

Marine Information Bulletin

Record of Practical Experience and Sea-Service (ROPES) books

1 Background

The National Marine Safety Committee (NMSC) released Edition 1 of the "National Record of Practical Experience and Sea-Service (ROPES)" book. ROPES serve to enhance a commercial marine licence candidate's practical experience at sea and improve the quality of sea service acquired towards the issue of these licences. ROPES books are available for each of the following classes/grades of certificate of competency: Coxswain, Master Class 5, Marine Engine Driver Grade 3 and Marine Engine Driver Grade 2.

ROPES books may be purchased from any Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) Marine Operations Centre.

2 Purpose

The ROPES books provide a structure and a purpose to sea service. Each class/grade of ROPES book contains a set of tasks that cover the areas of skill and knowledge candidates must acquire in order to gain a certificate of competency. Completing all of the tasks specified in the book will assist candidates to prove their onboard practical experience and sea service is of a high standard. This will allow for a reduction of the total qualifying sea service required for the certificate of competency being sought. The reduction in sea service may be up to 50%.

The ROPES books are an alternative to the existing methods for recording sea service (ie: Record of Service books, Statutory Declarations or other similar methods). Candidates may use any of these methods for recording sea service.

Candidates already working in the industry may record sea service in a ROPES book that has been accrued prior to the purchase of the book. However, candidates must complete the tasks required by the ROPES book and have these tasks signed off by a person supervising them, after purchasing the book.

Candidates should be aware that completion of the ROPES book does not take the place of the required training for the issue of a certificate of competency. If candidates wish to apply for the 50% reduction of total qualifying sea service required for a particular certificate of competency, they must satisfactorily complete all of the necessary tasks detailed in the appropriate ROPES book. The 50% reduction for using the ROPES book is inclusive of the existing reduction of sea service for completing a course of training with a MSQ approved Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

Should candidates decide not to use a ROPES book, they must provide the full amount of total qualifying sea service normally required for a certificate of competency. This includes candidates who choose to use the Record of Service book or statutory declarations as evidence of the sea service they have completed. These candidates will qualify for a reduction of sea service for completing training with a MSQ approved RTO.

3 Assessment of ROPES book and sea service by MSQ

If candidates have not completed all of the ROPES book tasks, MSQ may calculate a pro-rata reduction of sea service.

4 Signing off of ROPES tasks by supervisors

An appropriate person in a supervisory role must verify, by signing-off, the task when it is satisfactorily completed by a candidate. Each task has a number of separate parts or components. The person who supervises a candidate completing the task must sign and date each component of a task. This would normally be the Master or Engineer of the ship, or some other competent person.

5 Calculation of sea service

The national agreement for measuring the basic unit of sea service is a month. This has been defined as a minimum of 150 hours of work over a period of at least 20 days.

6 Periodic ratification of sea service by MSQ

Candidates must have their sea service entries ratified by a MSQ examiner within 3 months of leaving the ship.

7 Important information

Candidates should be aware of MSQ's requirement to meet certain medical fitness and eyesight (form and colour vision) standards to allow the issue of a certificate of competency. These standards vary depending on the certificate sought. ***MSQ strongly recommends that candidates at least undertake eyesight testing prior to purchasing a ROPES book or commencing marine training with a MSQ approved RTO.***

8 Issue of ROPES books

From 1 July 2004 candidates may apply for a ROPES book. To apply a candidate must provide the following to a MSQ Marine Operations Centre:

- a completed "National Record of Practical Experience and Sea-Service or Record of Service book Application" form (F3069). This form is available from the Corporate Forms database;
- two recent identical colour passport size photographs (less than 1 year old);
- evidence of identity; and
- payment of the prescribed fee.

9 Relevant documents and/or references

NMSC Circular No: 03-2 - Principles for Assessing Sea Service

MSQ Documents database policy - Implementation of the National Record of Practical Experience and Sea-Service (ROPES)

MSQ Documents database procedure – Implementation of the National Record of Practical Experience and Sea-Service (ROPES) books

10 Contact information

Administrative advice

Maritime Safety Branch
Manager (Business Process Support)

Telephone: 3120 7362

Fax: 3120 7356

Technical advice

Maritime Safety Branch
Manager (Policy Implementation and Support)

Telephone: 3120 7354

Fax: 3120 7355

11 Further information

You can get more information on how to use or complete a ROPES book from the books themselves. Or you can talk to a Marine Operations Centre at:

Cairns	(07) 4052 7400
Townsville	(07) 4726 3400
Mackay	(07) 4944 3700
Airlie Beach	(07) 4946 2200
Gladstone	(07) 4973 1200
Bundaberg	(07) 4131 8500
Brisbane	(07) 3860 3500
Southport	(07) 5539 7300
Mooloolaba	(07) 5477 8425