

Marine Equipment Directive – Placing Products on Ships Sailing in International Waters

The Directive Explained

The Marine Equipment Directive 96/98/EC (MED) as amended first came into force on 1 January 1999 and covers certain equipment carried on ships registered under the flags of the European Union Member States. It was established to ensure that equipment which must comply with the requirements of International Conventions e.g. Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (SOLAS) agreed by the International Maritime Organisation also meets common standards of safety and performance across the EU. Approval requirements are also harmonised which ensures certificates issued in one Member State are accepted by all States across the EU. The Directive applies to all 'Community Registered Ships' became mandatory as of January 1,2001. Thus, all equipment listed in Annex 1 of the MED placed on EU ships, must carry a Wheel Mark showing compliance with the MED.

A listing of the Equipment covered is provided in the Annexes of the Directive. This includes:

- Life saving appliances
- Marine Pollution Prevention
- **Fire Protection**
- Navigation Equipment
- Radio Communication Equipment

Proving Compliance

Annex A.1 of the Marine Equipment Directive lists the required Modules, type examination and attestation requirements for each product. Compliance of the equipment with the relevant Modules must be determined by an organisation 'notified' by the European Commission on the recommendation of a European Flag State Authority. These organisations are known as Notified Bodies and each has a unique identification number. For example Warrington Certification has the number 1121

The Manufacturer has the option to select (except for primary deck coverings) between the following combinations of modules: B+D, B+E or B+F. For Fire Protection equipment, no one module is allowed in isolation. Detailed information on the requirements of each Module is given in Annex B of the Marine Equipment Directive, which is summarised below:

Module B

This is the EC Type Examination (formally Type Approval) and is the procedure by which the Notified Body ascertains and attests that a specimen of the product, representative of the envisaged production, meets the relevant provisions of the MED. The Notified Body either tests or witnesses tests and certifies (via a Type Examination Certificate) that the specimen complies with the criteria given in the Fire Test Procedures Code 1998 (IMO MSC 61(67)).

Module D

This module relates to production quality assurance and is linked therefore to ISO 9001 certification. The manufacturer must operate to an approved quality system which itself is subject to periodic surveillance. The quality system must apply to the production process, final product inspection and to quality control testing.

Module E

The manufacturer must operate an approved quality system which is derived from ISO 9001 which relates to final

product inspection and testing only and must be subject to surveillance.

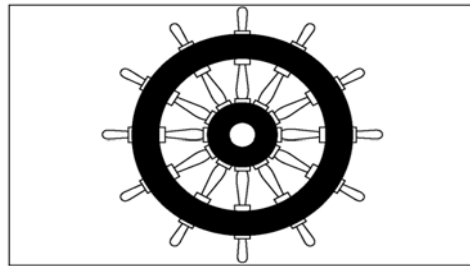
Module F

This module is used when the manufacturer of the Fire Protection equipment does not operate a standardised quality assurance procedure. The Notified Body must conduct appropriate inspections and examinations in order to certify the conformity of the product according to a statistical procedure.

The Wheel Mark

A mark of conformity must be affixed to products in compliance with the Marine Equipment Directive and consists of a ship's wheel together with the identification number of the Notified Body that carries out the production surveillance together with the last 2 digits of the year of manufacture.

Mark of Conformity
(Wheel Mark)



1121/10

In addition the manufacturer must issue a declaration of conformity, a legal document in which he declares that his product complies with the Marine Equipment Directive.

Procedure to Show Compliance

The procedure to be followed by which a manufacturer can obtain the mark of compliance is shown in the flow diagram shown in figure 1.

Very simply, if the equipment is listed in Annex A.1 of the Marine Equipment Directive, then, the manufacturer must firstly have a contact address in Europe, and must contact a Notified Body, who will provide the guidance necessary to ensure the equipment can be placed on a European registered vessel.

The first step for all Fire Protection Equipment is to submit a request for services to the Notified Body which must include numerous details and documentation relating to the product and its nature dependant on the Modules selected. Product is then selected and tested and if the criteria within the Fire Test Procedures Code are met, the Notified Body issues an EC Type Examination Certificate. At the same time that product is selected, the Notified Body (or another if required by the manufacturer) reviews the quality assurance systems of the manufacturer and witnesses the production testing of the equipment. If the Notified Body is satisfied that the requirements of Modules D, E or F are met, they will then issue a Certificate of Conformity. On receipt of this and the Type Examination Certificate, the manufacturer himself affixes the Mark of Conformity (Wheel Mark) to the product and also issues a Declaration of Conformity.

The Notified Body also enter the product onto the European based Database for Marine Approved Products. This database can be accessed by anyone searching for approved product on a world wide basis. It also link into the database used by USCG

The certification is issued for a period of 5 years, however, there is a required periodic surveillance requirement of

either the quality system employed by the manufacturer or if Module F is followed, of the fire performance of the product itself.

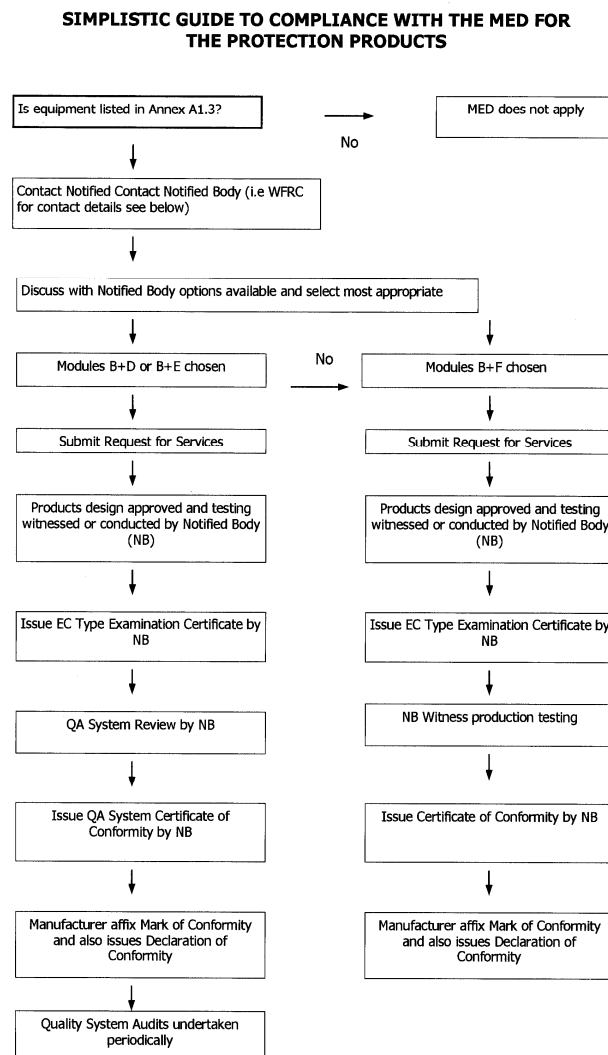
USCG Approval

In 2005, the signing of an MRA between the European Commission and the USCG meant that a Type Approvals and Quality Audits conducted in Europe would have validity in the USA and visa versa. Certificates are issued which have USCG approval numbers attached.

Other Flag States

Warrington Certification Ltd acts under the authority of the Maritime Coastguard Agency. In issuing Type Examination certificates and therefore many (although not all) Flag States recognise the certificates Warrington Certification Ltd issue. WCL has also worked to obtain recognition in its own right with other Flag States and can now act on behalf of Canada in conducting all the preparatory work prior to Canadian Transport issuing its Approvals.

FIGURE 1



For more information contact the following persons via the Warrington Certification Limited helpdesk +44 (0) 1925 646669 or email:

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