

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE CONCEPTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE LARGE COMMERCIAL YACHT CODE, LY2



- In 1998 the UK's Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) introduced the Large Commercial Yacht Code, a set of requirements more suited to yachts than the regulations in the SOLAS, Load Line and STCW international conventions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). This was made possible by the provisions in the conventions for Flag States to adopt equivalent standards, and the MCA took full advantage of these provisions by proposing a Code full of them.
 - The Code quickly became known as the MCA Code, but its origins actually lay with the Isle of Man authorities. The Isle of Man Ship Registry identified that the conventions' requirements were more suited to merchant ships than luxury yachts which are required to comply with them to charter.
 - The MCA spearheaded the development of the Code through an industry working group, with representation from the other British Registries as well as key representatives from the large yacht industry. Although all the British Registries are Flag States in their own right, the UK Government is the only Contracting Government to the IMO. All the British Registries are represented by the MCA at IMO.
 - Upon the completion of the Code, the MCA formally advised the IMO of its intention to use the Code to certificate large yachts instead of the applicable requirements in the conventions. This was then circulated by the IMO amongst the other Contracting Governments, in accordance with IMO protocol.
 - In 2004 the Large Commercial Yacht Code was revised and re-issued as LY2 in UK Merchant Shipping Notice 1792. The differences between LY2 and the original Code were generally very subtle. However, the most significant were:
 - (i) The introduction of the Short Range Yacht service restriction, permitting lower standards to be met for damage stability, construction and weathertight integrity.
 - (ii) All yachts over 500GT must have fixed fire-extinguishing systems throughout the accommodation and service spaces, even those that are certificated retrospectively.
 - (iii) All yachts *must* be Classed with ABS, BV, DNV, GL, LR or RINA.
 - Below is a list of the Category 1 British Registers, all of which can issue certificates to yachts complying with the Large Commercial Yacht Code:
 - [Bermuda](#)
 - [British Virgin Islands](#)
 - [Cayman Islands](#)
 - [Gibraltar](#)
 - [Isle of Man](#)
 - [United Kingdom \(MCA\)](#)
- Please visit www.redesigngroup.org for more information on the Red Ensign Group and the British Registries.
- Of Flag State authorities in these countries, only the Cayman Islands Shipping Registry (CISR) and MCA regularly attend yards to certify new yachts. The Isle of Man and Bermuda also occasionally attend yards, but they usually delegate the task to the CISR or the MCA.
 - Certificates issued by these governments are of equal value, and should be accepted by each other, i.e. a yacht built under survey and certificated by the CISR should be accepted by Gibraltar and vice-versa.
 - Yachts that are advertised as being MCA compliant will generally have been built under survey and certificated by the MCA or CISR, but if the flag at delivery is a non-British country the MCA or CISR may issue a Letter of Compliance instead of a Certificate of Compliance if the yacht complies with LY2. Only the authorities of the country in which a yacht is registered can issue certificates to it.
 - The correct description for a yacht that has been certified for compliance with the LY2 Code is 'LY2 certified'. MCA-certified is sometimes used incorrectly, as this implies that the MCA certified the yacht, and this need not be the case as explained above. It is imperative that all official contractual documents (e.g. new-building contracts and specifications) use the correct expression, however brokers for yacht sales and charters generally still use 'MCA' in their advertising media.
 - There is no such thing as 'MCA Class'. A yacht can only claim to be 'Classed' if it has been certificated by a Classification Society, a non-governmental organisation. The MCA is not a Classification Society; is it a Flag State and a UK government agency.