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5 FAQs on the Recreational Craft Directive by [Mark Brown](#)

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Before you let your boat even touch European waters, be sure there is the visible 'CE' mark on the vessel. This mark indicates that the boat has undergone thorough inspection for safety and quality that it complies with requirements of the Recreational Craft Directive. Here are a few things you might want to know about the Directive.

What is the Recreational Craft Directive (RCD)? The term 'craft' specifically refers to watercraft or boats. The directive sets standards for boats that are sold or used within the European Union (EU), including imported boats. The standards are also known as Essential Requirements (ER) and cover everything from the boat's structure to its engine's emissions. Aside from the CE mark, the boat should also have a Craft Identification Number (CIN) and a plate that indicates basic information about the boat.

How do I know if I'm covered by the directive? With a few exceptions, all boats sailing within EU waters are covered by the directive. If the boat is for commercial use or falls under certain categories such as kayaks/canoes, the RCD doesn't cover it. If the boat is for private use and is not sold within five years of purchase, it doesn't need to bear the CE mark.

What are the processes involved? The boat is classified under one of four categories: A, B, C and D. These categories are based on the boat's configuration and the surrounding conditions likely to be experienced by the vessel once it's launched. The boats under categories A, B and larger boats under C are inspected by a third party, while the smaller C boats and D boats can be builder-inspected.

What particular boat aspects are inspected? Aside from having the CIN and builder's plate, the boat should also meet structural requirements according to the Recreational Craft Directive, such as proper materials, construction style, and rudders. The inspection team will also check the boat's stability, load capacity, engine, electrical and fuel systems, and other features. Noise and emission levels of the boat's propulsion are also tested.

What are the costs of compliance? If you have a good idea of the Recreational Craft Directive requirements, the inspection and marking process should go smoothly. It also helps if you look for a legitimate company that offers boat CE marking. A company that is legitimate shouldn't offer to just put the mark, CIN and builder's plate on your boat and be done with it. You would find yourself paying much more for lawsuits and penalties if the authorities get wind of a counterfeit CE mark on your boat given by such unscrupulous outfits.

The Recreational Craft Directive ensures the health and safety not only of your boat's riders, but also of your bank account. For more information, read conformance.co.uk/directives/ce_boats.php.

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