



## **MECAL TECHNICAL NOTE**

### **MTN 4-1**

Issued by the *MECAL* Technical Committee

#### **Open RHIBs - Restricted night time operation**

Application: Open RHIBs (those without substantial enclosure)

##### **1.0 Introduction**

The attached draft OAN (Operational Advice Note) has been prepared by the MCA to allow assessment of open RHIBs for restricted night time operation. It is intended that this will appear in the final harmonised code & can be considered for MECAL coded vessels in advance of publication of the new Code.

This version has been issued by the MCA in draft form following consultation with the CA's.

While this advice is in draft form it will be necessary for the CA to obtain agreement from the MCA whenever such an application is to be considered as part of certification

	<b>Maritime and Coastguard Agency</b>  <b>[DRAFT] OPERATIONAL ADVICE NOTE</b>	<b>Document number:</b>  <b>OAN ***</b>
<b>Revision: 01</b>	<b>Alternative compliance standards for Rigid Inflatable Boats certified under the Small Commercial Vessels Codes of Practice wishing to operate outside the hours of daylight within area Category 3.</b>	<b>Date: 01 OCT 09</b>
<b>Distribution</b>	<b>HQ, Marine Offices, MCA Small Commercial Vessel Certifying Authorities</b>	
<b>Target document</b>		
<b>Expiry date</b>		

## **Introduction**

*The Safety of Small Commercial Motor Vessels – a Code of Practice* and the *Code of Practice for the Safety of Small Workboats and Pilot Boats*, section 4.5.1.5 in both Codes, require rigid inflatable boats to have a substantial enclosure for the protection of persons onboard if they wish to operate in area Categories 2 or 3.

Further guidance is provided in *MGN 280 (M) - Small Vessels in Commercial use for Sport or Pleasure, Workboats and Pilot Boats – Alternative Construction Standards*, section 4.5.1.2 requires a permanent substantial enclosure for the protection of persons onboard, and purpose designed, subject to approval by the Certifying Authority.

Additionally MGN 280, 4.5.1.2, allows for area Category 3 operation only, alternative provision for enclosures to be considered, with operational/seasonal limitations. Such cases are to be agreed by the Administration.

[Further guidance was provided by MCA in January 2005, which indicated that “a substantial enclosure can be a permanently secured solid structure, or one that can be removed in harbour, provided when in place it is through bolted to the deck and adequately stressed to meet the designed vessel limitations”. The guidance also stated that “portable canopies that are secured by lines/Velcro are not acceptable”. ]

## **Alternative Provisions**

Increasing numbers of applications for the use of rigid inflatable boats without (permanent) substantial enclosures outside the hours of daylight are being received by MCA for agreement. To streamline this process, a matrix (figure 1) has been developed to guide Certifying Authority surveyors on the requirements that MCA would consider to be acceptable to allow vessels to operate outside the hours of daylight.

In all cases agreement should still be sought from the MCA for the allowance of these alternative provisions. Certifying Authorities should provide to the MCA their assurance that the vessel is suitable for operation outside of the hours of daylight, along with confirmation that the guidance provided within the matrix is in place.

If it is not possible for the vessel to comply with the guidance provided by the matrix, then other alternative provisions will still be considered on a case by case basis by the MCA.

### **Interpretations of the guidance provided by Figure 1.**

The following are interpretations of the guidance provided by Figure 1:

'a secondary means of propulsion with totally independent systems' means a second engine should be provided that can be used to enable the vessel to return to a safe haven. This could mean a small outboard engine, provided it has adequate power to propel the vessel through the conditions it is likely to encounter and while it is laden with the maximum certified persons and/or cargo.

'daylight' has the same meaning as provided by the Codes of Practice and MGN 280. This is "one hour before sunrise until one hour after sunset".

'full risk assessment' means a written risk assessment that fully considers all risks that the vessel and persons onboard could reasonably expect to encounter during the operation outside of the hours of daylight, including mitigation to reduce the risks to the vessel where possible should be provided.

'wearing of a lifejacket' means that all persons onboard should wear an approved lifejacket in accordance with the requirements of the Codes of Practice. Where additional personal exposure protection clothing is worn, the lifejacket should be suitable to be worn with that clothing. The lifejacket should be fitted with a light.

'wearing of personal exposure protection clothing' means all persons onboard should wear a dry suit or a floatation suit meeting EN ISO 15027-1 . MCA strongly recommends that this should not include the use of an immersion suit which is designed for emergency situations. In addition warm head wear should be worn.

### **Certification**

The Certificate that the vessel is issued with should be endorsed with "Restricted Category 3", and agreed further operational limitations/requirements should be included within the 'conditions' section of the Certificate.

### **Manning**

The minimum skipper qualification for operation outside the hours of daylight is a commercially endorsed RYA/DfT Advanced Powerboat Certificate with 12 months relevant experience for operations up to 3nm from a nominated departure point, and with 2 years relevant experience for operations up to 10nm from a safe haven. Minimum manning requirements should be endorsed within the 'conditions' section of the Certificate for clarity to the owner/operator.

**Figure 1. Acceptance Matrix for Restricted Category 3 RIBs without a Permanent Substantial Enclosure.**

Daylight & Favourable Weather		RESTRICTED CATEGORY 3 24/7 (without a Permanent Substantial Enclosure)				Un-restricted operation
		Distance from a safe haven	Favourable Weather <sup>1</sup> & Seasonal Restrictions <sup>2</sup>	Favourable Weather <sup>1</sup> & NO Seasonal Restrictions	NO Weather Restriction & NO Seasonal Restrictions	
From a Nominated Departure Point CATEGORY 5	From a Safe Haven CATEGORY 4	Up to 20nm	<b>NOT PERMITTED</b>	<b>NOT PERMITTED</b>	<b>NOT PERMITTED</b>	Up to 20nm
		Up to 10nm	1. Wearing of personal exposure protection clothing outside of daylight hours. 2. Wearing of lifejackets.	1. All vessels to have a secondary means of propulsion with totally independent systems. 2. Full Risk Assessment. 3. Wearing of personal exposure protection clothing outside of daylight hours. 4. Wearing of lifejackets.	<b>NOT PERMITTED</b>	Up to 10nm
From a Nominated Departure Point CATEGORY 6		Up to 3nm	1. Wearing of lifejackets.	1. Wearing of personal exposure protection clothing outside of daylight hours. 2. Wearing of lifejackets.	1. All vessels to have a secondary means of propulsion with totally independent systems. 2. Full Risk Assessment. 3. Wearing of personal exposure protection clothing outside of daylight hours. 4. Wearing of lifejackets.	Up to 3nm

<sup>1</sup> Favourable Weather – means wind, sea and visibility conditions which are deemed by the skipper to be safe for a small vessel to operate within limits applied to it;

OR, in any other case means conditions existing throughout a voyage or excursion in which the effects either individually or in combination of swell, height of waves, strength of wind and visibility cause no hazard to the safety of the vessel, including handling ability.

<sup>2</sup> Seasonal Restrictions – Between 1st April and 30th October.