

OFFICER OF THE WATCH (NEAR COASTAL)

Details of standard

Occupation summary

This occupation is found in a wide range of specialist vessels, both commercial and military such as Royal Navy landing craft, tugs, fishing boats and workboats. Vessels are typically used to transport cargo, passengers or crew. They work close to the shore, in waters designated by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency as "Near Coastal"; an area of operation restricted to 150 miles from a safe haven on the coast of the UK and 30 miles from Ireland.

Vessels vary considerably in their size, type and use, and therefore an Officer of the Watch's (OOW's) responsibilities will also vary between different vessels.

The broad purpose of the occupation is to take charge of a vessel's safety, security and navigation during operations both at sea and when in harbour; the OOW must make key decisions on these issues, often in rapidly changing situations. Their work directly impacts the safety of all those onboard and also impacts protection of the marine environment.

An OOW can expect their working patterns to vary considerably, depending on the type of vessel and scope of operation. This can include working for several weeks at a time on board and working at any time of day or night and in all weathers. Lengthy operations at sea are potentially followed by a similar length of leave.

In their daily work, an employee in this occupation interacts with the crew, the Master of the vessel (sometimes known as Captain or Skipper), and other navigational and engineering officers (depending on the size of the vessel). They may also interact other professionals, such as seafarers on board other vessels. An OOW may interact with colleagues ashore, alongside, and on fixed structures at sea (e.g., oil platforms). This could include owners and their representatives, organisation senior managers, port and navigational authorities, technical and safety standards organisations, Coastguard Officers and other Search and Rescue professionals.

An employee in this occupation will be responsible for their vessel, which they are in charge of throughout their watch. They are also responsible for keeping an accurate record of notable events during the watch. An OOW is required to perform a full handover at the beginning and end of their watch.

An OOW is also responsible for directing and monitoring the crew. The OOW may also be responsible for coaching inexperienced crew.

They are responsible for the security and the safe embarkation or mooring / anchorage of a vessel. They must manage the passage plan that describes the voyage in detail, and for the safe handling of a vessel during its operation. These operations may also take place when the vessel is involved in other tasks like towing or pushing other vessels, fishing, or landing military personnel. An OOW may be required to supervise specialist tasks such as loading cargo when in harbour.

They must also take appropriate action and respond during emergencies to ensure the safety of the vessel and those working on board.

An OOW may also have responsibilities for the maintenance of navigational and safety equipment, lifesaving and fire-fighting appliances or have a part of vessel to look after. An OOW must work with the legal requirements set by a number of international and national bodies, particularly with regard to safety and to protect the marine environment.

Though the Master has overall responsibility for the vessel, there are times they will be unavailable. An OOW has delegated authority in the Master's absence. This is done within the scope of the Master's standing orders, which set out the operational plans and also sets out when the OOW should seek guidance. In any type of organisation, an OOW will need to balance their responsibilities with the business priorities of the vessel's owner (if in commercial service), or Command Aim of the Commanding Officer in the case of the Royal Navy.

Mandatory qualifications are listed below. Important notice: passing the MCA Oral and Written exams culminate in the MCA award of a Certificate of Competency to practice as an Officer of the Watch. These exams also form part of the partially integrated approach to End-Point Assessment (EPA). These exams must not therefore be completed during the apprenticeship on-programme. All of the remaining mandatory qualifications must be passed by gateway to EPA.

Training providers. Important notice - Only training providers who are on the ESFA register (the RoATP) and who are also approved by MCA to deliver OOW near-coastal 500 may deliver this apprenticeship. Training providers must contact MCA before commencing any training of apprentices.

Typical job titles include:

Landing craft master

Mate

Officer of the watch

Second officer

Entry requirements

Every civil apprentice without exception will need to pass the MCA's strict ENG1 [3] medical requirements.

MoD Apprentices will without exception need to pass the respective MoD recruitment entry medical assessment. These medical examinations will check if you have a health condition that could result in you needing urgent treatment, or potentially put fellow crew or passengers' lives at risk. The tests include, but are not limited to, severe deafness or difficulty communicating by radio or telephone, eyesight or colour vision that does not meet standards, and conditions that limit mobility and stamina. Beyond this, individual employers will determine their own selection criteria but should satisfy themselves the apprentice can meet the vocational requirements of their apprenticeship. Apprentices must accept being away from home for extended periods

Occupation duties

DUTY

Duty 1 Complete vessel operations by following the Master's standing orders and escalating to the Master any issues beyond limits of own role.

Duty 2 Take charge of a watch at sea, ensuring the safety of the vessel and its crew by taking decisions on navigation and vessel operations such as avoidance of collision with other vessels, and safe navigation of natural and man-made hazards

Duty 3 Take charge of a watch in harbour, ensuring the safety of the vessel and its crew, including when embarking and disembarking, and loading and unloading stores / equipment / cargo.

Duty 4 Ensure a lookout is kept at all times during the watch and a record kept of notable events.

Duty 5 Deliver incoming and outgoing handover of Watch responsibility from/to another officer.

Duty 6 Manage the vessel passage plan during a voyage.

Duty 7 Manoeuvre the vessel safely, commonly in busy waters, taking account of weather, sea state and tides

Duty 8 Supervise specialist operations, such as cargo, instructing the crew and coordinating activities.

KSBS

K3 K6 K7 K10 K15 K20 K26

S3 S4 S13 S18 S19 S25

B3 B5

K1 K2 K5 K9 K10 K11 K12 K13 K24 K26

S1 S2 S4 S5 S10 S11 S25

B3 B4

K1 K2 K3 K5 K7 K9 K19 K24 K26

S1 S2 S4 S6 S25

B3

K1 K2 K3 K10 K11 K12 K18 K24

S1 S2 S5 S10 S11 S20

B3

K1 K2 K3 K17 K18 K19

S1 S2 S17 S20 S22

B3 B4

K5 K6 K9 K10 K11 K12 K13 K22

S3 S5 S6 S7 S8 S10 S11

B3 B5

K2 K4 K5 K6 K9 K10 K11 K12 K13 K21 K22

S3 S4 S5 S6 S7 S8 S9 S10 S11

B1 B3 B4 B5

K2 K4 K5 K7 K8 K9 K19 K21 K26

S4 S6 S21 S25

B1 B3 B4 B5

Duty 9 Take charge of a response team during an emergency, including communication with emergency services, search and rescue coordinators and crew. Use the Safety Management System processes where instructed	K3 K4 K5 K15 K17 K19 K23 S13 S14 S19 B3 B4 B5
Duty 10 Comply with all relevant laws, regulations and with organisational procedures	K2 K5 K6 K7 K8 K10 K14 K18 K19 K25 K26 S6 S12 S25 B1 B3 B5 B6
Duty 11 Maintain the security of the vessel and its contents	K3 K4 K7 K8 K20 K25 K26 S1 S2 S25 B3 B5
Duty 12 Ensure that safety equipment is in good order ready for immediate use, and in compliance with appropriate regulations	K4 K5 K7 K8 S12 S21 S23 B1 B3 B5
Duty 13 Monitor crew performance and their ability to conduct duties (e.g., monitor fatigue)	K2 K3 K17 K18 K19 K25 S17 S21 S24 S25 B1 B3 B4 B6
Duty 14 Maintain effective communications with all parties onboard and ashore throughout the watch	K2 K3 K11 K16 K17 K18 K19 S15 S16 S17 B3
Duty 15 Work within the organisation's business priorities and constraints, while ensuring the safety of the vessel and its crew	K2 K5 K7 K20 K26 S18 S24 B1 B3 B4 B6
Duty 16 Support on board learning for junior crew members	K3 K17 K18 K19 S1 S17 S21 B1 B2 B3 B6

Knowledge

K1: The importance of maintaining a watch when in harbour and when at sea.

K2: The ways in which watch-keeping contributes to the safety of the vessel and all of those onboard.

K3: The principles of teamwork.

K4: Different vessel types and structure

K5: Techniques for determining a vessel's capability. This includes, for example, ship stresses, the impact of external forces on a vessel such as sea state, swell and wind.

K6: Principles and regulations for manoeuvring a vessel in near coastal waters (An area of operation restricted to 150 miles from a safe haven on the coast of the UK and 30 miles from Ireland)

K7: The different types of cargo operations

K8: The range of internationally used cargo codes, their meaning and impact on operations. For example, codes indicating dangerous goods.

K9: The methods for calculating tide conditions and obtaining meteorological forecasts.

K10: The purpose of a passage plan and how it is created.

K11: Methods for finding vessel position or other location.

K12: The different types and purposes of chart work, electronic navigational aids, maritime publications and navigational tools.

K13: Methods for plotting, executing and monitoring vessel progress.

K14: Relevant maritime legislation and regulation, the bodies responsible and the legal consequences for transgression. This covers COSWP (Code of Safe Working Practices), IRPCS/COLREGS (International Rules for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea), class and flag state requirements, health and safety and environmental protection such as SOLAS (International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea), MARPOL (the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships) and LOLER (the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations).

K15: Procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency (for example fire, flooding), and crew roles. This includes contingency plans such as the use of distress signals and evacuation procedures.

K16: The international code of signals, its purpose and usage.

K17: A range of verbal and written communication methods and techniques for choosing a method to fit the audience.

K18: Methods for using digital platforms to access and complete reports.

K19: The range of OOW stakeholders, their roles and responsibilities and how the OOW interacts with them.

K20: The importance of their own organisations commercial or operational priorities.

K21: How the OOW occupation fits in the wider digital landscape including the impact of automation and artificial intelligence.

K22: Types of propulsion system(s), their features and uses.

K23: the procedures and techniques for applying emergency first aid to others.

K24: The principles for completing a ship's log that accurately describes key internal/external factors that occur during a Watch.

K25: Recognise signs of fatigue

K26: Procedures for maintaining the security of a vessel and its contents

Skills

S1: Keep watch over the vessel and crew.

S2: Co-ordinate your team in order to provide constant watch cover.

S3: Manoeuvre a vessel in near-coastal waters, taking account of compliance requirements, vessel type, capability, loading and external factors like tide and weather.

S4: Select a mooring or anchoring solution that is relevant to the circumstances, including compliance, vessel type, capability, loading and external factors like tide and weather.

S5: Avoid collisions by using chart work and situational awareness, anticipating and responding to all potential threats to a safe navigation. This includes (but is not limited to) both the physical surroundings and other vessel traffic.

S6: Perform calculations and give necessary direction to your team to ensure the vessel has suitable load stability. This applies both when the vessel is moored and also when at sea.

S7: Create a passage plan that meets operational objectives, is safe and compliant and has due regard to the external environment and other vessels.

S8: Execute and adapt a passage plan taking account of the prevailing conditions at sea.

S9: Handle a range of vessel types in near coastal waters. This may include as examples single screw, twin screw, variable pitch, Schottel and other propulsion configurations.

S10: Monitor and respond to data provided by navigation and other equipment available on-board

S11: Cross-compare different data sources to reach an accurate conclusion. (For example, VHF reports).

S12: Support the Master in meeting the legal, regulatory, environmental, and organisational requirements of the vessel and crew.

S13: Coordinate the response in the event of an emergency. Operate emergency equipment and deploy contingency plans appropriate to the situation. (This will range, for example, from recovery of a man overboard through to evacuation of the vessel).

S14: Administer emergency first aid and coordinate with the coastguard in the event of a medevac if required.

S15: Communicate externally deploying the international code of signals when required. This includes for example using the flag system and Morse code as appropriate to the circumstances.

S16: Communicate effectively at different seniority levels of the organisation, selecting an appropriate communication method for the audience.

S17: Develop working relationships with crew, officers and other impacted maritime stakeholders to support the delivery of required performance standards.

S18: Recognise your own limitations and escalate decisions where appropriate to another member of the bridge team, including the Master

S19: Take charge in the event of the Master's incapacitation and take suitable contingency action such as getting the vessel to shore and alerting relevant authorities.

S20: Complete an accurate ship log

S21: Identify skills gaps across the team and deliver coaching and mentoring to less experienced staff.

S22: Identify and respond to all internal/external factors that provide for a consistent watch following a handover.

S23: Check that life-saving appliances and other safety equipment is functioning and assess any remediation needed.

S24: Identify the signs of crew, and one's own, fatigue.

S25: Implement own organisations security procedures, instructing the crew accordingly.

Behaviours

B1: Follows safe working practices and promotes a safety culture

B2: Seeks to continuously improve and develop

B3: Takes ownership of work

B4: Calm and effective under pressure.

B5: Actively protects the marine environment from pollution.

B6: Role-models own organisations equality and diversity requirements

Qualifications

English & Maths

Apprentices without level 2 English and maths will need to achieve this level prior to taking the End-Point Assessment. For those with an education, health and care plan or a legacy statement, the apprenticeship's English and maths minimum requirement is Entry Level 3. A British Sign Language (BSL) qualification is an alternative to the English qualification for those whose primary language is BSL.

Other mandatory qualifications

STCW Personal Survival Techniques (PST)

Level: 2

The government statutory regulator, MCA, has approved this apprenticeship standard and has confirmed each of the qualifications listed is a mandatory requirement. Passing these qualifications contributes to notice of eligibility - the application process that culminates in MCA oral and written tests - leading to certificate of competency. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-uk-seafarer-coc-deck-and-engineer-officers#deck-officers>

STCW Fire Prevention & Fire Fighting

Level: 2

see above

STCW Elementary First Aid

Level: 2

see above

STCW Personal Safety and Social Responsibility

Level: 2

see above

STCW Advanced Firefighting

Level: 2

see above

STCW Proficiency in Medical First Aid

Level: 2

see above

STCW Proficiency in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats

Level: 2

see above

STCW Navigational Watch Rating

Level: 2

see above

MCA Efficient Deck Hand

Level: 2

see above

AMERC GMDSS General Operators Certificate

Level: 2

see above

Navigation Aids, Equipment and Simulator Training (NAEST (O))

Level: 2

see above

Human Element, Leadership and Management “HELM(O)” certificate

Level: 2

see above

Signals Certificate

Level: 2

see above

Diploma in Maritime Studies: Officer of the Watch on Merchant Vessels of less than 500 Gross Tonnage (Near Coastal) - 603/4946/3

Level: 2

The diploma, awarded by MSQ, is the "vehicle" by which many of the other qualifications listed are delivered and assessed. The diploma was developed by MCA in conjunction with MSQ and MCA has confirmed it is a requirement as part of this apprenticeship.

Officer of the Watch certificate of competence

Level: 3

see above

Professional recognition

This standard aligns with the following professional recognition:

- The Nautical Institute for Full Membership (MNI)

Additional details

Regulated Standard

This is a Regulated occupation.

Regulator Body:

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Training Provider must be approved by regulator body

EPAO does not require approval by regulator body

Occupational Level:

3

Duration (months):

36

Review

Version log

VERSION	CHANGE DETAIL	EARLIEST START DATE	LATEST START DATE	LATEST END DATE
		Not set	Not set	Not set