

Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) radio operator

This guideline is for new applicants for a Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) radio operator certificate of competency

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This document is uncontrolled if printed. Please refer to the Maritime New Zealand website for the latest version.

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1. Overview

Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) radio operator certificate of competency

This guideline is for new applicants for the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) radio operator certificate of competency. It does not cover recognition of an equivalent certificate obtained outside New Zealand.

The information in this guideline covers training and other requirements for the certificate, how to apply and pay for your certificate, and where to find more information.

Once you have your GMDSS certificate, it is valid for five years. To continue using your certificate you will need to renew it before the expiry date. For more information about the requirements for renewals (revalidation), refer to the Maritime New Zealand (Maritime NZ) website.

maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers

The GMDSS certificate corresponds with the GMDSS radio operator certificate issued under regulation IV/2 of the international convention of the Standards for Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended (STCW).

This is a radio operator certificate designed for certificated navigating officers. With this certificate, you can work as a navigational watchkeeper at the operational level and perform the functions and duties of a radio operator on board a GMDSS ship, and operate its specialised GMDSS equipment.

About GMDSS

GMDSS is an internationally agreed set of safety procedures, equipment types and communication protocols that are used to increase safety and make it easier to rescue distressed ships and aircraft. Certain ships are designated as GMDSS ships.

The GMDSS systems are designed to perform the following functions: alerting, search and rescue coordination, locating (homing), maritime safety information broadcasts, general communications, and bridge-to-bridge communications. There are also back-up systems for alerting, distress and emergency sources of power. The specific requirements for radio carriage depend on a ship's operating area and gross tonnage.

Disclaimer

These guidelines provide information and explanations about the requirements set out in the maritime rules, but are not a substitute for the rules themselves, which are the law. These guidelines refer to provisions in Maritime Rules Part 32, Seafarer Certification. The Director of Maritime New Zealand will grant a certificate only when satisfied that all requirements have been met.

In this guideline, any references to 'we' or Maritime New Zealand relating to a decision impacting on the issue or renewal of any seafarer certificate are references to the Director or a person acting under the Director's delegated authority.

maritimenz.govt.nz/rules

2. Requirements

Before you spend time doing the training, we recommend you check that you can meet the medical fitness and eyesight standards (including for colour vision) and that you understand the fit and proper person requirements.

A summary of the requirements for this certificate is provided below. You will need to meet all of these requirements to get your GMDSS certificate.

- obtain a general operator's certificate (GOC) as a radio operator
- complete and pass the approved training course for GMDSS
- prove that you are a fit and proper person
- be medically fit and have good eyesight
- be at least 18 years old.

Each of these requirements and how to prove that you meet them is explained on the following pages.

You must also have English conversation, reading and writing skills appropriate to the responsibilities and functions for the level of your certificate, so that you can satisfactorily complete training, pass examinations and discharge your duties.

Notes

While GMDSS radio operator is a certificate of competency in its own right, Maritime Rules Part 32 also lists it as a co-requisite requirement for deck officer certificates aligned with STCW and STCW-F. The requirement for a GMDSS certificate is noted in the guidelines for the relevant certificates.

2.1 Prior certification and qualifications

No prior certification or qualifications are required for the GMDSS certificate of competency.

2.2 Sea service

There are no additional sea service requirements for this certificate of competency.

2. Requirements (continued)

2.3 Training

You must complete training that is acceptable to the Director of Maritime NZ to achieve all of the required competencies for this certificate, as specified in section A-IV/2 of the STCW Convention.

Approved training

The approved GMDSS training includes obtaining a course completion letter and a general operator certificate (GOC) as a radio operator (issued under the Radiocommunications Act 1989 or an equivalent issued under the international Radio Regulations).

The GOC course is available through the New Zealand Maritime School (Auckland) and the International Maritime Institute of New Zealand (Nelson).

Documents you must provide with your application

Requirement	Document(s) you must provide
General Operator's Certificate	The certificate issued under the Radiocommunications Act 1989 and regulation 24 of the Radiocommunications Regulations 2001, by Radio Spectrum Management (an agency of MBIE)
GMDSS course completion	A letter from the training provider confirming training leading to a GMDSS certificate has been completed

For more information about approved training providers and competency frameworks, refer to the Maritime NZ website.

maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarer

2.4 Fit and proper person

We need to confirm that you are a fit and proper person. To help us do this, we need the following documents from you.

Requirement	Document(s) you must provide
Be a fit and proper person	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A completed <i>fit and proper person form</i>, which must have been signed and dated no more than three months before we receive your application.A police clearance report for any country or countries outside New Zealand that you have lived in for 12 months or longer in the past five years (covering the entire period you lived in that country or countries).

2. Requirements (continued)

2.5 Medical examination and eyesight tests

You need to prove that your medical fitness and eyesight meet the required standards.

Requirement	Document(s) you must provide
Be medically fit	<p>A certificate of medical fitness for seafarers that is valid at the time we issue your GMDSS certificate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is a special medical certificate that complies with STCW regulation I/9. You must get this from an approved medical practitioner, or from a medical practitioner approved for issuing seafarer medicals in another country that is party to STCW. The medical category must be A, A(T) or B.• You may use an existing medical certificate if it will be valid when your certificate is issued and is less than two years old.• Your doctor will need to see your eyesight test results as part of their assessment of your medical fitness. You should have your eyesight test completed before you attend your medical examination.
Have good eyesight	<p>Eye test results from a registered optometrist, on the official form*, showing you have met the required standards for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• visual acuity (including a letter eyesight test). Your eyesight test results must be less than 12 months old at the time we issue your certificate• colour vision – this may initially be assessed as part of the seafarer’s certificate of medical fitness, using the Ishihara colour vision test. If you fail the Ishihara test, you will need to take an alternative colour vision test with a registered optometrist (for more details, refer to the Advisory Circular for Maritime Rules Part 34 (Medical Standards) on Maritime NZ’s website). <p>Your colour vision test results (of either test) must be less than six years old at the time your certificate is issued.</p> <p>*The official form is available on the Maritime NZ website. It is recommended that you take this form with you to your optometrist.</p>

For more information about the medical and eyesight requirements for this certificate, refer to Maritime NZ’s website.

maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers

2. Requirements (continued)

2.6 Age and identity

You must be at least 18 years old to hold this certificate.

We need to confirm your age and identity. Acceptable forms of identity are listed below. Refer to the *fit and proper person form* for the latest information.

You will need to provide two passport-sized photos or an electronic copy of a passport photo with your application.

All applicants must provide sighted and signed copies of both:

- a primary identification (ID) document **and**
- one other form of ID.

One of these forms of ID must be photographic.

A sighted and signed copy is a photocopy that has been sighted and signed by a trusted referee, in person, confirming that the person presenting the identity documents is the same person that the documents refer to. The trusted referee must sight the original identity document before signing the copy.

Trusted referees include a Justice of the Peace, a Notary public, a barrister or solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand, staff of an approved training provider, police, teachers, doctors, or Maritime NZ staff.

Primary ID	Other form of ID
Passport (NZ or overseas)	Driver's licence (NZ or overseas)
NZ full birth certificate issued on or after 1 January 1998	NZ full birth certificate issued prior to 1 January 1998
NZ firearms licence	Overseas birth certificate
NZ citizenship certificate	18+ card
NZ refugee travel document	Community services card
NZ emergency travel document	SuperGold card
NZ certificate of identity	NZ employee photo identification card
	NZ student photo identification card
	Inland Revenue number
	NZ issued utility bill (issued not more than six months earlier)
	NZ teachers registration certificate
	NZ electoral roll record
	International driving permit
	Steps to freedom form

3. When and how to apply

Apply when you have completed all of the certificate requirements. Once we have received all of the information we need from you, it may take us up to 20 working days to process your application, so send it in as soon as possible (and at least one month before you need your certificate).

Make sure you include all of the documents we have asked for. Refer to the checklist at 3.4 to make sure you have everything you need for your application.

Note

If your application is incomplete, it will not be processed and we will return your application and other documents to you.

3.1 Copies of supporting documents

We only need copies of your supporting documents, not the original versions.

For the *fit and proper person form* you need to include sighted and signed copies of the ID documents specified.

3.2 Fees

There is a fee for your application. Refer to the Maritime NZ website for information about fees.

maritimenz.govt.nz/fees

You will be invoiced once we have formally received your application. A reference number and instructions explaining how to pay will be sent with the invoice.

You can pay:

- online using a credit card or debit card, *or*
- by internet banking or bank deposit.

Refer to the Maritime NZ website for more information about how to pay your fees.

maritimenz.govt.nz/howtopay

Other costs

As well as the application fee, you will have other fees and expenses to pay. For example, you may need to pay for your eyesight tests, medical examination and training courses.

3. When and how to apply (continued)

3.3 Application process

This is the application process for this certificate of competency. Complete each step before you move on to the next one.

1 Do you meet all of the requirements?

You need to check that you meet all of the requirements for this certificate.

2 Do you have the documents we need?

You need to prove that you meet the requirements. Include all of the documents we have asked for with your application form. Use the checklist to help you (see *3.4 Checklist*).

Remember we need copies, not the originals.

3 Send us your application by courier or email

There are two options for you to send your application:

1. Send your application by email, attaching the scanned documents.
The application form has information about the requirements for electronic copies.
2. Use a courier to send us your completed application forms and supporting documents.

The addresses are on the application form.

4 Confirmation and/or request sent

We will send you an email or letter to confirm that we have received your application and advise you of any documents we need from you before we can assess your application.

We must receive your payment before we can finalise your application.

3. When and how to apply (continued)

5 Assessment

Once you have sent us all the documents we need, we will assess your application and make a decision. This will usually take 20 working days (about a month) from the time we let you know that we have received your application.

We will send you an invoice with your reference number and information on how to pay the application fee once we begin the assessment. Please note we cannot release your certificate unless payment has been received.

6 Issue certificate

We will send you:

- your certificate, if your application has been successful, or
- a letter or email explaining why your application was unsuccessful.

3. When and how to apply (continued)

3.4 Checklist

Use this checklist to make sure that you have everything you need for your application.

Check that your documents are complete and have been signed, dated and sighted as required.

We need to see all of the documents listed below to confirm that you have met each requirement.

- Seafarer certificate application form*
- Two passport-sized photos *or* an electronic copy
- Fit and proper person form* including sighted and signed copies of the ID documents specified
- Police clearance report for other countries (if applicable)
- Copy of certificate of medical fitness for seafarers
- Evidence of your approved course completion for GMDSS (letter from training provider)
- Copy of your General Operator's Certificate (GOC)

4. Contact us for help

If you need more information about the requirements for your application, visit the Seafarer Certification section of our website.

maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers

If you can't find the information you need, send us an email.

seafarers@maritimenz.govt.nz

Tell us what you need help with and remember to include your contact details (email address and phone numbers).

Alternatively, you can phone us toll free on 050 SEACERT (0508 732 237).