

Requirements when sailing abroad

The ships registration documents.

Radio licence for the installation, which will include the vessel details including call-sign and MMSI if DSC is enabled.

An appropriate Certificate of Competence and Authority to Operate for the operators of the radio.

Skipper qualifications.

Up to date logbook.

Passage plan is a legal requirement before proceeding to sea. The format is not specified so it can be written or otherwise.

Insurance documents for the vessel.

Courtesy flags for the countries being visited.

Some vessels come under the 'Compulsory Carriage' regulations, which indicates a requirement in law to carry certain safety equipment. In the UK this comes into force for pleasure vessels above 13.7m and for vessels operating commercially. Other countries have similar requirement and distinctions.

Always check the requirements of the country being visited before entering their waters.

General Requirements

Radar reflectors

Under SOLAS chapter V, radar reflectors should be fitted to all vessels (where practicable), regardless of size, in order to improve their visibility to other craft.

Passage plan

The amount of documentation should be proportionate to the nature of the passage. A short day trip in familiar waters may not require anything documented but a 36 hour passage to an unfamiliar port will require more documentation to enable you to refer to it to monitor progress and remind yourself of details such as radio channels or tidal gates.

Accidents

If an accident occurs then the log book and passage plan would become part of the evidence. Failure to produce one could count against a skipper who was negligent enough not to have formulated one. A national marine accident investigation organisation can conduct inquiries into accidents and incidents occurring on flag state vessels or other vessels in their national waters, with a remit to improve safety. The UK have the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB).

Environmental Requirements

Antifouling

Choose an antifouling paint that is effective in local conditions with least possible toxicity.

Fuel

When fueling up make sure that there are no spills

Holding tanks

Holding tanks are compulsory in some countries and should be fitted properly to protect the environment.

Grey water tanks

In some countries it is a requirement to have grey water tanks in addition to holding tanks. They work in a similar way to the foul tank but take water from washbasins and the galley.

Anti-syphon valves

It is really important that anti syphon valves are fitted to all pipes that are attached to skin fittings below the water line. This safety rule applies not only to the heads but everywhere else on the vessel where pipes breach the hull.