

National Standard for Commercial Vessels Part C7A

New safety equipment information for accredited persons

Introduction

From 1 June 2009 regulatory amendments to the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulation 2004*, and variations, replaced the Uniform Shipping Laws Code (USL Code) Section 10, Part 3 with safety equipment requirements under the National Standard for Commercial Vessels Part C7A. This change will affect the safety equipment that commercial and fishing ships operating in Queensland waters are required to carry. Under the new standard medical supplies are included in safety equipment.

Why the changes?

Over recent years, several marine incidents and fatalities have prompted Coronial recommendations that more stringent safety equipment requirements for commercial and fishing ships be introduced to reduce the likelihood of injury or loss of life at sea.

As a result of these recommendations and the need for a national consistency for safety equipment requirements, Maritime Safety Queensland consulted with industry and assessed responses to assist with the new safety standard requirements.

The new standard will be implemented in increments in Queensland until it replaces the USL code in its entirety. The USL Code is 30 years old and not current with many safety equipment requirements applicable to today's modern fleet, and does not take into account new technological advancements.

Commercial and fishing industries often operate across state borders. The introduction of the new safety equipment standard will minimise the differences between states and increase national uniformity. This in turn will decrease the regulatory burden on operators who have previously been required to understand and comply with the differing requirements.

Impact

The introduction of the National Standard for Commercial Vessels Part C7A will have a significant impact on accredited persons. There will be a need to ensure a vessel is designed, built and surveyed under the new standard requirements. In some cases this will require designers to ensure there is sufficient space in the design to allow for suitable storage for safety equipment as required by the standard. Two main items affected include life jackets and life rafts. The use of dinghies, which are less safe, will be phased out under transitional arrangements.

Transitional provisions

With respect to class 1A, 2A and 3A ships, the transitional provisions of Part 25 of Marine Orders for Safety Equipment and Part 10 for Medical Supplies will apply under the *Navigation Act 1912 (Cwlth)*.

For all other commercial and fishing ships, transition arrangements will provide vessel owners and operators the time to upgrade their safety equipment to full compliance with the requirements of the new standard. When an item of safety equipment becomes irreparable, unserviceable, incapable of being restored to its original condition, or has reached the end of its serviceable life as stated by the manufacturer, the replacement equipment must comply with the National Standard for Commercial Vessels Part C7A requirements.

Policy position

New ships

New ships are commercial or fishing ships that had not been operated before 1 June 2009 and for which an application for a Design Approval Certificate is received by Maritime Safety Queensland, or a Certificate of Compliance-Design is issued by an accredited ship designer after 1 June 2009.

These new ships must comply in full with the National Standard for Commercial Vessels Part C7A safety equipment requirements and relevant variations in *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulation 2004*.

www.msq.qld.gov.au

Existing ships

Existing ships are commercial and fishing ships that were equipped with the required safety equipment, prior to 1 June 2009. These ships will qualify for transition to the National Standard for Commercial Vessels Part C7A as per arrangements with this directive.

Ships under construction

New ships under construction will qualify for the 'transition period' to the National Standard for Commercial Vessels Part C7A. To be considered an application must be received by Maritime Safety Queensland before 1 June 2009 for a Design Approval Certificate or Certificate of Compliance-Design issued by an accredited ship designer.

Transition periods

In recognition of the cost to ship owners to comply with the amended regulation, and the serviceable lifespan of safety equipment, Maritime Safety Queensland has allowed transition periods for existing vessels and some new vessels (where applicable) to comply with the new requirements. The transition periods are:

- two years to be compliant with type and quantity of safety equipment
- five years to be compliant with specifications and quality of safety equipment.

However, if the safety equipment needs replacing no further transition periods apply.

Type and quantity – two years

By the end of this transition period, unless an equivalent solution has been proposed and accepted by Maritime Safety Queensland, a ship must be equipped with the type and quantity of safety equipment (including medical supplies) required for the class in which it is registered.

During the two year transition period safety and medical equipment for all registered commercial and fishing ships must meet the quality standards as prescribed in the Uniform Shipping Laws Code.

Quality – five years

By the end of this transition period, unless an equivalent solution has been proposed and accepted by Maritime

Safety Queensland, the design, construction, installation, and servicing of safety and medical equipment on board must comply with requirements of the National Standard for Commercial Vessels Part C7A.

Equivalent solutions

The owners and operators of existing and new ships have the option of applying to Maritime Safety Queensland for consideration of equivalent solutions to National Standard for Commercial Vessels safety equipment requirements.

Applications for equivalent solutions will be decided by the General Manager or delegate, and must be submitted to enable finalisation prior to the expiry of the relevant transition period.

If an equivalent solution is approved, a copy of the approval will be recorded on the ship's registration certificate.

Contact information

If you require further information contact 07 3120 7359, or one of Maritime Safety Queensland regional offices listed below.

Safety equipment requirements can also be downloaded from the Maritime Safety Queensland website at www.msq.qld.gov.au.

Airlie Beach	07 4946 2200
Bundaberg	07 4131 8500
Cairns	07 4052 7400
Gladstone	07 4973 1200
Hervey Bay	07 4194 9600
Mackay	07 4944 3700
Mooloolaba	07 5477 8425
Pinkenba	07 3860 3500
Southport	07 5539 7300
Townsville	07 4726 3400

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