

Helmsman's Course

This course aims to teach boat handling and seamanship in motor cruisers. By the end of the course you will feel comfortable berthing and unberthing in straightforward locations and should be confident in general boat handling.

Duration: Two days

Minimum age: 12

Non-residential/residential course

PRACTICAL

1 Safety and Seamanship

Understands:

- The importance of crotch straps
- The difference between manual and auto-inflating life jackets
- Appropriate clothing

Can:

- Correctly fit a life jacket

2 Engine Operation and Maintenance

Knowledge of:

- Fuel consumption range and reserve

Understands:

- Engine monitoring while running
- Routine maintenance checks
- Basic fault diagnosis

Can:

- Perform pre-start checks
- Locate fuel cut-offs
- Perform close-down procedure

3 Boat Preparation

Knowledge of:

- Local boating conditions and regulations
- CE marks; loading; effect on handling and performance

Understands:

- Safety equipment; life jackets; dangers; the need for crew
- Use of a kill cord (if fitted)
- Secure stowage of equipment

Can:

- Tie and know the use of relevant knots: round turn and two half hitches; bowline; clove hitch
- Prepare boat, lines and fenders

4 Boat Handling

Knowledge of:

- Differences between hull shapes and propulsion systems

Understands:

- Steering; controls; windage
- The effect of wind on bow
- Carrying way
- Movement around the boat and crew positioning at sea
- Boat control in waves
- Use of power trim and trim tabs

Can:

- Start and stop the engine
- Steer a straight course at low speed
- Turn in a confined space
- Handle a boat at planing speed
- Use trim tabs/power trim (where fitted)

5 Securing a Buoy

Understands:

- The importance of crew communication
- Methods of approach in various wind and tide conditions
- Taking way off
- The procedure when overshooting

Can:

- Prepare mooring warps
- Use a boat hook
- Make fast
- Approach and secure to a buoy

6 Berthing Alongside and Leaving

Understands:

- Preparation and use of lines and springs
- Methods of approach in various conditions

Can:

- Attach fenders
- Coil a line
- Throw a mooring line
- Secure lines to cleats
- Make fast alongside
- Use springs to leave a berth

7 Man Overboard

Knowledge of:

- Various methods for recovering the person overboard from the water

Understands:

- That engines should be switched off unless it is unsafe to do so

- Drift-down approach

Can:

- Take immediate action
- Observe the man overboard
- Carry out the correct return with awareness of the propellers
- Approach and recover the man-overboard dummy

8 Anchoring

Knowledge of:

- Types of anchor
- Depth of water; holding ground; scope required

Understands:

- Stowage and attachment to boat
- Preparation of anchor, chain and warp
- Correct approaches in various conditions
- Taking way off
- The importance of crew communication
- Use of windlass
- Weighing anchor

Can:

- Approach and anchor
- Check holding
- Weigh anchor

THEORY

1 Vessel

Knowledge of:

- Types of craft
- The advantages/disadvantages of different hull types with respect to seakeeping ability and wash considerations
- Engines and drives – advantages/disadvantages of different drive systems
- The choice and use of fuel