

V2 Jan 2025

Welcome Aboard...

Thanks for your enquiry for a BSS examination. Being the sole employee of my company means answering the phone to new enquiries can be difficult, especially if I'm underneath a boat or dealing with a complex set of problems, so if I've not managed to speak to you yet I hope this is of use. Text is always a good way to get in touch as I can call you back when free.

Here is some guidance / FAQs for BSS examination customers.

What are the costs?

All costs are available online at my website. I am one of the few professional marine surveyors to publish costs it seems. My website is www.smallcraftservices.com

Included in the fee with me you get:

- full BSS examination
- free help with on the spot simple repairs e.g. I'll try and find and repair gas leaks, assist with simple repairs to help get a pass where this is possible
- travel costs
- retest visit if required
- certificate charges levied by CRT (£72 per certificate issued, note this rises by a tenner each year in April)
- VAT @ 20%

As a bonus, returning customers get a discount next time round!

Can we attend on the day?

Yes, you are welcome to be present, or if you want I can provide a full unattended service. I am fully insured to work on (not just inspect) boats, meaning I can complete necessary tasks for you, such as moving gas cylinders out of lockers (I am also gas safe registered of course).

What do you inspect?

We are looking at fire and explosion risk, so whether the boat floats or sinks, goes forwards or backwards is neither here nor there for this inspection. If you think about what causes fire and explosion, it's systems, so that is what we check; fuel, electrical, gas, appliances, and also fire extinguishers and CO alarms. The BSS has more guidance on their website which is

Will my boat pass?

It is highly likely that every boat will need something, no matter how minor! It could be a CO alarm out of date, or batteries able to move etc. There are some instances where boats require more repairs. This can be for a number of reasons, including previous poor examinations where fail items were overlooked, changes to the boat, poor workmanship regarding repairs, and changed to the BSS checking procedures. The last changes were Sept 2021 and these are affecting a lot of boats.

What are the top fail items?

Here are some popular fails:

- Battery securing – can they move in excess of 10mm in any direction?
- CO alarm – in date? Marked to BS EN 50291
- Gas locker – free of holes (except drains of course!)? Cleaned and painted if a steel locker rusty. Ask yourself if you can remember the last time you cleaned and painted the locker, and if you can't, why not get it done now?
- Battery charger and solar charger outputs fused?
- Fuel hoses free of chafe damage?
- Cables secured and free of chafe damage?
- Deck labels present?
- Solid fuel stove secured by x 2 fixings?

Note the BSS requires x 2 fixings to solid fuel stoves from Sept 2021 – previously they did not stipulate any minimum. If you have an Aqualine with a Morso Squirrel it might have only one fixing (big long screw through the centre of the bottom plate) and this new requirement is probably going to irritate you, please don't shoot the messenger! Let me know and I can tell you how to sort.

Also note ferrous (pig-iron) fittings in a gas system are no longer permitted and have to be changed. These are in abundance out there on Springer, Hudson and other manufacturers. This again was new from 2021, but does not affect most boats.

The latest BSS guide for private boats is here:

<https://www.boatsafetyscheme.org/media/299267/bss-examination-checking-procedures-core-2-9-interim-final.pdf>

The changes in 2021 are partly explained here:

<https://www.boatsafetyscheme.org/about-us/introducing-the-revision-of-the-core-bss-examination-checking-procedures/>

What happens if the boat fails and we need to get repairs completed?

If we can't get it sorted on the day, you get 90 days until we have to start over again with a new examination. There is no charge for retests with me, and it's no problem to come back and check the fail items off once completed. After the 90 days retest period we have to start the whole process again, so it's important to get any repairs done as promptly as possible.

How do we pay?

After the examination, I'll send you an invoice which has bank details included. You can pay by BACs. You can pay cheque or cash on the day if you prefer.

I've heard I need a Bubble Tester as I live aboard. Is this true?

No. Nobody needs a bubble tester.

If you live aboard then this is what you require to get a BSS examination completed:

1. A gas safe registered BSS examiner (such as me),

Or

2. A standard BSS examiner and a gas safe registered engineer to complete the gas test

Or

3. A bubble tester

Bubble testers enable owners to complete a simple test which gives an indication there are no gas leaks in the gas system. However it is limited to that as that is all the navigation authorities such as CRT are interested in.

What can I do to prepare for the examination?

1. Have a look at the top fail section above
2. Make sure we can get to the engine and batteries - you may need to clear the decks to enable this
3. Make sure there is gas aboard if you have gas appliances
4. If you have a gas water heater (e.g. Paloma or Morco etc) we need to see it working, so you need water, working water pump, gas and charged batteries. We may need to run it for 10 mins (likelihood is only a few mins). Please also see the note below about some Morco and Innovita branded heaters.

<https://www.boatsafetyscheme.org/about-us/news-and-press-releases/news-releases/nr24-004-morco-products-ltd-open-flued-water-heaters-important-safety-warning/>

Lastly:

5. Don't worry! I will guide you through the process – it's a well-trodden path and I've helped 1000s of boaters do this since 2005.