

Date 9 March 2004

RCD Stakeholders

The Recreational Craft Directive¹

Commonly known as the "RCD", this European Directive came into force in the UK 8 years ago in 1996. If you build or trade in recreational craft between 2.5 and 24 metres, **then it affects you**. If you do not meet the requirements of the Directive then you may risk action being taken against you by enforcement authorities. However, if you do apply the Directive properly, then you have the right to market the craft in all 15 member states (soon to be 25) of the European Community as well as the other EEA members.

The original RCD covers design and construction of craft. The recent substantial amendment applies to craft with engines and covers exhaust gas emissions and noise from the craft². If you are fully aware of the requirements of the original RCD **and** the recent amendment, then you need read no further and I apologise for troubling you. However, you may still wish to refer to the various websites below as a refresher.

¹ The Recreational Craft Regulations 1996 (S.I. 1996/1353), as amended which transposed the Recreational Craft Directive 94/25/EC and the forthcoming Recreational Craft Regulations 2004, transposing Directive 2003/44/EC which will amend the current Legislation

² The amending Directive 2003/44/EC, which was adopted by the European Council and Parliament on 16 June 2003, will apply in the UK from 1 January 2005; and will take full effect from 1 January 2006. The implementing UK Regulations are presently being drafted.

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Want to know more?

It is important that anyone dealing with products falling within the scope of the Regulations is aware of the need to comply with the relevant Essential Requirements as required. Here are some bullet point reminders:-

The Original RCD

Purpose

To allow a single European Market in recreational craft to operate whilst maintaining a high degree of safety

- The Recreational Craft Regulations 1996 (RCR) (S.I. 1996/1353), as amended, implemented the European Community Directive on recreational craft (94/25/EC).
- Introduced on 16 June 1996, and became mandatory on 15 June 1998.
- Applies to recreational craft, constructed in or imported into the UK, measuring between 2.5 and 24 metres in hull length, intended for sports and leisure purposes. It also covers partly completed boats and some specified components.
- For the purposes of the Regulations, craft are split into four design categories and they must all be designed and constructed to withstand parameters set out in each category with respect to stability, buoyancy and other essential safety requirements listed in Schedule 1 of the Regulations and to have good handling characteristics before they are placed on the market in the UK and put into service for use.
- There are several ways in which a boat builder can satisfy the Essential Requirements. However it will generally be best to choose a harmonised standard wherever possible and should another set of criteria be chosen, the Notified Body, when involved, will have to be convinced that this alternative is an adequate substitute.
- Any product within the scope of the RCD must have accompanying documents. These include a Technical File, an Owner's Manual, and, where relevant, a written Declaration of Conformity. The product should also be CE marked, usually on the Builder's plate.

The Amending Directive

Purpose

To allow a single European Market in recreational craft to operate whilst maintaining a high level of environmental protection.

- On 12 October 2000, the European Commission presented a proposal for an amendment of the RCD 94/25/EC, extending the scope to include personal watercraft and adding further essential requirements covering exhaust emissions from propulsion engines and noise emission from craft and engine combinations.
- The amending Directive 2003/44/EC, which was adopted by the European Council and Parliament on 16 June 2003, will apply to a wide variety of new recreational craft, including sail cruisers, motor cruisers, motor boats and narrow boats, and personal watercraft (propelled by a water jet pump) that fall within the size range, whether powered by outboard engines, stern drive engines or inboard engines. The proposed changes will also apply to existing craft and their engines that undergo major modification and conversions.
- Member States are required to apply measures from 1 January 2005; those measures will take full effect from 1 January 2006, in the case of products falling under Article 1 (1)(a), compression and four-stroke ignition engines and, in the case of two-stroke ignition engines from 1 January 2007 – thus allowing two separate periods of transition.
- The exhaust emission requirements take the form of limits of acceptable emissions of carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides and, in the case of diesel engines, particulates.
- The noise emission requirements are presented in terms of maximum acceptable sound pressure levels determined from a pass-by test. The amending Directive also provides for the use of a “Power Displacement Ratio” formula and a “Froude Number” as a method for determining compliance with the Directive.
- It further provides for the establishment of a database of reference craft whereby craft will be deemed compliant if key design parameters are the same or compatible with those of a certified reference boat.

Enforcement in the UK

- Both the original RCD and the Regulations transposing amending Directive 2003/44/EC will be enforced by Trading Standards Departments of local authorities in Great Britain and their equivalent in Northern Ireland.
- The implementing Regulations, in line with other similar legislation and the 1996 Regulations, will provide for fines of up to a maximum of £5000 and/or three months imprisonment.

You Need More Detailed Information?

Further information on the Recreational Craft Regulations and the Directive is available at the following web-sites:

Department of Trade & Industry – Standards & Technical Regulations Directorate provides Guidance notes intended to assist manufacturers of recreational craft and specified components to understand the effect of the Regulations. This guide seeks to explain the requirements of the Regulations in general terms and will be updated to reflect the Amending Regulations closer the date of implementation of the latter.

www.dti.gov.uk/strd/recreat.html

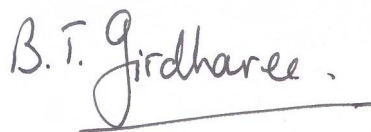
A guide to the application of Directive 94/25/EC through the “Recreational Craft Directive and Comments to the Directive Combined” is available at the European Commission web-site at

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/maritime/maritime_regulatory/rc_switchboard.htm

The British Marine Federation runs half-day workshops for builders. They have also produced a user-friendly “RCD Programme Manual” which takes the form of an RCD CD Rom that guides the builder through the CE marking process with access to the ISO standards and examples of the documentation required. Further information is freely available from their new Boat Builders Guide in the “Technical” section of their “Our Publications” page at

<http://www.britishmarine.co.uk/>

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "B.T. Girdharee". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Neeroo Girdharee