

# Watchkeeper Deck

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This guideline is for new applicants for a Watchkeeper Deck certificate of competency

**SeaCert**

# Watchkeeper Deck

Last updated: July 2019

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## In this guide

1. Overview	2
<hr/>	
2. Requirements	3
<hr/>	
2.1 Prior certification	4
2.2 Sea service	4
2.3 Training	8
2.4 Final examination	12
2.5 Fit and proper person	12
2.6 Medical examination and eyesight tests	13
2.7 Age and identity	14
3. When and how to apply	15
<hr/>	
3.1 Copies of supporting documents	15
3.2 Fees	15
3.3 Application process	16
3.4 Checklist	18
4. Contact us for help	19
<hr/>	

# 1. Overview

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## Watchkeeper Deck

This guideline is for new applicants for the Watchkeeper Deck certificate of competency. It does not cover recognition of an equivalent certificate obtained outside New Zealand.

The information in this guideline covers sea service, 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 Watchkeeper Deck 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](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers)**

The Watchkeeper Deck certificate corresponds with a certificate issued under regulation II/1 of the International Convention on the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended (STCW).

With this certificate, you can perform the functions and duties of officer in charge of a navigational watch (navigational watchkeeper) on ships of any gross tonnage in any operating area. While on watch, you are responsible at all times for the safe navigation of the ship.

From Watchkeeper Deck, you can progress to Chief Mate on ships less than 3000 gross tonnage, Chief Mate, Master on ships less than 500 gross tonnage, or Master.

### 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 the 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 about 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](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/rules)**

## 2. Requirements

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Before you spend time doing sea service and 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 need to meet all of these requirements to get your Watchkeeper Deck certificate.

- prove you have the minimum sea service requirements for the option you choose
- complete and pass the approved qualification for Watchkeeper Deck
- have the required STCW ancillary certificates and the STCW global maritime distress and safety system (GMDSS) certificate of competency
- pass Maritime NZ's final exam
- prove that you are a fit and proper person
- be medically fit and have good eyesight and
- 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.

## 2.1 Prior certification

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

## 2.2 Sea service

Your sea service must be relevant and appropriate to the requirements of regulation II/1 of the STCW Convention. This means that it must be in a deck or navigating capacity on a commercial ship.

All your sea service must be obtained within the 10 years preceding your application.

It is preferred that you complete your sea service on vessels of 500 GT or more, operating beyond restricted limits. However, sea service that does not meet this specific requirement will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### Sea service requirements

You can choose from two options for the sea service requirements for Watchkeeper Deck, as shown below. You must complete one of them.

#### Option 1

At least 12 months' sea service as part of an approved training programme (such as a cadet programme) that includes on-board training documented in an approved training record book. The 12 months is to include at least six months of bridge watchkeeping duties under the supervision of the master or a qualified officer.

#### Option 2

At least 36 months' sea service. The 36 months is to include at least six months of bridge watchkeeping duties under the supervision of the master or a qualified officer.

## 2. Requirements (continued)

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### Proving your sea service

You are responsible for making sure your sea service is documented and verified by your ship's master or company.

For Option 1 we suggest that you complete the summary of sea service form contained in your training record book.

For Option 2 you will need to keep track of your sea service. You may use the summary of sea service form available on the Maritime NZ website to help you achieve this. This form is not required to support your application.

To prove your sea service, you must provide at least one of the following documents for each vessel you have served on:

- *certificate of sea service or record of employment* (available on Maritime NZ's website)
- completed seafarer's record book
- discharge certificate or discharge book (ensuring that any section on watchkeeping is appropriately signed off)
- letter from your employer.

The documents you provide must contain all of the following details for each vessel you have served on:

- your employer's name and contact details
- the name, gross tonnage and type of vessel (for example, cargo vessel, tanker, bulk carrier, passenger)
- the type of cargo carried and area of operation
- the dates you were employed and the sea time completed between those dates
- your duties and the capacities you served in.

Any statutory declarations you have made are generally *not* acceptable as proof of your sea service. However, the Director will consider these in exceptional circumstances.

## 2. Requirements (continued)

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### Calculating sea service for voyages of 24 hours or more

Relevant qualifying sea service is expected to be on voyages of 24 hours or more, calculated as follows:

- from the sign-on date of starting work on the ship to the sign-off date of discharge (both dates are inclusive)
- by counting each whole calendar month during this period as one month
- for multiple voyages, by adding extra days that do not fall within a calendar month together, with each addition of 30 days to be calculated as one month.

Extended time in port is generally not counted as sea service, and nor is time on leave.

#### Note

Voyage means a voyage between a port or place of departure and a ship's final port or place of arrival. It includes any period of 24 hours (or more) where you are signed on or employed on the vessel and you remain on board.

**For example:** If your service record shows your sign-on date as 3 March and sign-off date as 14 April, your sea service would be calculated as one month (3 March to 2 April) and 12 days (from 3 to 14 April inclusive).

### Calculating sea service for voyages of less than 24 hours

This sea service only applies to Option 2, where service in excess of 12 months may be on voyages of less than 24 hours, provided all of the conditions of sea service are met.

Sea service on voyages of less than 24 hours (for example, day work) is calculated by counting the number of months made up of days, as follows:

- counting each period of eight (or more) hours worked within each period of 24 hours as one day's service
- counting periods of more than eight hours at a rate of more than one day (may be expressed in decimal points), at the Director's discretion, if the Director is satisfied there are suitable policies and processes in place to manage fatigue
- counting each additional 20 days (or more) in a 30-day period as one month's sea service. A month is calculated as 160 or more hours worked over 20 or more days in a 30-day period.

Where insufficient hours are accrued in a period of 30 days, additional hours or days may be accrued as described above until 20 days have been reached. This can then be counted as one month's sea service.

You cannot claim for more days of sea service than you actually served. You also cannot claim for time spent on leave or extended periods in port.

For more information about calculating your sea service, refer to the Maritime NZ website.

**[maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers)**

## 2. Requirements (continued)

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### Sea service pre-assessment

If you are unsure about whether you have met the sea service requirements, you can ask us to assess your sea service time before you make your full application.

To have your sea service pre-assessed, you need to:

- apply for pre-assessment using Maritime NZ's *pre-assessment form*
- send us the documents we need (see *Proving your sea service*) in order to check your sea service.

#### Note

If you are pre-assessed and have the required sea service for the Watchkeeper Deck certificate, add your pre-assessment reference number to your *seafarer certificate application form*.

If there is a delay between getting your pre-assessment completed and applying for your Watchkeeper Deck certificate, make sure your sea service was obtained within the 10 years preceding the date of your certificate application.

## 2. Requirements (continued)

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### 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-II/1 of the STCW Convention.

#### Approved training

For Options 1 and 2, the approved training qualification for Watchkeeper Deck is the Diploma in Nautical Science Level 6. The diploma 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
<b>Option 1</b> Diploma in Nautical Science (Level 6) with evidence of approved training programme, including on-board training and completion of your approved training record book	The diploma certificate showing your name and the date of issue. Alternatively, a copy of your academic transcript evidencing completion of the qualification.  Evidence of completion of an approved training programme that includes on-board training that has been documented in an accepted training record book. This is often referred to as a cadet programme. The evidence is likely to be a letter from the training provider.
<b>Option 2</b> Diploma in Nautical Science (Level 6)	The diploma certificate showing your name and the date of issue. Alternatively, a copy of your academic transcript evidencing completion of the qualification.

For more information about approved training providers and the competency framework for Watchkeeper Deck, refer to the Maritime NZ website.

**[maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers](http://maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers)**

## 2. Requirements (continued)

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### Training record book

For Option 1 you must complete one of the following approved training record books as part of your sea service:

- International Shipping Federation On Board Training Record Book for Deck Cadets
- Merchant Navy Training Board (MNTB) Deck Training Record Book (UK)
- Global Met Training Book (used for the Diploma of Nautical Science).

If you do not have one of these books, contact Maritime NZ to determine whether the training record book you are using is acceptable.

Your training record book will be assessed by your training provider.

You must provide the original of your training record book to an approved Maritime NZ Examiner before you take your final exam.

Your training record book needs to:

- be the original, not a copy
- have all relevant records completed
- have all relevant project work completed and signed off by the ship's master or a qualified certificated officer, as indicated in the book.

Keep your training record book in a safe place. We also recommend you make a copy of the completed sections and the associated evidence, storing these in a safe place too – but separately from your training record book.

If you do not complete an approved training programme, which includes on-board training documented in an approved training record book, you must comply with Option 2.

## 2. Requirements (continued)

### Ancillary and other certificates

You must provide copies of the ancillary and other certificates you gained as part of your Watchkeeper Deck training. The training for all of the certificates listed below is included within the NZ Diploma in Nautical Science (Level 6). You should receive copies of the certificates when you complete your diploma to confirm you have demonstrated proficiency in the required skills.

Document(s) you must provide	Ancillary certificate requirements
STCW basic training	STCW basic training that complies with STCW A-VI/1 paragraph 2 and covers basic personal survival techniques (A-VI/1-1), fire prevention and fire fighting (A-VI/1-2), elementary first aid (A-VI/1-3) and personal safety and social responsibility (A-VI/1-4). This may be issued as one certificate citing the four elements or as four separate certificates
Proficiency in survival craft and rescue boats other than fast rescue boats (PISC)	STCW survival craft and rescue boats other than fast rescue boats certificate that complies with STCW Code Section A-VI/2 paragraphs 1-4 (Table A-VI/2-1)
Advanced fire fighting	STCW advanced fire-fighting certificate that complies with STCW Code Section A-VI/3, paragraphs 1-4 (Table A-VI/3)
Medical first aid	STCW medical first aid on board ship certificate that complies with STCW Code Section A-VI/4, paragraphs 1-3 (Table A-VI/4-1)
STCW global maritime distress and safety system radio operator certificate of competency (GMDSS)	Current certificate of competency as GMDSS radio operator as provided for in Maritime Rule 32.114, or recognised equivalent certificate that complies with STCW IV/2
Electronic chart display and information system (Generic ECDIS)	The certificate must state that the ECDIS training meets the STCW competency requirements of Table A-II/2. This is optional, but without it, your certificate will include the following limitation. <i>This certificate is not valid for service on ships fitted with ECDIS.</i>
Security awareness	STCW security awareness complies with the STCW Code Table A-VI/6-1. This is optional, but without it, your certificate will include the following limitation. <i>This certificate is not valid for use on ships for which the ISPS code applies without a current proficiency in security awareness training (STCW A-VI/6-1).</i>
A ships security officer certificate or Security awareness for seafarers with designated security duties certificate may be accepted as an alternative	The alternative must state that it meets the requirements of STCW Section A-VI/6 and Table A-VI/6-2

## 2. Requirements (continued)

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If you already have an ancillary certificate that demonstrates proficiency in the areas listed above and at the required level, you may use it – as long as the certificate is current and specific requirements are met.

Your certificates must also conform to the STCW regulations and have the appropriate STCW regulation number.

The following ancillary certificates must be less than five years old from the date of issue when we issue your Watchkeeper Deck certificate.

- STCW Basic – Personal survival techniques
- STCW Basic – Fire prevention and fire fighting
- Proficiency in survival craft
- Advanced fire fighting

### Acceptance of overseas STCW training

For STCW basic training, we will accept certificates issued by any training provider that is approved by any country on the STCW white list.

For the STCW advanced training, we will accept ancillary certificates issued by any training provider that is approved by a flag state which has a memorandum of understanding with Maritime NZ.

### Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) certificate

Before we can issue your Watchkeeper Deck certificate, you must provide Maritime NZ with proof that you meet the requirements to be issued with a GMDSS certificate of competency as a specialist radio operator that complies with STCW regulation IV/2.

GMDSS training is included with the NZ Diploma in Nautical Science. Your training provider should issue you with the required documentation for you to apply for your GMDSS certificate of competency. You can apply for your GMDSS and Watchkeeper Deck certificates at the same time.

The documents that prove you meet the requirements include a course completion letter and a general operator certificate (GOC) as a radio operator (issued under the Radiocommunications Act 1989 or an equivalent under the international Radio Regulations). Information about how to obtain your GMDSS certificate is available on Maritime NZ's website.

**[maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers](http://maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers)**

If you already hold a GMDSS certificate, it must be valid at the time of applying for your Watchkeeper Deck certificate.

If you have a GMDSS certificate from a foreign country, refer to the recognition of non- New Zealand STCW certificates guidelines to see if it is from one of the listed issuing countries whose certificates we will accept.

## 2. Requirements (continued)

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### 2.4 Final examination

After you have completed the approved training you must sit and pass the final examination.

This examination must be conducted by a Maritime NZ approved examiner. The examination checks that you have met the standards of competency specified in section A-II/1 of the STCW Convention.

The final examination is currently an oral examination. It is usually organised by your training provider when you have completed all the requirements for the award of the NZ Diploma in Nautical Science qualification.

If you have completed a training record book, you will also need to provide this to the examiner before you attend your examination.

### 2.5 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"><li>• 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.</li><li>• 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).</li></ul>

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## 2. Requirements (continued)

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### 2.6 Medical examination and eyesight tests

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

Forms for the medical examination and eyesight tests are available on the Maritime NZ website.

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 Watchkeeper Deck certificate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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.</li><li>• You may use an existing medical certificate if it will be valid (usually less than two years old) when your Watchkeeper Deck certificate is issued.</li><li>• 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.</li></ul>
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"><li>• visual acuity (including a letter eyesight test). Your visual acuity eyesight test results must be less than 12 months old at the time we issue your certificate</li><li>• colour vision – this is initially assessed using the Ishihara colour vision test. If you fail the Ishihara test, you will need to take an alternative colour vision test (for more details, refer to the Advisory Circular for Part 34 on Maritime NZ's website).</li></ul> <p>Your colour vision test results (of either test) must be less than six years old at the time your Watchkeeper Deck 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>

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

**[maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers)**

## 2. Requirements (continued)

### 2.7 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

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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](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/fees)**

There is a separate application fee for a GMDSS certificate (if required).

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](https://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, training and ancillary courses.

### 3. When and how to apply (continued)

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## 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 the requirements?

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

Apply for pre-assessment of your sea service time if you are unsure about meeting the sea service requirements.

### 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)

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#### 5 Assessment and payment of application fee

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)

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#### 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 sea service
- Your pre-assessment reference number if we pre-assessed your sea service time
- Evidence of your approved training (NZ Diploma in Nautical Science Level 6)
- Copy of your ancillary certificates
- Copy of your GMDSS certificate or GMDSS application

## 4. Contact us for help

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

**[maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers)**

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

**[seafarers@maritimenz.govt.nz](mailto: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 0508 SEACERT (0508 732 237).