



NEW RPN What changed on 1 April 2023?

Introduction

The new Regulations for Rhine Navigation Personnel (RPN) entered into force on 1 April 2023: <https://www.ccr-zkr.org/13020500-en.html#04>

It provides the rules applicable to crew members and safety personnel qualifications, medical fitness and manning requirements. The RPN applies from Basel to the open sea.

This flyer aims to describe in a simple manner the main changes for the different users.

For more information

The explanatory note to the new RPN gives details of each individual change. It also contains a table of correspondence between the old and new articles of the RPN: <https://www.ccr-zkr.org/13020500-en.html#04>



Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR)

2, Place de la République - CS10023
67082 Strasbourg Cedex
France

ccnr@ccr-zkr.org
www.ccr-zkr.org



Clear career pathways

The new RPN clearly specifies the possible career paths for all crew members:

- the boatmaster (Article 12.01),
- the other deck crew members: helmsman, able boatman, boatman, deckhand, apprentice (Article 10.01) and
- the engineer (Article 10.02).

For the position of **engineer**, new entrants are now also welcome from the mechatronics sector, as technical installations in the inland navigation sector comprise an ever-increasing proportion of electronic components.

Lateral entrants from the **maritime sector** will see a better recognition of professional experience.



Alleviations for the recreational and administrative boatmaster's certificate

The recreational boatmaster's certificate is required for sport craft with a length between 20 and 25 meters (instead of 15 to 25 meters) and for sport craft with propulsion engines with a power exceeding 11.03 kW (15 hp). For sport craft with a propulsion of less than 11.03 kW (15 hp) and a length of less than 20 metres, the national regulations apply.

The administrative boatmaster's certificate is also required only for vessels with a length above 20 meters. The examination can be passed at the age of 18 (instead of 21).



Examinations

To become a boatmaster, you must now pass a practical examination.

Practical examinations for the boatmaster and for sailing with the aid of radar can be taken on simulators.

The content for the examinations for recreational and administrative boatmaster's certificates remain unchanged. What is new is that they can be passed on simulators.

An examination for sailing on inland waterways with a maritime character is now required, the specific authorisation is optional (not included anymore in the initial training).



Specific authorisations

The radar patente becomes a specific authorisation for sailing with radar (Article 13.02).

The sector knowledge also becomes a specific authorisation for sailing on waterways identified as being stretches with specific risks (Article 13.03).

To sail on inland waterways with maritime character, a specific authorisation is now required and subject to a theoretical examination (Article 13.03). This is not required anymore as part of the initial training for the Rhine patente.

The specific authorisations are directly incorporated in the certificate of qualification as a boatmaster.



Modern and transparent requirements for stretches with specific risks

The sectors with risks along the Rhine remain unchanged. The requirements to navigate on these sectors are listed in a transparent manner in Annex 5 of the RPN.

The requirements to obtain the specific authorisation are also amended:

- only journeys during the last three years instead of the last 10 years are taken into account,
- but only three journeys upstream and three journeys downstream are required instead of 16 journeys.

The exam for specific risks on the Rhine can be passed in any CCNR Member State. Germany and France agreed with several other countries that they may also organise exams for the stretches located in these two countries based on the newly published list of competences in Annex 5 of the RPN.



New documents

I am a boatmaster: I have a Rhine patente (digital, on my smartphone, or in paper). I can obtain a service record book to document: journeys on stretches, navigation time on ADN vessels, navigation time on large convoys or navigation time on craft propelled by LNG. These documents can be delivered by any competent authority in CCNR countries.

Point of attention: if I get a specific authorisation, I have to go back to the issuing authority for a re-issue of the updated certificate of qualification as a boatmaster.

I am a crew member other than the boatmaster: I have only 1 service record book combined with my certificates of qualification. It can be delivered by any competent authority in CCNR countries.

For deck crew members, the Rhine documents meet identical requirements than EU certificates of qualification, service record books and logbooks. They are valid on all EU inland waterways!

The CESNI (European Committee for drawing up Standards in the field of Inland Navigation) publishes FAQ on the administration of certificates: <https://www.cesni.eu/en/faq/>



Medical check-up

The periodic control of medical fitness occurs at 60 and not anymore at 50. Between the ages of 60 and 70, the proof of the medical fitness is renewed every 5 years, and over 70 years, every two years. Also crew members other than the boatmaster now need a first medical check-up at 60.

If I have a Rhine qualification, I can take the medical examination with any approved doctor and renew it with any approved doctor in the CCNR Member States.

For engineers, the vision conditions are alleviated compared to the deck crew members with a view to impaired colour vision (Article 4.03).



More flexible crew regulations

Derogations from the minimum crew requirement are now possible in order to support pilot projects, particularly in the field of automation (Article 17.02).



Transitional provisions (Chapter 20)

All documents (boatmaster certificates, service record books and logbooks) that have been valid before 1 April 2023, be it documents issued according to the RPN or recognised by the CCNR as being equivalent before the entry into force of the new RPN remain valid until 18 January 2032 (unless they expire before).

During this period, they can be exchanged at any time by any competent authority of a Member State of the CCNR.