

Welcome Aboard BSS V3 June 2026

Welcme 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.

[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's seems. My website is www.smallcraftservices.com

Included in the fee with me you get:

- VAT @ 20%
- certificate charges levied by BSS Ltd, this changes every April, as of April 2026 the cost to me is £97.20 per certificate issued.
- 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
- travel costs
- retest visit if required

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).

Can we bring our dog?

It's a strange thing but nobody would take their dog and leave it in the car during an MOT, but dogs live on boats too so it's a slightly different thing. Your dog can be present but please bear in mind we need to be going in and out of the boat, doors open etc so it might not suit all dogs. If your dog is at all unhappy or aggressive with visitors then it can't be there at all unfortunately. I've got a dog, and she loves everyone who comes to our home but it is not always reciprocated or convenient to have her there!

How long will it take?

Most examinations of a full boat with numerous systems take around 1 ½ hours on the boat. Some are quicker, some are longer. If you have a day boat with outboard engine and a fire extinguisher and a battery, it's obviously much faster versus a 70' barge with numerous systems and cabins.

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 It could be a CO alarm out of date, or batteries able to move etc.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, even into 2026.

What are the top fail items?

The BSS published a "Top 10" [here](#)

Here are some popular fails and reasons:

- Battery securing – can they move in excess of 10mm in any direction?
- CO alarm – in date? Marked to BS EN 50291? BS Kitemark?
- Gas locker – free of holes (except drains of course!)? Cleaned and painted if rusty.
- 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.

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.

The latest BSS guide for private boats is here:

<https://www.boatsafetyscheme.org/media/299451/bss-complete-ecps-private-boat-public-version-2023.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. Read the BSS preparation guidance published [here](#)
3. Make sure we can get to the engine and batteries - you may need to clear the decks to enable this
4. Make sure there is gas aboard if you have gas appliances
5. 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).

Will my fire extinguishers pass?

Please read this info I have produced [here](#) (you might need to copy and paste the address below

<https://www.smallcraftservices.com/resources/Fire%20Extinguisher%20Info%20for%20Tom%20Keeling.pdf>

Lastly:

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.

Thanks for reading

Tom