MCA issues updated guidance on ECDIS training requirements - Implications for Masters and Deck Officers on Yachts <3,000gt

The UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has recently issued a Marine Information Note (MIN 442) to clarify the requirements for ECDIS training for masters and deck officers serving on vessels using ECDIS as the primary means of navigation.

MIN 442 expands upon and replaces the guidance first issued in January 2011 in MIN 405. Masters and deck officers on yachts under 3,000gt are required to have the same level of ECDIS training as those officers holding an Unlimited Certificate of Competency (CoC), if their vessel is operating with ECDIS as the primary means of navigation.

For most yacht deck officers this will mean completing an MCA-approved five-day ECDIS course before either applying for (or revalidating) their Certificate of Competency or joining a vessel using ECDIS as the primary means of navigation.

The training requirements for using ECDIS as the primary means of navigation are:

1. Generic ECDIS training
2. ECDIS ship specific equipment training

The MCA will accept any of the following courses as meeting the generic training requirement:

i. An ECDIS course based on the IMO model course, approved by the MCA

ii. An ECDIS course based on the IMO model course, approved by an Administration whose Certificates of Competency are accepted by the MCA for the issue of Certificates of Equivalent Competency.

iii. An MCA approved Navigation, Radar and ARPA Simulator (NARAS) course at operational or management level, or their replacements: the Navigation Aids and Simulator Training (NAEST) operational or management courses. For these courses to be considered as meeting ECDIS training requirements, the course must have been completed on or after 1 January 2005.

The Yacht Navigation and Radar courses for OOW and Master are NOT accepted as meeting the ECDIS training requirements. Even though these courses do include some ECDIS training, they are currently too short to incorporate everything required in an ECDIS course.

If officers wish to avoid having their Certificates of Competency endorsed with the phrase, “From the 1 January 2017 this certificate is not valid for service on ships fitted with ECDIS”, they must submit an ECDIS certificate for a course completed on or after 1 January 2005, or one of the accepted alternatives, when they apply for or revalidate their CoC. Even though MIN 423 (requirements for CoC revalidation) does not state that it applies to large yachts, the MCA is applying it as though it does.

Warsash Superyacht Academy offers a fully MCA-approved five-day generic ECDIS course at its waterside campus near Southampton. The training is conducted in one of our new dedicated ECDIS training suites by very experienced instructors, and the course is also approved by Transas as equipment specific training for its Navi Sailor 4000 ECDIS. We also provide type-specific training on a range of other manufacturers’ equipment, including Kelvin Hughes, Kongsberg and Sperry.