



NOTICE BY THE COMMISSIONERS OF  
CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

TO OWNERS AND MASTERS OF BRITISH YACHTS AND  
OTHER PRIVATE CRAFT

Yachts and other private craft sailing for, and returning from, overseas (including the Channel Islands and the Republic of Ireland) are subject in general to the same regulations as other foreign-going ships. The Commissioners of Customs and Excise do not, however, wish to impose any undue restriction upon the movement of private craft and are therefore prepared to relax certain of the normal controls. The essential requirements are set out below. Any further information required may be obtained at the nearest Custom House.

**Warning.** A yacht or other private craft is liable to Customs search in the same way as any other ship. Any craft carrying prohibited or uncustomed goods is liable to forfeiture and the persons concerned to heavy penalties.

I.—DEPARTURES

1. **Licences.**—The Small Craft Regulations, 1953, require the licensing of any vessel of less than 40 tons register which it is intended shall proceed outside a distance of

- (i) twelve nautical miles seaward from that part of the coast of England which is between North Foreland and Beachy Head, or
- (ii) thirty-six nautical miles seaward from any other part of the coast of the United Kingdom.

Yachts and similar pleasure craft are exempt from these licensing requirements provided the Commissioners are satisfied the vessel is used exclusively for pleasure by the owner.

In addition to actual use by the owner himself, the qualification about exclusive use for pleasure by the owner may be taken to cover use, provided this is without remuneration to the owner, by

- (a) any one acting under the direction of the owner, or,
- (b) with the consent of the owner, dependent members of the owner's family or his *bona fide* guests,

whether or not the owner is actually on board at the time. A vessel will not be regarded as being used exclusively for pleasure by the owner if it is hired, chartered or operated in any way other than as provided above.

The term "owner" may be taken to include any part-owner whose interest is properly registered or, in the case of a vessel owned by a properly constituted yacht club and hired out to club members, any member of the club. "Tons register" means the vessel's net tonnage ascertained according to the regulations of the Merchant Shipping Acts, 1894 to 1954.

Application for a licence should be made, in writing, by the owner or the person under whose direction the vessel will be used to the Collector of Customs and Excise for the place at which it is usually based or from which it is intended to operate. The application should contain

- (i) particulars of the vessel—
    - (a) name
    - (b) how propelled
    - (c) if registered, number, year and port of registry
    - (d) tons register
    - (e) name of master
    - (f) name and address of owner;
  - (ii) name and address of person under whose direction the vessel will be used;
  - (iii) period for which licence is required;
  - (iv) purpose for which licence is required;
- and should be signed by the applicant.

A licence will be issued without payment for such period as the circumstances require (*e.g.*, for the voyage or for the period of hire or charter) but will lapse automatically should there be any change in the ownership of the craft. A lapsed licence is to be surrendered to the Collector from whom it was obtained, and if the new owner requires another licence a fresh application should be made. The licence must always be carried on board and shown, on request, to any Customs officer.

**2. Notification of intended departure and clearance outwards.**—Several days before the date of intended departure, the Collector or other officer in charge at the Custom House at the port of departure should be informed in writing of the name of the vessel, its place of registration and its tonnage, the names of its owner and master, and the place from which it is intended to start the voyage. It should also be made clear whether the master intends to call at the Custom House for a formal Clearance, a document which may be of use on arrival in another country. If stores are wanted, particulars should be given at the same time of the quantities required, the duration of the voyage and the number of passengers and crew.

**3. Shipment of stores.**—In general no restriction is placed upon the shipment of reasonable quantities of foodstuffs, fuel and other stores unless they are goods of a kind on which duty is chargeable or upon which drawback is claimed. The shipment of duty-free stores is normally restricted to vessels of 40 tons net register or more but subject to certain conditions they may be shipped on yachts or other private craft of less than 40 tons register departing for a port beyond the following limits *viz.* south of Brest or north of the north bank of the Elbe. Prior application is necessary and information about the procedure for shipping stores may be obtained at any Custom House. If shipment of duty-free stores, or the reshipment of surplus duty-

free stores previously landed, is authorised the vessel must be entered outwards and cleared at the Custom House.

4. **Cargo.**—No goods other than *bona fide* stores may be shipped unless all the relative Customs and export licensing requirements are met.

5. **Immigration regulations.**—All persons not of British nationality need the permission of the Immigration Officer to embark. It is the responsibility of the owner or master of the vessel to make sure that permission is obtained.

6. **Currency regulations.**—There are restrictions on the exportation of currency. The yachtsman should apply to his bank for up-to-date information.

## II.—ARRIVALS

7. **Notification of arrival.**—All private craft arriving from abroad, whether dutiable stores are carried on board or not, are subject to Customs, Public Health and Home Office (Immigration Department) requirements. The following signal must be hoisted and remain so until the arrival of the Customs officer—

by day—the international Code flag “Q”.

by night—a red light over a white light, the lights being not more than six feet apart.

When cruising in home waters with dutiable stores under seal the ensign with a knot tied in it should be hoisted on arrival at any British port.

8. **Customs duty on yachts and other private craft.**—Yachts and other private craft of less than 80 tons gross arriving in the United Kingdom from abroad are all potentially liable to Customs duty; but vessels built in the United Kingdom and other vessels shown to have previously departed from the United Kingdom (except vessels temporarily imported by visitors from abroad) are usually re-admissible free of duty. Duty may, however, be chargeable on any repairs or alterations (other than ordinary running repairs) carried out abroad and particulars of any such repairs and alterations must be declared in Section B of Form C.142A (*see* paragraph 9).

The owner or master of a British yacht, etc., returning to the United Kingdom after a trip abroad must therefore, when so required, satisfy the Customs Officer on arrival as to the title of the vessel to free re-admission.

In order to facilitate the identification of British yachts, etc. of less than 80 tons gross returning from temporary visits abroad, owners are advised to enter their vessels with the Customs prior to departure from home waters on Form X.S.29 in duplicate, and to obtain a certificate thereon from the Customs officer. The duplicate Form X.S.29 may be retained for use as a Customs Pass to cover further temporary exits and re-entries. Copies of the form may be obtained from the nearest Custom House.

If a person resident in the United Kingdom buys a yacht or other

private craft while abroad or if a yacht or other private craft is brought to this country on or for sale or for hire to any one in the United Kingdom, the vessel must be produced to the Customs officer on arrival and full details of the transaction (actual or prospective) declared.

**British registration of a vessel does not in itself establish title to duty-free admission into the United Kingdom.**

**9. Importation of goods.**—Goods, including stores, brought in a private craft, whether obtained abroad or shipped from bond, and all hydrocarbon oils, irrespective of origin, must be declared to the Customs officer. Declaration Forms C.142 and C.142A are used for this purpose and may be obtained from any Custom House. Many goods are subject to import licensing control and are liable to duty and/or Purchase Tax. Failure to declare goods may render the persons concerned liable to heavy penalties.

**10. Stores and equipment.**—Dutiable stores may not be used duty-free while cruising in home waters. If, however, the owner of a private craft finds it necessary for the victualling of his vessel when so cruising to use sealed dutiable stores, the Commissioners will not object provided their officers are informed at the next port of call (the appropriate signal being hoisted) and all duties due on the quantities consumed are paid immediately.

When private craft are laid up any dutiable stores should normally be cleared on payment of duty but, exceptionally, arrangements may be made either for the temporary deposit in the Queen's Warehouse or for their remaining on board under seal for future use, subject in the latter case to bond (with one surety) being given by the owner or master in an amount equal to the duty chargeable.

Duty may also be charged on any equipment of the craft, wholly or partly of foreign origin, which is landed in the United Kingdom.

**11. Immigration regulations.**—All persons not of British nationality need the permission of the Immigration Officer to land. It is the responsibility of the owner or master of the vessel to make sure that permission is obtained.

**12. Currency regulations.**—There is no restriction on the importation of any currency notes, including United Kingdom bank notes.

King's Beam House,  
Mark Lane,  
London, E.C.3.

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