

Skipper Fishing Vessel – Unlimited (SFV-U)

**This guideline is for new applicants for a Skipper Fishing
Vessel – Unlimited certificate of competency**

Skipper Fishing Vessel – Unlimited

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This document is uncontrolled if printed. Please refer to the Maritime New Zealand website for the latest version.

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1. Overview

Skipper Fishing Vessel – Unlimited (SFV-U) certificate of competency

This guideline is for new applicants for the Skipper Fishing Vessel – Unlimited certificate of competency. It does not cover recognition of an equivalent certificate obtained outside New Zealand.

The information in this guideline covers sea service, training and other requirements for the certificate, how to apply and pay for your certificate, and where to find more information.

Once you have your SFV-U certificate, it is valid for five years. To continue using your certificate you will need to renew it before the expiry date. For more information about the requirements for renewal (revalidation) of certificates, refer to the Maritime New Zealand (Maritime NZ) website.

maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers

The SFV-U certificate is issued under Subpart D of Maritime Rules Part 32 – National (STCW-F aligned) Certificates. It corresponds with a certificate issued under Regulation II/1 (chapter 2 regulation 1) of the International Convention on the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel, 1995 (STCW-F).

With this certificate, you can perform the functions and duties of master on a fishing vessel of any size in any operating area. This is the highest-level command certificate for a fishing vessel.

Disclaimer

These guidelines provide information and explanations about the requirements set out in the maritime rules, but are not a substitute for the rules themselves, which are the law. These guidelines refer to provisions in the Maritime Rules Part 32, Seafarer Certification. The Director of Maritime New Zealand will grant a certificate only when satisfied that all requirements have been met.

In this guideline, any references to ‘we’ or Maritime New Zealand relating to a decision about the issue or renewal of any seafarer certificate are references to the Director or a person acting under the Director’s delegated authority.

maritimenz.govt.nz/rules

2. Requirements

Before you spend time doing sea service and training, we recommend you check that you can meet the medical fitness and eyesight standards (including for colour vision), and that you understand the fit and proper person requirements.

A summary of the requirements for this certificate is provided below. You need to meet all of these requirements to get your SFV-U certificate.

- hold a current certificate of competency as Mate Fishing Vessel – Unlimited or equivalent
- prove you have met the minimum sea service requirements
- complete and pass the approved qualification for SFV-U
- have current ancillary certificates and the STCW Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) certificate of competency
- pass Maritime NZ's final exam
- prove that you are a fit and proper person
- be medically fit and have good eyesight.

Each of these requirements and how to prove that you meet them is explained below.

You must also have English conversation, reading and writing skills appropriate to the responsibilities and functions for the level of your certificate, so that you can satisfactorily complete training, pass examinations and discharge your duties.

2. Requirements (continued)

2.1 Prior certification and qualifications

You must have a current Mate Fishing Vessel – Unlimited (MFV-U) certificate or equivalent.

2.2 Sea service

Your sea service must be relevant and appropriate to the requirements set out in the maritime rules.

In practice, this means that you must complete your sea service as mate or officer in charge of a navigational watch while holding MFV-U, aboard a fishing vessel of 12 metres or more overall length operating beyond restricted limits.

Sea service requirements

The sea service requirement is a minimum of 12 months.

Up to six months of this sea service may be substituted if you have sea service as officer in charge of a navigational watch (holding a certificate as Watchkeeper Deck or equivalent, or higher) on vessels covered by the International Convention on the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended (STCW).

All of your sea service must have been completed in the 10 years immediately before you apply for the certificate.

Proving your sea service

You are responsible for making sure your sea service is documented and verified by your ship's master or company.

To prove your sea service, you must provide at least one of the following documents for each vessel you have served on:

- *certificate of sea service or record of employment* (available on MNZ's website)
- completed seafarer's record book
- discharge certificate or discharge book (ensuring that any section on watchkeeping is appropriately signed off)
- a letter from your employer.

The documents you provide must contain all of the following details for each vessel you have served on:

- your employer's name and contact details
- the name, gross tonnage details and type of vessel (for example, passenger, non-passenger, fishing)
- the area of operation
- the length overall
- the dates you were employed and the sea time completed between those dates
- your duties and the capacities you served in.

Any statutory declarations you have made are generally not acceptable as proof of your sea service. However, the Director will consider these in exceptional circumstances.

2. Requirements (continued)

Calculating sea service for voyages of 24 hours or more

Relevant qualifying sea service is expected to be on voyages of 24 hours or more, calculated as follows:

- from the sign-on date of starting work on the ship to the sign-off date of discharge (both dates are inclusive)
- by counting each whole calendar month during this period as one month
- for multiple voyages, by adding together extra days that do not fall within a calendar month, with each addition of 30 days to be calculated as one month.

Extended time in port is generally not counted as sea service, and nor is time on leave.

Note

Voyage means a voyage between a port or place of departure and a ship's final port or place of arrival. It includes any period of 24 hours (or more) where you are signed on or employed on the vessel and you remain on board.

For example: If your service record shows your sign-on date as 3 March and sign-off date as 14 April, your sea service would be calculated as one month (3 March to 2 April) and 12 days (from 3 to 14 April inclusive).

Calculating sea service for voyages of less than 24 hours

Sea service on voyages of less than 24 hours is calculated by counting the number of months made up of days, as follows:

- by counting each period of eight (or more) hours worked within each period of 24 hours as one day's service
- by counting periods of more than eight hours at a rate of more than one day (may be expressed in decimal points) at the Director's discretion, if the Director is satisfied that there are suitable policies and processes in place to manage fatigue
- by counting each additional 20 days (or more) in one month as one month's sea service.

In cases where sea service is accrued and recorded in hours (for example, day work):

- each additional 160 hours (or more) in one month counts as one month's sea service
- where insufficient hours are accrued in a period of 30 days, additional hours may be accrued until 160 hours have been reached. This can then be counted as one month's sea service.

You cannot claim for more days of sea service than you actually served. Extended time in port is generally not counted as sea service, and nor is time on leave.

For more information about calculating your sea service, refer to the MNZ website:

maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers

2. Requirements (continued)

Sea service pre-assessment

If you are unsure about whether you have met the sea service requirements, you can ask us to assess your sea service time before you make your full application. To have your sea service pre-assessed, you need to:

- apply for pre-assessment using MNZ's pre-assessment form
- send us the documents we need (see Proving your sea service above) in order to check your sea service.

Note

If you are pre-assessed and have the required sea service for the SFV-U certificate, add your pre-assessment reference number to your *seafarer certificate application form*.

2.3 Training

You must complete training that is acceptable to the Director of Maritime NZ to achieve all of the required competencies for this certificate as set out in Regulation II/1 of STCW-F.

Approved training

The approved training qualification for SFV-U is the New Zealand Diploma in Fishing Vessel Operations (Level 6) with Fishing Vessel Skipper strand. This diploma is available through the International Maritime Institute of New Zealand (Nelson).

Documents you must provide with your application

Requirement	Document(s) you must provide
New Zealand Diploma in Fishing Vessel Operations (Level 6) with Fishing Vessel Skipper strand	The diploma certificate showing your name and the date of issue. Alternatively, a copy of your academic transcript evidencing completion of the qualification.

For more information about approved training providers and the SFV-U competency framework, refer to the MNZ website:

maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers

2. Requirements (continued)

Ancillary and other certificates

You must provide copies of the ancillary and other certificates required for your SFV-U training as listed below. You need to provide evidence of the certificates and any refresher courses to confirm you have demonstrated proficiency in the required skills.

Ancillary certificate requirements	Document(s) you must provide
STCW-F basic training	STCW-F basic training that complies with STCW-F chapter III regulation 1 and covers basic personal survival techniques, fire prevention and fire fighting, emergency procedures, elementary first aid, prevention of marine pollution and prevention of shipboard accidents Alternatively, we will accept an STCW certificate of proficiency in basic training (which complies with STCW A-VI/1 paragraph 2) as meeting these requirements
Proficiency in survival craft and rescue boats other than fast rescue boats (PISC)	STCW survival craft and rescue boats other than fast rescue boats certificate that complies with STCW Code Section A-VI/2 paragraphs 1–4 (Table A-VI/2-1)
Advanced fire fighting	STCW advanced fire-fighting certificate that complies with STCW Code Section A-VI/3, paragraphs 1–4 (Table A-VI/3)
Medical first aid	STCW medical first aid certificate that complies with STCW Code STCW A-VI/4-1
Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS)	Current certificate of competency as Global Maritime Distress and Safety System radio operator, as provided for in Maritime Rule 32.114, or recognised equivalent certificate that complies with STCW IV/2

If you already have an ancillary certificate that demonstrates proficiency in the areas listed above and at the required level, you may use it.

Your certificates must also conform to the STCW regulations and have the appropriate STCW regulation number.

Acceptance of overseas STCW and STCW-F training

For STCW and STCW-F basic training, we will accept certificates issued by any training provider that is approved by any country on the STCW white list.

For the STCW advanced training, we will accept ancillary certificates issued by any training provider that is approved by a flag state which has a memorandum of understanding with Maritime NZ.

2. Requirements (continued)

Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) certificate

Before we can issue your SFV-U certificate, you must provide Maritime NZ with a copy of a valid GMDSS certificate of competency as a specialist radio operator that complies with STCW regulation IV/2. This certificate must be less than five years old from the date of issue.

You will need to complete GMDSS training, including obtaining a course completion letter and a maritime general operator certificate (MGOC) as a radio operator (issued under the Radiocommunications Act 1989 or an equivalent under the international Radio Regulations). Information about how to obtain your GMDSS certificate is available on MNZ's website.

maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers

If you already hold a GMDSS certificate, it must be valid at the time of applying for your SFV-U certificate.

If you have a GMDSS certificate from a foreign country, refer to the recognition guidelines to see if it is from a country whose certificates we will recognise and the process that applies.

2.4 Final examination

After you have completed the approved training you must sit and pass the final examination.

This examination must be conducted by a Maritime NZ approved examiner. The examination checks that you have met the standards of competency specified in section Regulation II/1 of the STCW-F Convention.

The final examination is currently an oral examination. It is usually organised by your training provider when you have completed all the requirements for the award of the New Zealand Diploma in Fishing Vessel Operations (Level 6) with Fishing Vessel Skipper strand qualification.

2.5 Fit and proper person

We need to confirm that you are a fit and proper person. To help us do this, we need the following documents from you.

Requirement	Document(s) you must provide
Be a fit and proper person	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A completed <i>fit and proper person form</i>, which must have been signed and dated no more than three months before we receive your applicationA police clearance report for any country or countries outside New Zealand that you have lived in for 12 months or longer in the past five years (covering the entire period you lived in that country or countries)

2. Requirements (continued)

2.6 Medical examination and eyesight tests

You need to prove that your medical fitness and eyesight meet the required standard.

Requirement	Document(s) you must provide
Be medically fit	<p>A certificate of medical fitness for seafarers that is valid at the time we issue your SFV-U certificate (after you have completed all of your exams and ancillary certificates).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is a special medical certificate that complies with STCW regulation I/9. You must get it from an approved medical practitioner or from a medical practitioner approved for issuing seafarer medicals in another country that is party to STCW. The category must be A, A(T) or B.• You may use an existing medical certificate if it will be valid (usually less than two years old) when your SFV-U certificate is issued.
Have good eyesight	<p>Eye test results from a registered optometrist, on the official form*, showing you have met the required standards for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• visual acuity (including a letter eyesight test). Your visual acuity eyesight test results must be less than 12 months old at the time we issue your certificate• colour vision – this is initially assessed using the Ishihara colour vision test. If you fail the Ishihara test, you will need to take an alternative colour vision test (for more details, refer to the Advisory Circular for Part 34 on Maritime NZ’s website). Your colour vision test results (of either test) must be less than six years old at the time your SFV-U certificate is issued. <p>* The official form is available on the Maritime NZ website. It is recommended that you take this form with you to your optometrist.</p>

For more information about the medical and eyesight requirements for this certificate, refer to the guidelines on MNZ’s website:

maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers

2. Requirements (continued)

2.7 Identity

We need to confirm your identity. Acceptable forms of identity are listed below. Refer to the *fit and proper person form* for the latest information.

You will need to provide two passport-sized photos or an electronic copy of a passport photo with your application.

All applicants must provide sighted and signed copies of both:

- a primary identification (ID) document **and**
- one other form of ID.

One of these forms of ID must be photographic.

A sighted and signed copy is a photocopy that has been sighted and signed by a trusted referee, in person, confirming that the person presenting the identity documents is the same person that the documents refer to. The trusted referee must sight the original identity document before signing the copy.

Trusted referees include a Justice of the Peace, a Notary public, a barrister or solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand, staff of an approved training provider, police, teachers, doctors, or Maritime NZ staff.

Primary ID	Other form of ID
Passport (NZ or overseas)	Driver's licence (NZ or overseas)
NZ full birth certificate issued on or after 1 January 1998	NZ full birth certificate issued prior to 1 January 1998
NZ firearms licence	Overseas birth certificate
NZ citizenship certificate	18+ card
NZ refugee travel document	Community services card
NZ emergency travel document	SuperGold card
NZ certificate of identity	NZ employee photo identification card
	NZ student photo identification card
	Inland Revenue number
	NZ issued utility bill (issued not more than six months earlier)
	NZ teachers registration certificate
	NZ electoral roll record
	International driving permit
	Steps to freedom form
	Seafarer ID book

3. When and how to apply

Apply when you have completed all of the certificate requirements. Once we have received all of the information we need from you, it may take us up to 20 working days to process your application, so send it in as soon as possible (and at least one month before you need your certificate).

Make sure you include all of the documents we have asked for. Refer to *3.4 Checklist* to make sure you have everything you need for your application.

Note

If your application is incomplete, it will not be processed and we will return your application and other documents to you.

3.1 Copies of supporting documents

We only need copies of your supporting documents, not the original versions.

For the *fit and proper person form* you need to include sighted and signed copies of the ID documents specified.

3.2 Fees

There is a fee for your application. Refer to the Maritime NZ website for information about fees.

maritimenz.govt.nz/fees

You will be invoiced once we have formally received your application. A reference number and instructions explaining how to pay will be sent with the invoice.

You can pay:

- by bank deposit or internet banking, or
- online using a credit card or debit card.

Refer to the MNZ website for more information about how to pay your fees:

maritimenz.govt.nz/howtopay

As well as the application fee, you may have other fees and expenses to pay. For example, you may need to pay for your eyesight tests, medical examination, training and ancillary courses.

3. When and how to apply (continued)

3.3 Application process

This is the application process for this certificate of competency. Complete each step before you move on to the next one.

1 Do you meet all the requirements?

You need to check that you meet all of the requirements for this certificate.

Apply for pre-assessment of your sea service time if you are unsure about meeting the sea service requirements.

2 Do you have the documents we need?

You need to prove that you meet the requirements. Include all of the documents we have asked for with your application form. Use the checklist to help you (see 3.4. *Checklist*).

Remember we need copies, not the originals.

3 Send us your application by courier or email

There are two options for you to send your application:

1. Send your application by email, attaching the scanned documents.
The application form has information about the requirements for electronic copies.
2. Use a courier to send us your completed application forms and supporting documents.

The addresses are on the application form.

4 Confirmation and/or request sent

We will send you an email or letter to confirm that we have received your application and advise you of any documents we need from you before we can assess your application.

We must receive your payment before we can finalise your application.

3. When and how to apply (continued)

5 Assessment and payment of application fee

Once you have sent us all the documents we need, we will assess your application and make a decision. This will usually take 20 working days (about a month) from the time we let you know that we have received your application.

We will send you an invoice with your reference number and information on how to pay the application fee once we begin the assessment. Please note we cannot release your certificate unless payment has been received.

6 Issue certificate

We will send you:

- your certificate, if your application has been successful, or
- a letter or email explaining why your application was unsuccessful.

3. When and how to apply (continued)

3.4 Checklist

Use this checklist to make sure that you have everything you need for your application.

Check that your documents are complete and have been signed, dated and sighted as required.

- Seafarer certificate application form*
- Two passport-sized photos *or* an electronic copy
- Fit and proper person form* - including sighted and signed copies of the ID documents specified
- Police clearance report for other countries (if applicable)
- Copy of certificate of medical fitness for seafarers
- Evidence of your MFV-U certificate or equivalent
- Evidence of your sea service
- Your pre-assessment reference number if we pre-assessed your sea service time
- Evidence of your approved training NZ Diploma in Fishing Vessel Operations (Level 6) with Fishing Vessel Skipper strand
- Copy of your ancillary and other certificates

4. Contact us for help

If you need more information about the requirements for your application, visit the Seafarer Certification section of our website.

maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers

If you can't find the information you need, send us an email:

seafarers@maritimenz.govt.nz

Tell us what you need help with and remember to include your contact details (email address and phone numbers).

Alternatively, you can phone us toll free on 0508 SEACERT (0508 732 237).