

## COMPREHENSIVE CENTENARY BIRTHDAY REFORM: CCNR MODERNISES REGULATIONS FOR RHINE NAVIGATION PERSONNEL

Ref: CC/CP (22)13



The Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) reached a milestone on the ambitious schedule it set itself in the [Mannheim Declaration](#) of 2018, when it accepted its new Regulations for Rhine Navigation Personnel (RPN) on 8 November 2022:

- up-to-date and flexible crew regulations that also take account of social issues and rapidly changing working conditions aboard and ashore as a result of new technologies;
- increased attractiveness of careers in inland navigation.

The new regulations mark the entry into force on the Rhine, with effect from 1 April 2023, of **modern regulations governing professional qualifications and crews** aboard inland navigation vessels, from Basel to the open sea.

### The regulations feature the following innovations:

To promote technical innovations (for example: in the context of automated vessels) the CCNR may in future permit derogations from crew regulations on a case-by-case trial basis. This presupposes that the derogating regulations, in conjunction with the technical innovations, provide adequate safety.

In the interests of Europe-wide harmonisation of the qualification system, the CCNR is introducing the [requirements for certificates of qualification, service record books and logbooks](#) adopted by the European committee for drawing up standards in the

field of inland navigation (CESNI). The CCNR documents thus satisfy the same requirements as the corresponding EU documents and are therefore valid in all EU States.

Under the law as it currently stands, certificates of qualification, service record books and logbooks will continue to be valid under transitional provisions (until 2032).

At the same time, the CCNR is **modernising the requirements for engineers and for the acquisition of recreational and administration boatmaster's certificates**. Recreational boatmaster's certificates are also only now required (this to coincide with the beginning of the new season) for craft between 20 and 25m in length and with propulsion engines with a power exceeding 11.03kW (15 hp). The minimum age for the examination for the Administration boatmaster's certificate is reduced to 18 (from 21).

**Finally, derogations apply to the demonstration of local sector knowledge** for operating on stretches of the Rhine with specific risks. In the future, only three journeys in each direction, not 16, will be required on the stretch in question. Admittedly, only journeys undertaken during the past three, rather than ten, years will now be considered. The examination for Rhenish waterway stretches with a specific risk can also be taken outside the CCNR Member States. A respective agreement has already been reached between Germany and the Czech Republic.

Digitalisation as well is making its entry: Anyone who so wishes can receive their Rhine boatmaster's certificate (encompassing the former Class 1 and Class 2) and the certificate of qualification as an expert in electronic rather than card format.

100 years after the first regulations for navigation personnel were adopted on 14 December 1922, the CCNR has continued the tradition of up-to-date and progressive regulations for qualifications and crews.



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## FURTHER READING...

The [resolution](#) that has been published contains detailed explanations on each amended article.



### More flexible crew regulations

As regards the technical equipment of inland navigation vessels, the CCNR can permit derogations from the requirements for innovative inland vessels and issue a vessel inspection certificate. That enables pilot projects to be permitted without regard to national borders. Thanks to the modernisation of the RPN, this principle is now also applied to crew regulations.

Greater flexibility as regards crew composition is also being introduced. The ability for the holder of a certificate of qualification as a boatmaster to be qualified for employment as a deck crew member except for the apprentice is retained. In other cases it is expressly made clear that a function can be replaced by a higher function:

- the holder of a certificate of qualification as a helmsman can also be employed as a deckhand, boatman or able boatman,
- the holder of a certificate of qualification as an able boatman can be employed as a deckhand or boatman,
- the holder of a certificate of qualification as a boatman can also be employed as a deckhand. The new wording emphasises the particular importance of training because as before there is no way for an apprentice to be replaced by a higher function.



### Modernisation of the acquisition of qualifications

The function of engineer is being modernised. In addition to the familiar requirements, lateral entrants will in future also be welcome from the mechatronics sector in recognition of the fact that technical installations in the inland navigation sector comprise an ever increasing proportion of electronic components.

The examinations for the recreational boatmaster's certificate and Administration boatmaster's certificate are also being modernised because they can now also be conducted in the simulator.

For recreational boatmasters' certificates the limits below which national regulations for sailing without a certificate can be enacted are being increased from 15m to 20m and from 3.68 kW (5 hp) to 11.03 kW (15 hp).

An important aspect for future applicants: the examination for the Rhine boatmaster's certificate can now, if the applicant so desires, be taken with or without special authorisation to navigate on inland waterways with a maritime character.

Still with the objective of facilitating the mobility of personnel. Certificates of qualification, service record books and logbooks issued in accordance with the present Regulations for Rhine Navigation Personnel will remain valid until their expiry, but no later than 18 January 2032.



### Enhanced coordination between the competent authorities of the Member States

The CCNR's common legal framework enables fitness examinations to be performed by any doctor recognised by a competent authority. What that means in practice is that the holder of a certificate of qualification issued in accordance with the new RPN no longer needs to return to the country in which the previous fitness examination was conducted to undergo a new medical examination. The holder of a certificate of qualification bearing the CCNR logo can have his fitness checked by any doctor recognised by a Rhine riparian state or Belgium.

The authorities of the CCNR States also cooperate closely in confiscating documents, which is of particular benefit to the safety of navigational traffic, while also protecting employers from being presented with certificates of qualification that have been withdrawn or suspended.

This enhanced coordination will provide efficient support for entering the data contained in certificates of qualification, service record books and logbooks in electronic national registers.

### ABOUT THE CCNR

*The Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) is an international organisation that exercises an essential regulatory role in the navigation of the Rhine. It is active in the technical, legal, economic and environmental fields. In all its areas of action, its work is guided by the efficiency of transport on the Rhine, safety, social considerations, and respect for the environment. Many of the CCNR's activities now reach beyond the Rhine and are directly concerned with European navigable waterways more generally. The CCNR works closely with the European Commission as well as with the other river commissions and international organisations.*



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