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MCCABE
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How to obtain the Ship's Cook Certificate

The next issue of The Crew Report takes a closer look at the Ship's Cook Certificate...

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The Ship's Cook Certificate (SCC) is a mandatory requirement for chefs working on commercially registered vessels operating more than 60 miles offshore, and with 10 or more crew on board. The qualification replaces the previous Merchant Shipping (Certificate of Ships' Cooks) Regulations 1981. Chefs can qualify for the Certificate of Competency (CoC) from the age of 18 and, to be eligible, applicants are also required to have completed the STCW basic safety courses and hold an ENG1 or equivalent.

While many in the galley department have naturally opposed the requirements, claiming it is an additional waste of time and funds for yacht chefs who often have invested resources in other qualifications and experience, the regulations are in place and should be accepted. What does need to change, however, is the superyacht industry's understanding of the certificate: the value of it, what it is and what needs to be done to get it.

A key step towards achieving the Ship's Cook Certificate is to take the Assessment in Marine



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Cookery. One common misunderstanding is that this assessment is same as the Ship's Cook Certificate, and many CVs claim that chefs hold the certificate when, in fact, they have completed only the marine assessment. But there is more to be done.

Firstly, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) application form must be printed and carefully completed, and sent together with all valid certificates (originals or attested), including the STCW, ENG1, MCA-approved Food Hygiene Level 2 and the Assessment in Marine Cookery. Then sea service must be shown in entries in a Seafarer's Discharge Book, by Certificates of Discharge or Sea Service Testimonials signed by the captain. Proof of experience as a chef, or as a cook in a professional working environment, must also be sent, alongside two colour, full-face, UK-approved passport photos, one of which must be countersigned by a professional.

It is worth noting that the MCA will no longer accept online or 'in-house' food safety certification – these qualifications must be attained through an accredited provider with a physical supervised examination. If chefs already hold a valid UK Ship's Cook Certificate under the Merchant Shipping Regulations 1981, or hold professional chef qualifications, the MCA may accept these as evidence of accredited prior learning, and you may need to only complete certain elements to apply for the SCC.

At the time of writing, the MCA lists six locations in the UK and France that can administer the Assessment in Marine Cookery: South Tyneside College, the City of Glasgow College, Dumfries and Galloway College, Entier Limited, Bluewater Antibes and Tante Marie Culinary Academy. Many of these locations will offer additional help for candidates for certain theory and practical aspects of the assessment. For example, Tante Marie's full four-day prep and assessment, including one day of Food Safety Level 2, costs £1,000.

While the obtaining a SCC might seem an arduous task to yacht chefs who have already invested heavily in their careers, those who do hold it are arguably in a much stronger position for the roles they are applying for. Whether the SCC is required for a job application or not, it confirms that the candidate is up to date with all documentation and has been proactive in doing so. For those who decide not to pursue it, there will still be jobs out there but options may be limited as the superyacht fleet continuously increases in size and professionalism.

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