



Australian Government

Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Master and designated person

Guidance: Marine Order 504 changes



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Master and designated person

From 1 June 2025, operators are required to clarify operational responsibilities by:

1. Including a designated person's responsibility statement (all vessels)
2. Clarifying the master's responsibility and authority statement (Class 1, 2 and 3 vessels)

We introduced these requirements to help clarify and differentiate operational roles and responsibilities between:

- owner
- master
- designated person.

Learn more about the role of the [designated person](#).

Designated person's responsibility statement

***Exclusions:** A designated person responsibility statement will not be required if:

- the owner is also the designated person, and
- their vessel/s meet the eligibility criteria for a simplified SMS.

How to write a designated person's responsibility statement

Include:

- who holds the function of designated person (this could be more than one person)
- their contact information
- their roles and responsibilities.

Scenarios and examples

Medium-sized company that operates 5 Class 2C work boats

The managing director of a medium-sized company operating Class 2C work boats has, in consultation with their senior management team, developed and approved a designated person responsibility statement for their vessel operations.

In determining the responsibilities and who can carry out this function, they have considered:

- the operations undertaken by vessels and crews, including the size and complexity of the operations
- the need for out of hours contact with masters and crew (not 24/7 as this is the responsibility of the emergency contact)
- the need for people with good knowledge of vessel operations and the safety management system
- the ability of the person to ensure appropriate resources and shore-based support to the vessel.

The designated person function is held by the following staff member:

Sam Lee (operations manager)

P: xxxx xxx xxx

E: samlee@companyname.com.au

The designated person responsibility statement is held on shared folder H:\vessel operations\designated person\responsibilities

Designated person responsibility statement

When undertaking the function of designated person, the rostered officer is responsible for the following:

- Monitoring the safe operation of the vessels, including that the SMS is implemented and working as intended
- Ensuring pollution prevention aspects of all vessel operations are implemented and working as intended
- Providing support and resources to vessels, including giving advice and guidance on policies and procedures to masters and crew
- Alerting the managing director to issues raised by masters and crew that cannot be satisfactorily resolved
- In consultation with master and crew, review relevant sections of the SMS following any incidents or concerns raised by masters, crew or shore-based personnel
- In consultation with master and crew, ensure inductions, training, and emergency procedures practice are carried out
- Providing briefings to the managing director as required
- Providing handover to oncoming designated person in the approved form

Master's responsibility and authority statement

There is no policy change to the master's responsibility and authority statement. This amendment is only to clarify the existing requirements.

***Exclusions:** A master's responsibility and authority statement will not be required if:

- the owner is also the master, and
- their vessel/s meet the eligibility criteria for a simplified SMS.

How to clarify the master's responsibility and authority

Review your master's responsibility and authority statement and clarify that the master:

- has authority to make decisions for the safety of the vessel, the environment and persons on or near the vessel
- may request the owner's assistance to ensure the safety of the vessel, the environment and persons on or near the vessel.

Questions and answers

Q. Do the requirements for the master's responsibility and authority statement apply to vessel operating under simplified SMS?

A: Yes. However, if the owner is also the master there is no requirement to include a responsibility and authority statement in the SMS.

Q: Do the requirements for the designated person responsibility statement apply to vessel operating under simplified SMS?

A: Yes. However, if the owner is also the designated person there is no requirement to include a responsibility and authority statement in the SMS

Contact

Got a question about this requirement? Please [contact us](#).