



RYA Marine Radio SRC Course and Exam

Update and progress report: June 2014

Course packs

The course pack that was introduced at the end of 2013 must be given to students before they start their course. The order code is SRCP and a pack consists of the course book and exam application form. The standalone VHF Handbook or eBook must not be used as a substitute.

The book from the course pack must be given to the student prior to their course so they can do the required three hours of pre-course preparation to allow their course to be run over seven hours. If the book is not supplied ahead of the course, this pre-course preparation cannot take place correctly, meaning the course must be run over the full ten hours, followed by the exam.

To avoid the potential for students losing/forgetting their exam application forms, we suggest you keep the exam forms at your centre ready for the exam. If they plan to take the exam elsewhere you will need to give them the form after completing their training course, be it online or in the classroom.

The course

Regardless of whether a student takes the course in the classroom or online, completion of their course must be checked and the details entered on the exam application form.

The exam

The exam must not be run by the same Assessor who ran the classroom training course.

Prior to the exam, your candidates should be allowed some familiarisation time with your training radios. As the separation between training and examining must remain clear, this familiarisation must not mutate into training, but it is acceptable to show students how to use the set and access the menus. To illustrate the boundary between assistance and instruction in the familiarisation period, consider the following two scenarios:

First student says: *"I cannot find the DSC menu to set up an urgency alert."*

Second student asks: *"What is an urgency alert?"*

In the first instance the student knows what they are looking for, but the particular radio is not familiar to them so they should be helped - there is nothing wrong with showing them how to do it on that set. The second is asking about the underlying knowledge and, in this case, is asking for instruction.

We recently conducted a survey of successful exam candidates and found that a number of them were given very little/no time or assistance to get to know the radios. This time is especially important for candidates who have taken the training course online as the exam may be the first time they use a real radio.

Exam papers

Revised papers were published at the beginning of this year and can be downloaded from our website. They are password-protected and the password is given to you on receipt of your examiner payment details. If you are an SRC Assessor but haven't yet submitted your payment details, complete the examiner payment BACS form available from the RYA website or by emailing training@rya.org.uk. Please note the bank account provided must be under the control of the SRC Assessor named on the form. If the account is a business account not in the name of the Assessor, the Assessor must be the owner, partner or significant shareholder in that company.

The exam papers now include a space for both the Assessor's name and the candidate's name, and must be retained at the training centre until the next inspection.

Exam application forms

Photocopied exam forms and the old (pre-2014) forms are not acceptable. A small number of spare forms are available from certification@rya.org.uk but these are closely monitored.

Please ensure that exam forms are sent to the RYA Certification Department as soon as possible after the exam to avoid unnecessary delays for students.

The exam centre listed on the application form should be the one that is physically hosting the exam. The Assessor's relationship with any other centres is not relevant in this situation, as they are engaged by the RYA for the exam, and so should not be shown on the form.

The processing of a significant amount of application forms is delayed because they are either incomplete or there is a problem with payments. If incomplete forms are received or no payment is included they are simply returned to the Assessor. The preferred method of payment is either cheque or credit card direct from the candidate. However, if a centre wishes to charge the fee to its own RYA account, the centre must have a credit account with sufficient credit to allow the payment to go through and the exam form must be completed with the Principal's signature. If no credit account exists the forms will be returned to the centre for payment.

With over 1,000 SRC certificates being processed each month, we appreciate your assistance in helping the system run smoothly.

The online training course

We are pleased to say that the online course launched in January has been very well received, with around 350-400 students taking the course online each month. A good test of its viability was our recent survey of over 150 online students who have now taken their exam. Despite nearly half those students not speaking English as their first language, only one student felt they were not well prepared for their exam. At the end of the survey, 72 respondents submitted general comments about the course, which were overwhelmingly positive. In fact, the only negative comments related to their familiarisation session prior to their exam, not the course itself.

We have just completed the first update of the online course, which is now available for students to download. Content changes in this edition are minimal and mainly concern changing some text colours to help colour blind students. Other changes address minor functional problems.

A full report on the online course has been circulated to centres recognised to offer the course in that way.

Future development: ePacks

We have made progress towards being able to supply the SRC student pack as either an ePack (containing a voucher for an eBook and a printed exam form) or a conventional pack as it is at the moment. Initially this will run as a trial, which we hope will take place over the summer. Further details on this will follow.