

AMERC News

Issue 98 – Incorporates Circular 317

May 2025

Editorial

Welcome to issue 98 of AMERC News - which doubles as **Circular 317** and, as such, should be circulated to all GMDSS instructors / examiners by their AMERC centre coordinator.

After 20 years of editions every quarter, sadly, this will be the last ever edition of AMERC News.

UK GMDSS is now managed entirely by the MCA. (See page 3) Please contact stc.courses@mcqa.gov.uk for all enquiries, and read [this page](#) for full instructions.

A huge thank you to those of you who attended the AMERC 2025 AGM in Newcastle a few weeks ago! (**Full AGM report** on pages 4-6)

The **Membership Vote Results** for how AMERC's remaining financial assets will be redistributed are on page 7.

On page 2 are notes from the most recent **MCG open session meeting**, and the quarterly **NAC Statistics Report** for GMDSS examinations.

Maritime Miscellaneous is on pages 8 & 9, thanks to Graham Lees and Michael Moir for sending us interesting articles for inclusion.

Also featured is a link to an excellent new website (developed by our own wonderful web sleuth, Mike Pengelly) designed to help people educate themselves on how to spot and prevent online scams.

Our **Ask AMERC** feature returns on pages 10 & 11, where we answer questions submitted anonymously via our website since the last newsletter.

GMDSS Criss-Cross is back on page 12. As this is the last newsletter, you will find the answers on page 13.

To all readers, especially those who have gotten in touch over the years to submit questions, stories, articles, etc. etc. – a heartfelt **thank you** from all of us at AMERC. It's been a pleasure to read your stories and to keep these newsletters going.

So long, all the best, and thanks for reading!

- Prue (Editor & Company Secretary)
amercsecretary@gmail.com

The **Maritime Consultation Group (MCG)** meets regularly - four times each year – for the AMERC Executive Committee ‘Open Meeting’. MCG membership consists of AMERC Executive Committee (EC) representatives; the AMERC Chief Examiner; the MCA Chief Examiner and/or the MCA Deck & GMDSS Team Leader; the NAC and other AMERC/industry specialists.

The latest meeting was held in person on April 4th, 2025. The following items reflect discussions at MCG that may be of interest to members and training centres.

In addition to the AMERC Executive Committee, the meeting was attended by Shajan Lukose, Head of Nautical Exams for the MCA.

AMERC Examination Papers

It was agreed in the Executive Committee meeting that unencrypted PDF versions of the current series of AMERC examination papers will be shared with all centres. It is hoped that these papers will be a useful resource going forward once centres are responsible for writing their own examination papers.

Chief Examiners’ Reports

Since the last quarterly meeting, Claire and Keith worked hard to ensure all was ship shape before the handover to the MCA on 12th May.

This included getting a brand new centre up and running for GOC, ROC and LRC. The MCG unanimously agreed with the Chief Examiners’ recommendation to approve Seafood Cornwall Training as an AMERC-approved centre.

Maritime Radio School Kolbmiller has been a long-time provider of AMERC LRC examinations, but the Chief Examiners confirmed they now also meet the requirements to run GOC and ROC, and the MCG approved this decision.

Congratulations to all!

New Examiner approvals

The following examiner applications were considered, and approved by the MCG:

- Joe Beaumont (ASET) – full approval
- Stefano Cioni (VMB Yachts) – full approval

Congratulations to them!

MNTB Syllabus

EC Member Terry Slack informed the meeting that he recently attended the (external) FM58 meeting on behalf of AMERC, and reported that there were revisions being made to the MNTB syllabus. (**Ed note: since the meeting, guidelines have been published, please see: [Global Maritime Distress and Safety System \(GMDSS\) Courses Criteria - 3rd Edition](#)**)

NAC Statistics Report (all stats compared to same period last year)

GOC - UK and overseas exam numbers have increased, with first-time pass rates increasing slightly in the UK, decreasing slightly overseas.

ROC - exam numbers have decreased slightly in the UK and overseas. UK first-time pass rate has increased, while overseas has remained the same.

LRC - UK and overseas exams have both increased. first-time pass rates in the UK increased, remaining the same overseas.

GMDSS Examination Statistics – rolling annual report: National Administration Centre (NAC) examination statistics for the period **1st April 2024 – 31st March 2025** are shown below:

EXAMINATION	ENTERED (1 st time)	PASSED (1 st attempt)	% PASSED 1 ST ATTEMPT
UK GOC	791 (755)	751 (718)	718/755 (95.1%)
ALL GOC	1738 (1656)	1641 (1563)	1563/1656 (94.4%)
UK ROC	90 (87)	87 (84)	84/87 (96.6%)
ALL ROC	133 (130)	130 (127)	127/130 (97.7%)
LRC	90 (89)	89 (86)	86/89 (96.6%)
ALL LRC	124 (123)	122 (120)	120/123 (97.6%)

As of May 12th, 2025, UK GMDSS is managed solely by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)

Please read [MIN 716 \(M+F\) Amendment 1](#) for full MCA guidance on changes to GMDSS processes, and contact the MCA directly for all enquiries relating to GMDSS as below:

- Enquiries relating to centre approvals; examiners; audit processes; examinations
➔ stc.courses@mcga.gov.uk
- Individual candidates' enquiries (GMDSS certificates; STCW endorsements; replacements; conversions etc
➔ gmdss@mcga.gov.uk

AMERC is no longer the appointed authority for any UK GMDSS services

AMERC is no longer conducting any business operations, and is in the process of closing as a registered charity. Although the Executive Committee still exists in a caretaker capacity to facilitate the charity's shutdown, the charity must effectively "go dormant" until full and final closure. (estimated: June 2026)

The Executive Committee are unable to action any enquiries from approved centres, examiners, candidates etc relating to the MCA's GMDSS operations. These must be directed to the MCA as per the above. (Please do not copy in any previous AMERC email addresses/personnel to MCA emails, as this may breach MCA GDPR regulations)

- **From 31st May, the amercsecretary@gmail.com email address will no longer be actively monitored. Any enquiries relating to AMERC governance should be emailed to amercexecutive@gmail.com**
- **For all enquiries relating to AMERC accounts payable/receivable, please email amerc treasurer@gmail.com**
- **If you are interested in being part of a new network for GMDSS professionals, please contact claire.amerc@gmail.com**

Unencrypted versions of the most recent AMERC examination series, and the final edit of the AMERC Administration Handbook are [temporarily available to download here](#) (Until 30/06/25)
The AMERC Document Delivery App will be decommissioned as of May 31st; if you wish to download these, please do so promptly.

All AMERC documents are to be used as support materials only; for all up-to-date regulations, please refer to the MCA.

AMERC no longer has an address in Kendal. Please do not post ANY physical documents to AMERC without first contacting amercexecutive@gmail.com

AMERC AGM 2025

Report

The end of an era – this was the last ever AMERC AGM. We were delighted that so many of our members could attend!



As in previous years, the Executive Committee and the Maritime Consultation Group met for their quarterly meetings the day prior to the AGM (Friday 4th April). Ordinarily, during these meetings is when the EC would vote to appoint any available EC officer positions, but due to AMERC’s closure, no EC appointments were made.

The AGM itself commenced at ten AM on Saturday 5th April. For the same reasons as above, AMERC was unable to invite applications for new membership, or applications for EC vacancies. (This resulted in the speediest membership vote in AGM history!)

Financial Matters:

Motion	Details	Outcome
1	Moore and Smalley are approved as accountants for 2025	<i>Approved</i>
2	The AMERC Accounts for 2024 are approved	<i>Approved</i>



As part of the MCA's takeover of UK GMDSS provision, AMERC was keen for our centre coordinators to have the opportunity to pose their questions to the MCA at the event itself. We were fortunate to be joined by the MCA's Head of Nautical Exams, Shajan Lukose. For the majority of the afternoon, Shajan provided excellent responses to our

members' questions, and everyone at AMERC extends our sincere thanks to him for his contribution.

At the evening meal, "thanks and farewell" speeches were made from members and some of AMERC's Executive Committee. Some of these recounting AMERC's history; remembered much-missed colleagues no longer with us; and expressed hopes for the future of GMDSS. (Of course, the Moir bear made its traditional appearance!)



As part of Chairman Paul Martin's speech, he distributed some home-made Morse machines, setting challenges for attendees to decode a few messages. For some of those present, this was a blast from the past and a chance to flex well-practiced skills. For many others, it was a chance to learn basics of Morse, and get creative with their

own transmissions (some messages more suitable for the workplace than others...!) Paul generously invited attendees to keep these machines, in exchange for a small donation to the RNLI.





We hope that everyone present enjoyed the event, albeit a little bittersweet, knowing that it was the last of its kind. Huge thanks from all of us at AMERC to everybody who made the effort to attend this year, or indeed any previous AGM event. AMERC could never have grown into the institution it is without the support and hard work of its membership. We wish all our members (past and present) all the very best for the future.

*- Prue Langfield,
AMERC Company Secretary*

Membership Vote Results

Redistribution of AMERC's remaining financial assets upon final closure

Recently, the AMERC membership voted with regards to how AMERC's remaining financial assets should be divided between suitable charities once the company has officially closed.

The total amount to be divided will be the remainder in AMERC's financial accounts after all winding-up costs have been paid upon final company closure. (estimated date of final closure = June 2026)

The final results have been calculated and verified. The votes have been converted into % each nominee will receive of total remainder assets:

Nominated Charity	% of Total Funds
RNLI	30.81
Slater Fund	21.62
The Nautical Institute	21.08
UKSA	16.22
T.S. Rahaman "Women in Rating" Programme	10.27

Thanks to all AMERC members who took the opportunity to cast their vote in support of these excellent causes.

Maritime Miscellaneous:

Intellian investing in GMDSS radio systems

Intellian Technologies is opening a new GMDSS development Centre in Busan, South Korea, dedicated to expanding its portfolio of products. This will include new GMDSS radio in MF, HF and VHF frequency bands, as well as NAVTEX. The first products are expected to launch this year.



The news comes off the back of an announcement last year that Intellian is developing GMDSS Maritime Safety Terminals alongside long term partners Inmarsat and Iridium.

The expansion into GMDSS radio solutions demonstrates a long-term commitment to enhanced maritime safety.

The establishment of the GMDSS Development Centre in Busan, supported by R&D teams in HQ and the L-band Centre of Excellence in London, underscores Intellian's commitment to delivering high-quality GMDSS products that will set a new standard in maritime safety.

Online Resource: www.bescamaware.org



Developed by Mike Pengelly, (creator of the AMERC Document Delivery App, and AMERC’s go-to guru for all things web-based since 2019) this website is designed to be a free resource for scam awareness, prevention and action. From the website:

“In an increasingly connected world, scams are evolving rapidly. Our mission is to empower you with the knowledge and tools needed to recognize and prevent fraud. Whether you’re here to learn, seek advice, or engage with interactive resources, we provide everything you need to stay secure and informed.”

The website is ever-growing, but already includes many real-world scam examples, common methods to look out for, advice pages, and interactive tools to test your ability to spot fraudsters. There’s also fantastic feature aimed at educating young tech-users called “ScamBusters HQ”, teaching kids how to become Digital Heroes.

Readers are encouraged to check out bescamaware.org, and support if you can by sharing the page with others!

Online Resource: [The IMO: Roles; Structure; Outputs](#)

Click the link above for an excellent free article from the Nautical Institute’s website about everything IMO; its history, its importance, and its roles and structure within the world of maritime safety.

Thanks to Michael Moir for submitting this for inclusion, hopefully readers will find this interesting and helpful.

Ask AMERC:

(Thanks to all those who used this feature and sent us in some great questions to keep us on our toes. – Ed.)

Question (received 02/08/24):

“What are the acceptable standards for battery voltage drop when performing a daily load test; and which regulations are the standards specified?”

Answer:

Regulation 13, Chapter 4 of SOLAS states that batteries must drop a maximum of 10% of the battery’s terminal voltage when testing, and must drop to no less than 1.5volts.



Question (received 21/07/24):

Could you confirm whether individuals need a VHF certificate (SRC/LRC/ROC/GOC) when working on a private VHF channel on an offshore windfarm? Does it make a difference if the handheld device is locked to a specific frequency or if it can be switched?

Answer:

If the device is using a marine VHF channel (private or otherwise), then the operator *must* hold an Authority to Operate certificate (SRC as a minimum). If the channel used is not marine, and instead is a public, license-free channel (PMR, e.g. 446) then no user certificate is required.



Question (received 14/01/25):

What frequency do you use for sea area A1 in distress?

Answer:

In A1 sea area, channel 70 must be monitored at all times. A distress alert must be sent channel 70 via DSC distress. This is to be followed by a voice message on channel 16.



Question (received 09/01/25)

Who regulates GMDSS radio user certificates for the offshore oil & gas industry in the UK continental shelf? Oil rig companies have marine radios but it seems very few have an operator certificate to use these. Who do I report this to?

Answer:

Fixed installations, FSPOs and drill ships all carry GMDSS equipment and as such, the operators need to have the appropriate licenses to operate radio equipment. This may be SRC, LRC, ROC or GOC dependant on the equipment carried. For those with helipads, a CAA license is required for the operators. If appropriate, when operating as a ship, the Deck Officer onboard will hold the necessary GMDSS certification. Any concerns regarding qualifications for those onboard should firstly be raised with the management team.



Question (received 09/01/25)

I have a UK GMDSS certificate, and worked as a GMDSS examiner in the year 2007. Is there any age limit to take up GMDSS faculty/examiner employment?

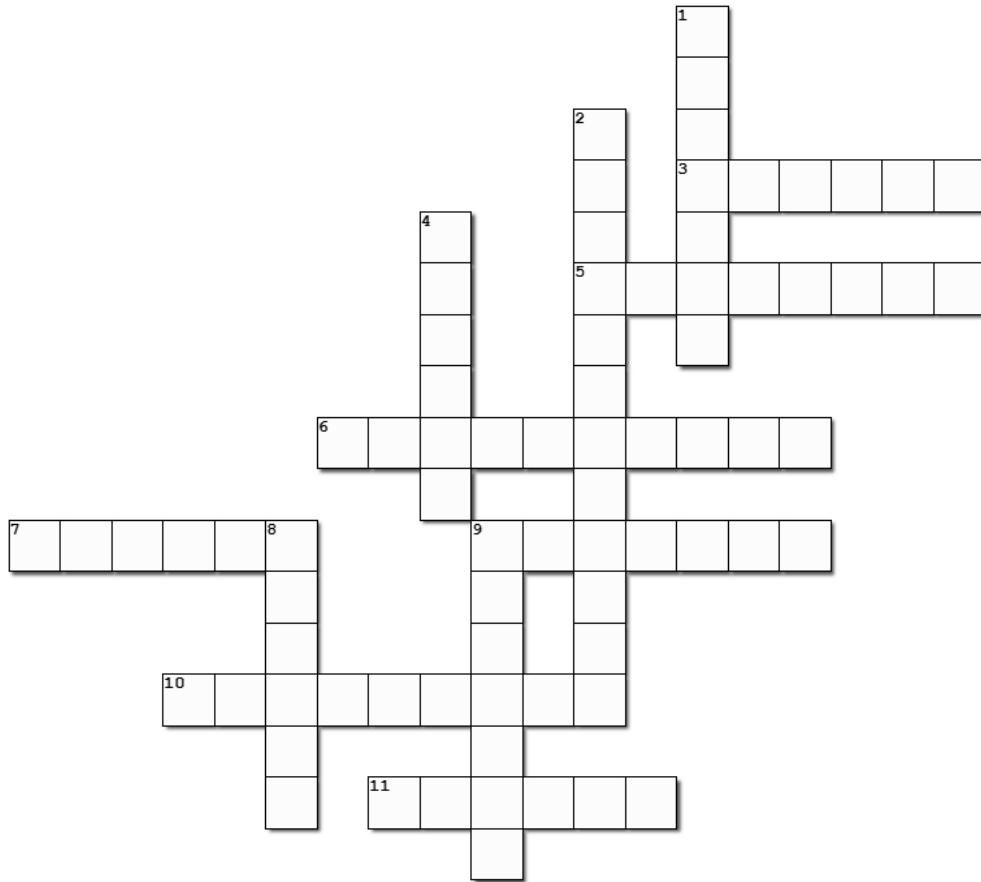
Answer:

The labour laws in the UK dictate there is no upper age limit for employment, as it is illegal to discriminate against someone due to their age. This may not be same in other countries, and the applicant would need to check relevant labour laws. Under current AMERC rules, if an approved GMDSS examiner has not conducted any examinations for a period of 5 consecutive years, they must reapply for examiner approval. After 12th May, it will be the responsibility of an approved centre to prove an examiner is suitable, using their QMS system, CPD records, etc.



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Answers should be researched and/or confirmed by reference to ALRS / ADRS, where appropriate.



Across:

3: Name of container ship which collided with US fuel tanker, March '25 (6)

5: River from Ho Chi Minh city (4,3)

6: Name of Mexican navy tall ship which collided with Brooklyn Bridge, May '25 (10)

7: Sea west of Anzhu Islands (6)

9: A___ Technologies, clean ship-builder recently partnered with Orkney Ferries (7)

10: Country: Inmarsat C LES station, IOR 328 (9)

11: NAVAREA XIX coordinator (6)

Down:

1: Lancashire ferry port for Isle of Man (7)

2: C___ in IMO's name prior to 1982, "IMCO" (12)

4: Bay north of Bilbao (6)

8: City where most recent FM58 took place, March '25 (6)

9: Country: call sign prefix C3 (7)

Issue 92 answers

Across: 3= Gormley 4= Millennium 7= QRL 11= Torshavn 12= Bermuda

Down: 1= Muuga 2= Amsterdam 5= Lawrence 6= Drifting 8= Bothnia 9= Jeddah 10= France

Issue 98 answers

Across:

3 = Solong 5 = Soai Rap 6 = Cuauhtemoc 7 = Laptev 9 = Artemis 10 = Singapore 11 = Norway

Down:

1 = Heysham 2 = Consultative 4 = Biscay 8 = Vienna 9 = Andorra