

Boating Charge Certificates

SSWA Info 006 (Jan 04)

THE BOATING RULES

Scouter's Responsibility - "Before allowing a SCOUT to take part in any boating activity the Scouter-in-charge must consider the age, experience and reliability of the SCOUT, and the ability and experience of himself or any other person in charge of any part of the activity. The Scouter should always take whatever precautions a prudent parent would observe for the safety of his/her own children".

The Boating Rules are printed in full in the Sea Scout Leaders Handbook. They were not drawn up with the intention of restricting fun, adventure or initiative, but in an attempt to achieve all these ideals in as safe a manner as possible.

CHARGE CERTIFICATE SCHEME

This is a system of qualifications for various types of boating (rowing, sailing and powered craft) based on assessment of –

- a) Practical competence in boat handling
- b) Leadership ability of the Scout or Leader concerned.
- c) Local knowledge

A Charge Certificate is a licence to take Scouts boating and comes in various grades –

- Basic Boathandling Certificates are issued for one season only, enabling those with limited experience to get afloat to improve skill and be assessed for a full certificate later. They are confined to enclosed safe waters, 1 May to 30 September, wind force 3 max.
- Intermediate Certificates are intended for Adult Leaders with limited experience and for Watch Leaders over fourteen years old and Venture Scouts. They signify competence to take charge of a boat and crew in enclosed safe waters and restricted waters.
- Advanced Certificates are available to Adult Leaders and Venture Scouts over 17 years, and signify competence to take charge of a craft and crew in Day Cruising Waters.
- Instructor Ratings are additional qualifications available to experienced Leaders with Advanced Certificates.
- Coastal / Off-Shore Certificates are awarded only to those who possess a Coastal or Offshore Yachtmaster Certificate of the Irish Sailing Association or RYA.

Training

Scouting Ireland Sea Training operates on a Provincial basis, through the Provincial Sea Scout and Water Activity Committees and is responsible for providing or arranging Training Courses and assessment sessions for Adult Leaders in boating and seamanship. They are advertised locally, and enquiries should be made through your Provincial Committee Secretary.

Requirements for Charge Certificates

Although a candidate for a Charge Certificate is obviously expected to have a good level of technical skill and theoretical knowledge, equally important parts of the assessment are a sense of responsibility and dependability, common sense and local knowledge.

Issue of Charge Certificates

When assessment is completed for a particular certificate, the Charge Certificate Log Book should be signed by the assessor. It should then be sent to the Provincial Sea Scout and Water Activity Committee Secretary who will register the Charge Certificate, and notify National Office for record. There is no need for any other application form - the completed Log Book is sufficient. Experienced boatmen, who wish to apply directly for Charge Certificates, should consult with the Provincial Sea Scout and Water Activity Committee Secretary to arrange for assessment, or recognition of previous qualifications.

Classification of Waters for Boating

In order to classify areas of water suitable for boating for the different grades of Charge Certificates, the following definitions are intended as a guide to the type of waters to be expected in each category –

- (a) Enclosed safe waters - sheltered inland waters, rivers, canals and small lakes, and other sheltered waters where currents and tides create no real danger.
- (b) Restricted waters - the sea up to one mile offshore, but excluding any more dangerous waters closer inshore - e.g. tide races, "overfalls", etc. More sheltered parts of estuaries, large inland lakes.
- (c) Day Cruising Waters - the sea up to three miles off shore and up to fifteen miles along the coast in either direction from the Group's normal base, but excluding any more dangerous waters close inshore, as mentioned above. Day Cruising Waters also include the exposed parts of large estuaries. Any boating which extends into the Group's Day Cruising area must be treated as an expedition.
- (d) Coastal – up to 10 miles offshore.

Amended (Dec04, Mar05, Apr09, Dec10)

(e) Offshore – out of sight of land.

Note The limits of waters (a) and (b) above are set for each Group by the Sea Scout Team, in consultation with the Group. Certain waters may vary considerably in different weather and tidal conditions, and all Charge Certificate holders must appreciate such changes and the dangers which may appear, restricting the boundaries of a classified area or making an area temporarily unsuitable for boating.

Full details of the boating limits for Enclosed Safe Waters and Restricted Waters will be found in the Sea Scout Leaders Handbook, or in Information Leaflet No 5.

USE OF CHARGE CERTIFICATES

Boating waters are classified for each Group. The Leader or Scout in charge of a boating activity must possess an appropriate Charge Certificate. It is not always necessary for a Charge Certificate holder to be afloat during every activity. The Charge Certificate Rule may be relaxed in 'safe enclosed waters' for training purposes, provided that a competent Scouter is nearby or sailing in company and is in effective control of the activity.

Enclosed safe waters are exactly that, and are for basic training and practice. Probably the vast majority of Scout boating takes place in these areas.

Depending on –

- Weather
- exact area,
- boat(s) available
- experience of the crew(s),
- availability of a powered safety craft
- availability of VHF radios
- any other local conditions

the Leader in Charge of any activity must decide whether s/he should be afloat or would have better control and supervision from ashore, which boats may go afloat, which (if any) must have a Charge Certificate holder on board.

Restricted Waters are for more adventurous activities. The Leader in charge should be afloat. If a number of boats are involved, sailing in company, each boat should have a Charge Certificate holder on board. If the Leader in charge has an Advanced Charge Certificate, s/he may allow another boat without a Charge Certificate holder to sail

in company, and will take responsibility for supervising that boat. This may also be allowed if a powered safety craft (with a Power Charge Certificate holder on board) is available. The use of VHF radios is advised.

Day Cruising Waters are for day cruises and sail/camp expeditions. The Leader in Charge must possess an Advanced Charge Certificate. Accompanying boats should each have an Intermediate Certificate holder in charge. If there are more than 4 boats together, there should be a second Advanced Charge Cert holder present. The use of VHF radio communication in these types of activities is essential. Cruising expeditions, even if only for a day, are now covered by the regulations of the SOLAS Convention, and require written Passage Plans (copy left with a shore contact person) and contact with the Coast Guard before and after the journey. See Information Leaflet No 7 on Passage Planning.

Coastal and Offshore Cruising for Sea Scouts is gradually becoming more available, and the Sea Training Team now has access to 3 cruising yachts. Those in charge of these activities must possess a Coastal or Offshore qualification of the Irish Sailing Association.

Instructor Ratings for sail or for power require the possession of a Sail or Power Instructor or Inland Waterway Instructor Certificate of the Irish Sailing Association. Instructor Rating for Rowing is a Scouting Ireland qualification which may be obtained by any experienced Scouter who possesses an Advanced Rowing Certificate, and who successfully passes an Instructor Training Course and assessment. These Training Courses are arranged by the Sea Training Team.

CHARGE CERTIFICATE INSIGNIA

These may be worn in uniform over the left shirt pocket or in a similar position on a jersey by those qualified. The badges indicate the type of certificate. The colour of the fleur-de-lys in the centre indicates the grade (red for intermediate, green for advanced, purple for coastal/offshore). A green border indicates instructor grade. Insignia may be obtained through your Area Committee Secretary. There are no insignia for Basic Boathandling Certificates.

OUTSIDE QUALIFICATIONS

Rowing There are no outside qualifications available for rowing. The Scouting Ireland Charge Certificates for Rowing are the only such qualifications available.

Sailing and Power Boating Irish Sailing Association or Royal Yachting Association Levels may be used to assess candidates for sailing and power Charge Certificates. These are excellent indications of level of technical skill, but the candidate should still

be assessed for leadership, responsibility, local knowledge, and expertise with the relevant craft in use in Scouting. For example, a holder of “Improving Skills” Sailing Certificate, experienced only in performance dinghies, should have a familiarisation session and reassessment in a BP18 before taking charge of it. Similarly, a holder of ISA Level 2 Power, experienced only in inflatable craft, should be reassessed in a displacement craft before taking charge of such a craft. Any theory items in the Scout Certificate not covered in the ISA syllabus should also be checked.

The approximate equivalents are as follows –

Sailing Charge Certificates

Basic Boathandling	ISA “Basic Skills”
Intermediate Sail	ISA “Improving Skills”
Advanced Sail	ISA “Advanced Boathandling”, or “Adventure 1” ISA Level 2 Cruising (Day Skipper), (Sail)

Power Charge Certificates

Basic Boathandling	ISA Level 1 Power
	ISA Level 1 Inland Waterways
Intermediate Power	ISA Level 2 Power
	ISA Level 2 Inland Waterways
Advanced Power	ISA Level 3 Power (Safety Boat)
	ISA Level 3 Power (Advanced)
	ISA Level 2 Cruising (Day Skipper), (Power)