



Defence
Safety Authority

DMR

Defence Maritime Regulator



A Guide to Red, White and Blue Ensigns

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1: Introduction

1. This document has been produced by the Defence Maritime Regulator (DMR) to provide the maritime community with a guide to the flag status of United Kingdom (UK) Ministry of Defence (MOD) owned and operated shipping. It provides an overview of the maritime legal framework under which the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) UK Merchant Shipping Register and the Defence Register operates, and the practical application of red, white and blue (defaced) ensigns.
2. The United Nations Convention on Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS) requires that all shipping be on a State register and fly the flag (ensign) of that State. Shipping registers in turn identify recognised rules and standards for design and operation. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) manages the UK Shipping Register. Ships belonging to Her Majesty (UK MOD) have a disapplication from registration on the UK Register under the Merchant Shipping Act (MSA95). The creation by DMR of a UK Defence Shipping Register, referred to in this document as the Defence Register, addresses this disapplication so that the UK MOD remains 'at least as good as statutory law'. The Defence Register details all vessels owned, operated, or operated on behalf of the UK MOD.
3. Some ships are dual registered on both the UK Merchant Shipping Register and Defence Register. For example, the Royal Fleet Auxiliaries (RFAs) were brought back under the Merchant Shipping Act (MSA95) by the 1911 'Order in Council' and referred to under DSA02^[1] Defence Maritime Regulations. Also, SERCO Denholm Support Vessels and Boskalis Westminster Ltd Vessels are captured under the Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA) UK Merchant Shipping Register, the details of which are verified and assured by the Defence Register for military activities. The information compiled in the Defence Register^[2], detailed under DSA02 Regulation Set 601, aligns to that required by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) UK Merchant Shipping Register. Further information on the civilian construct can be found in the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) UK Shipping Register guidance document^[3] and Annex A for the Defence Register.

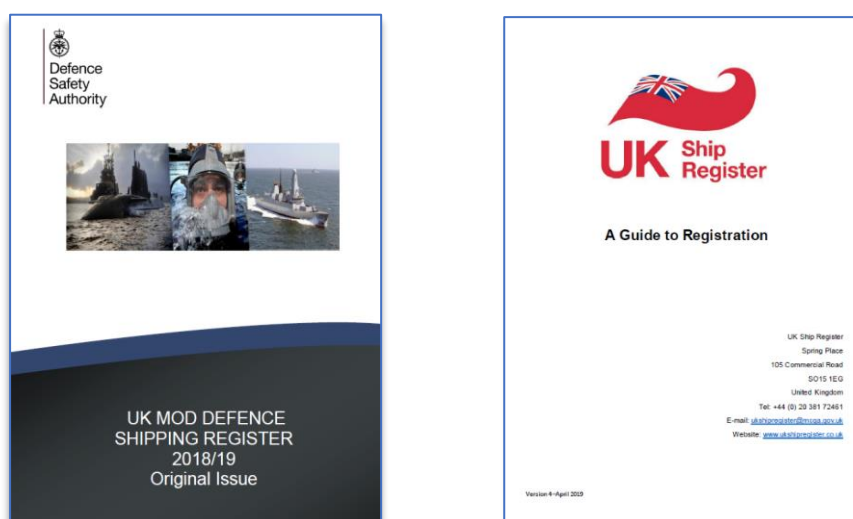


Figure 1: UK Defence Shipping Register and MCA UK Merchant Ship Register (guidance).

^[1] DSA02 - DMR: Defence Maritime Regulations for Health, Safety and Environmental Protection, The Regulations. Came into effect on 1 January 2019.

^[2] DMR - UK Defence Shipping Register 2018/19 – Original Issue.

^[3] MCA UK Shipping Register – A Guide to Registration, Version 4, 4 April 2019.

2: Maritime Legal Framework

International Maritime Treaties and Conventions

1. The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) is an agency of the United Nations (UN) with responsibility for regulating shipping. Principles are enshrined through United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 1982¹ and UN Convention on Conditions for Registration of Ships (UNCCRS) of 1986. The IMO has produced a range of legal instruments, totalling approximately 60 International Treaties and Conventions. IMO conventions include MARPOL, SOLAS, STCW, COLREGs and MLC², which address safety at sea; facilitate trade among seafaring states; and protection of the maritime environment.

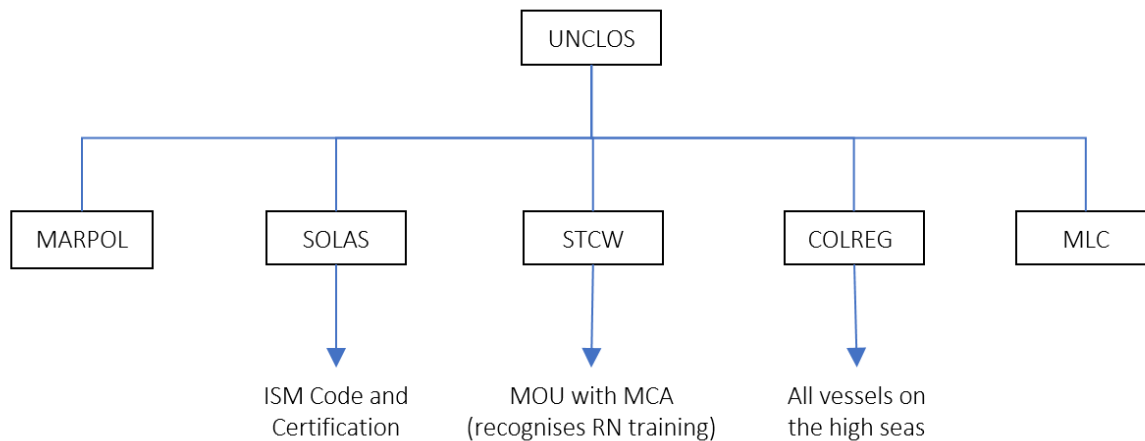


Figure 2: Key IMO Legal Instruments.

2. UNCLOS is the international agreement resulting from the third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III). It is widely recognised as the general legal framework within which all maritime activities are carried out. It stipulates that for a vessel to have freedom of navigation of international waters it must be registered with a State, i.e. the flag of that state. Article 91 of UNCLOS requires there to be a genuine link between the State and/or the owning company based in the State.

3. UNCLOS has introduced a number of significant provisions with relevance for Defence Shipping, these include the definition of a 'Warship' and specific provisions and disapplications in relation to 'Warships' and 'Government Ships' on non-commercial service.

¹ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), United Nations, 1982.

² International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL); International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS); International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping (STCW); International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREG); Maritime Labour Convention (MLC).

UK Implementation of International and European Legal Legislation

4. State implementation of International and European Legal Instruments is through country specific legislation. European Directives are transposed into national law by the legislatures in each Member State of the European Union. These are implemented in the UK by primary 'Acts' and secondary 'Regulations' and equivalent child rules through the UK Merchant Shipping Regulations.

5. For UK MOD shipping the significant Acts include:

- the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA);
- the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA); together with specific legislation covering aspects such as Air Emissions (through the Clean Air Act) and Noise (through the Environmental Noise Regulations³); and
- the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 (MSA95); consolidates the Merchant Shipping Acts 1894 to 1994 and other enactments relating to merchant shipping.

6. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) is the statutory regulator responsible for implementing the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 (MSA95) and associated maritime regulations in the UK. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) issues Merchant Shipping Notices (MSNs), which provide guidance on applicable statutory instruments that must be complied with under UK legislation.

UK MOD Disapplication to the Merchant Shipping Act 95

7. The UK MOD has a disapplication to the Merchant Shipping Act (MSA95), therefore UK MOD owned and operated shipping cannot be registered on the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) UK Shipping Register of Merchant Ships, unless the vessel flies a red ensign or has been partially brought back under the Merchant Shipping Act (MSA95) by an 'Order in Council'⁴, such as the RFAs. Article 95 and 96 of UNCLOS grants warships and government ships not under commercial service, immunity from jurisdiction from another State, meaning that a British Government ship cannot be boarded. The Defence Register provides the means to register Warships (under the white ensign) or Government owned and operated ships (under a defaced blue ensign), which are classified under their own distinct and high-risk operational profiles.

8. The Secretary of State (SofS) for Defence Policy Statement requires defence to maintain departmental arrangements that produce outcomes that are, as far as reasonably practicable, at least as good as those required by UK legislation. In this case, registration of UK MOD owned and operated shipping is captured in the Defence Register, which addresses the disapplication of Merchant Shipping Act (MSA95). DSA 02 Defence Maritime Regulation set 601 identifies the required data in the Defence Register. The Platform Authorities and Operating Duty Holders (ODH) are responsible for validating the data in the Defence Register and ensuring any updates are captured on an annual basis. This aligns to the publishing timescales of the DMR Annual Assurance Report (AAR).

³ Separate regulations exist for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, for brevity only the regulations for England have been referenced.

⁴ The MCA makes provision for the 'SofS' to make an 'Order in Council' which nullifies elements of the disapplication. As a consequence, the RFAs operate under two regulatory regimes DMR and the MCA.

3: UK MOD - Flag Status and Definitions

1. UK MOD owned and operated vessels (also known as UK Defence Shipping) are established under different ensigns dependent on role and ownership, as illustrated in Figure 3 (page 8). These are either red, white, or blue (defaced) ensigns⁵. Unless specifically permitted, British ships generally fly the red ensign and come under Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) jurisdiction. White ensign is allocated to commissioned warships of the Royal Navy (RN) and Royal Marine (RM) vessels; defaced blue ensign with a badge insignia for the RFA vessels, Army vessels, royal yacht squadrons, and UK MOD Defence Police (MDP) craft; defaced blue ensign with a horizontal anchor for other vessels under Government Service; and red ensign for vessels under UK MOD support contracts.

White Ensign - Royal Navy (RN) and Royal Marines (RM)

2. An Order in Council from 1864 determined that, from then on, ships commissioned into service with the Royal Navy (RN) warships and Royal Marines (RM) should wear a white ensign. The Royal Navy operates out of three UK naval bases HMNB PORTSMOUTH; HMNB DEVONPORT; and HMNB CLYDE, and overseas including Gibraltar and Cyprus. All RM craft are maintained by the Royal Navy. NATO designations include Aircraft Carrier (CVx); Cruiser (Cx); Destroyer (Dxx); Frigate (Fxx); Inshore Patrol (Pxx); Landing/Amphibious (Lxx); Mine Counter Measures (Mxx); Offshore Patrol (OPx); and Submarine (SSx). The white ensign can also be flown by Trinity House ships if they are escorting the Sovereign.



Defaced Blue Ensign with Vertical Anchor - Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA)

3. The RFA auxiliary support ships flying a defaced blue ensign with a vertical anchor. These vessels support the Royal Navy in maintaining world-wide operations with fuel, ammunition and supplies, normally by Replenishment at Sea (RAS). The RFA also transport Army and Royal Marines (RM) personnel and their equipment, and conduct humanitarian operations. Although the UK MOD has a disapplication to the Merchant Shipping Act (MSA95), the RFAs are partially brought back under the Merchant Shipping Act (MSA95) by an 'Order in Council' and are registered on both the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) UK Merchant Shipping Register and the Defence Register. Designated as UK MOD Ships with NATO Auxiliary (Axx & Yxx) classification.



Defaced Blue Ensign with Horizontal Anchor - The Government Service Ensign

4. This ensign is commonly used by warships undergoing contractor sea trials before being formally accepted into service by UK MOD. There are a number of UK MOD Sail Training Yachts that operate out of Royal Yacht Clubs and these are permitted to fly a defaced blue ensign representing their club, or, the Government Service Ensign for larger sail training yachts.



⁵ BRd2 paragraph 9142 provides details on when different Ensign Colours and when they should be used for RN and RM vessels.

Defaced Blue Ensign with British Army Insignia – Her Majesty’s Army Vessel (HMAV)

5. Her Majesty’s Army Vessel (HMAV) is the prefix used for a ship which is an operational unit of the British Army, commanded by British Army Officers and crewed by army personnel in uniform. These include Army Work Boats; Combat Support Boats; Mexeflotes; and Assault Craft. Designations include NATO Ship classification types: Patrol (Pxx).



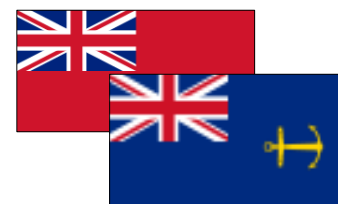
Defaced Blue Ensign with Police Insignia – UK MOD Defence Police (MDP)

6. The MOD Police (MDP) marine unit fly a defaced blue ensign and currently operate a number of patrol craft and a number of Rigid Hulled Inflatable Boats (RHIBs). Their primary duties are to escort UK MOD defence vessels, including vessels from visiting Navies, and port securities. MDP vessels operate between HMNB Devonport, HMNB Portsmouth and HMNB Clyde. Designations include NATO Ship classification types: Patrol (Pxx).



Red Ensign / Government Service Ensign

7. The UK MOD have a number of support vessels captured under the red ensign, which come under Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) jurisdiction and inspection regime. However, when embarking military personnel or when deployed overseas on Government operations then the ensign is transferred to a Government Service Ensign.



8. **Strategic RO-ROs:** the Strategic RO-ROs come under a 22-year charter from Foreland Shipping, who own, operate, and crew the ships when they are not being used for military service. Under this status they fly the red ensign. When activated for military tasking the crews come under the Armed Forces Act 2006 and will fly the defaced blue ensign with a horizontal anchor to denote a vessel under Government Service.

9. **SERCO Denholm Support Vessels:** the SERCO Denholm Marine Service is a joint venture under a 15-year UK MOD Defence Marine Services (DMS) contractual arrangements to deliver a wide range of marine services to the Royal Navy. These include auxiliary support and recovery, diving support, tugs, military training, pilot boats and tenders.

10. **Boskalis Westminster Ltd:** Boskalis manage a number of UK MOD owned workboats and Force Protection Craft (FPC). These vessels are civilian (commercially) registered and certified under the Workboat Code. The Boskalis Westminster Ltd manage and operate a number of workboats which are owned by the UK MOD. All craft are captured on both the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) UK Merchant Shipping Register and Defence Register as UK MOD tasked vessels. The UK MOD has an interest as most of these vessels are associated with the carriage of OME (Ordnance, Munitions and Explosives) or operate in support of UK MOD training and range activities.

11. **Ships Taken Up From Trade (STUFT):** are UK Flagged Shipping which can be taken up from trade to support UK military operations. These are managed by the UK MOD Salvage and Marine Operations (SALMO) who act as a de facto Platform Authority for all STUFT shipping. If the vessel has been converted, modified, acting as part of a task group or carrying military personnel as force protection then the Government service ensign is to be displayed. If strictly used on a commercial Port A – B, with cargo pick up and drop off, then red ensign is to be displayed.

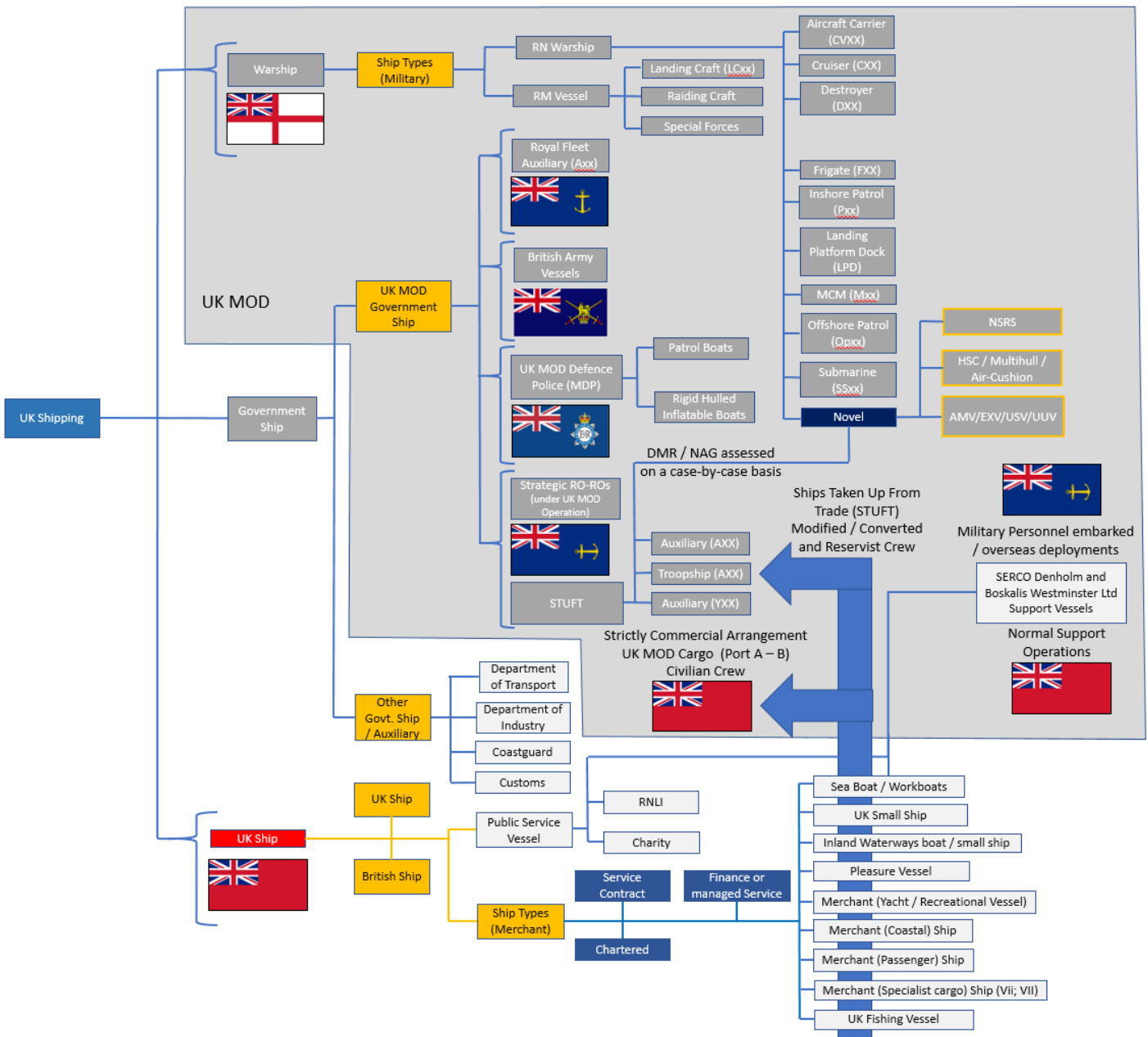


Figure 3: UK Defence Shipping Schematic (shaded in grey).

4: Practical Application

Selection of Ensign

1. For UK Defence Shipping the selection of ensign will depend on the type of vessel under consideration and its life cycle phase. Figure 4 (page 10) provides a guide to UK Defence Shipping and the practical application of ensign during the acquisition, in-service and disposal phases. It highlights ten types of vessels which fall broadly into three main categories: Warship; Government Service (non-commercial service); and Merchant Ship (commercial operations).
2. Article 95 and 96 of UNCLOS grants Warships and Government Service vessels (non-commercial service) immunity from jurisdiction of any State other than the flag State when on the high seas, therefore these vessels cannot be boarded by another lawful agent when operating on the high seas. Generally, a ship flying a White or Blue Ensign is indicating it is a government ship and not under commercial service and has immunity from compliance with UNCLOS. This highlights the importance of which ensign is flown and the transfer of ensign during special conditions for Strategic RO-ROs, SERCO Denholm & Boskalis support vessels, and Ships Taken Up From Trade (STUFT). Descriptions of vessels as referenced in the legislation are provided below, noting that the activity and manning inform the choice of ensign as much as the design.
3. **Warship:** a vessel belonging to the armed forces of a state bearing external marks distinguishing such ships of its nationality, under command by the government of the State, and manned by regular armed forces or Government crew, whom come under the Armed Services Act 2006. Operationally warships can be deployed to war-zones or areas of high hostility. For this reason, they are expected to exhibit higher damage control and survivability features and can be fitted with either offensive and defence weapon systems, or purely defence weapon systems as part of a task group. The Royal Navy (RN) and Royal Marines (RM) operate warships as defined in international law.
4. **Government Service (Non-commercial Service):** vessels under government state ownership or operation, with government crew, which are not distinguished under the definition of 'warship' and do not operate in a commercial arrangement. These include auxiliary and training vessels in support of the regular armed forces. The RFAs operate under an Order-in-Council that re-applies parts of the Merchant Shipping Act (MSA95). The main purpose of the re-application in this case is about ensuring the RFAs can obtain merchant seafarers against defined acceptable and assured civilian living standards and safety. As such the RFAs operate under two regulatory regimes.
5. **Merchant Ship:** a vessel that is being operated for commercial purposes, classified by the type of cargo that they carry oil; chemicals; gas; containers; passengers; vehicles; and bulk material. Also contained under this definition are passenger ships, small commercial vessels, luxury yachts, and fishing vessels. All vessels under this category operate in a benign operational profile and come under Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) UK Merchant Shipping Registration. They operate under Ownership of Standards and are regulated by flag administration with 'No Military Features or Standards'. A merchant ship under a red ensign could invite challenge from the Port or Flag State seeking to board a ship under UNCLOS or Port State Control arrangements.

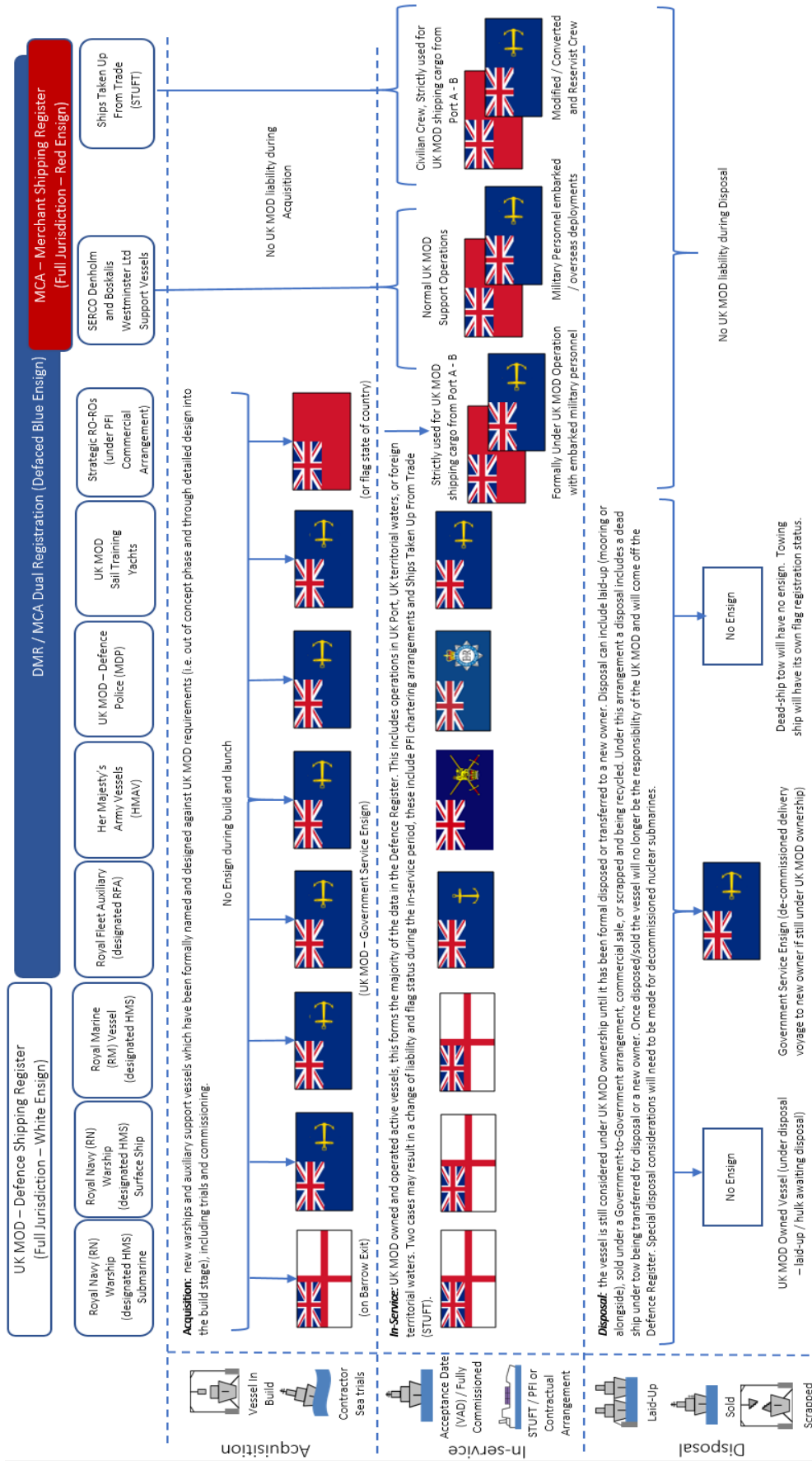


Figure 4: UK Defence Shipping - Practical Application of Ensign during lifecycle phases.

Life Cycle Phases

6. **Acquisition:** during design, build and launch, vessels will not generally flag an ensign. Under Contractor Sea Trials (CSTs) the vessel flag status will vary depending on the type of vessel. Under a commercial or Private finance initiative (PFI) arrangement, the vessel comes under the Ship Builder liability and may be operated by a civilian crew. Vessels can be registered under the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) UK Merchant Shipping Register and are permitted to fly the red ensign, or the flag of the state (e.g. the Tide class flew a Korean flag for basic contractor sea trials).

7. If the Contractor Sea Trials are manned by regular armed forces or government crew, who come under the Armed Services Act 2006, or mixed civilian crew, then the conditions of flag status becomes more complex as the UK MOD holds a level of liability and responsibility. This includes the operation of weapon systems and Government Furnished Equipment (GFX / GFE). A defaced blue ensign with a horizontal anchor to denote Government Service should be flown. Submarines will generally flag a white ensign during Barrow exit and Contractor Sea Trials predominately due to the UK MOD liabilities for the weapon systems and the nuclear reactor.

8. On successful completion of trials, the vessel contract will specify the acceptance conditions for formal hand-over to the UK MOD on the Vessel Acceptance Date (VAD)⁶. Appropriate ship safety certification by the Naval Authority Group (NAG), Classification Society, or another Recognised Organisation (RO), and Safety and Readiness Check (SARC) requirements will need to be completed. This includes the processes associated with Integrated Testing, Evaluation and Acceptance (ITEA) and Sea Acceptance Trials (SATs) undertaken whilst at sea, leading to UK MOD ownership.

9. **In-service:** as highlighted in Section 3, vessels with HMS designation will flag a white ensign which will remain the situation until formally decommissioned. These include Royal Navy (RN) submarines and surface warships, and Royal Marine (RM) vessels.

10. Defence government vessels will flag a defaced blue ensign with their own badge insignia for the RFAs, Her Majesty's Army Vessel (HMAV), and MOD Police (MDP) Marine Unit. All other government owned and operated vessels will fly the Government Service Ensign (defaced blue), with special conditions set-up for transferring ensigns depending on the operation of the vessel, see paragraphs 12 - 16.

11. **Disposal:** UK MOD owned vessels when decommissioned and laid-up waiting for disposal will not fly an ensign but will continue to be subject to safety certification. Decommissioned vessels classed as a dead ship under tow will also not fly an ensign. The towing ship will have its own flag registration status. A Government Service Ensign (defaced blue) would only be flown in the disposal phase if the decommissioned vessel, still under UK MOD ownership, is destined for a delivery voyage under its own power. The UK MOD would not normally take liability for the disposal of Strategic RO-ROs, SERCO Denholm & Boskalis support vessels, and Ships Taken Up From Trade (STUFT).

⁶ *Delayed Commissioning Ceremonies:* For programming reasons the ceremony of commissioning may take place sometime after the formal act of acceptance and actual commissioning of new RN or RM vessels. The White Ensign may be hoisted at an appropriate point during this ceremony, the masthead pennant should remain flying throughout.

Special Cases of Transferring Ensigns when In-service

12. **Strategic RO-ROs:** these come under a 22-year charter from Foreland Shipping, who own, operate and crew the ships when they are not being used for military service under this state the ships come under Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) jurisdiction and fly the red ensign. If the vessels operate under civilian crew then standards and operating conditions required are equivalent to those for merchant or passenger vessels.

13. When used for UK MOD military service the crews come under the Armed Forces Act 2006 and the vessels operate with a full suite of Naval Authority Certification to take into account their military role. During this transition the ships come formally under Government operation, and similar to STUFT will be required to fly a defaced blue ensign with a horizontal anchor to denote Government Service.

14. **SERCO Denholm and Boskalis Westminster Ltd support vessels:** these will normally fly a red ensign for UK MOD support operations. When operating with embarked military personnel, or when operating outside UK waters on government service, the country will be informed of the visit by the sponsoring unit and will be subject to a vessel visit clearance process. In this situation vessels are required to fly the defaced blue ensign with a horizontal anchor to denote Government Service.

15. **Ship Taken Up From Trade (STUFT):** these can be chartered or requisitioned to provide specialist designed capability in direct support of enhancing the military effect. This is distinct to a commercial vessel on charter that may be carrying out its trading function in support of a military operation where a red ensign is flown and is strictly used in a commercial arrangement, the distinction being that a STUFT vessel may be employed in a potentially high-threat area, and be expected to be integrated directly into a larger military venture, which will be underwritten by the UK MOD.

16. The UK MOD Salvage and Marine Operations (SALMO) act as a de facto Platform Authority for all STUFT shipping. A SALMO 'Crown Surveyor' will assess and certify a vessel when taken up from trade and augmented with the necessary means to operate in its design function in a higher threat environment, or for any change in function requiring material conversion (i.e. helicopter pads and lifting equipment). Such vessels will be subject to additional preparations and conditions to make sure they can work as part of a deployed task force or military operation. To achieve this, depending on the nature of the operation, it may be necessary to undertake a set of augmentation measures such as adopting a defaced blue ensign with a horizontal anchor to denote Government Service, and classification, replacement or augmentation of civilian crew with military staff. This includes the installation of Military Tasked Equipment (MTE) to make its commercial role compatible with the military requirement. A STUFT vessel will be expected to retain its merchant ship status, and not have an offensive capability.

Annex A: Ship Registration and Certification

- Factors considered when selecting the registration method and the resulting ensign are:
 - UK MOD Government owned and Operated Vessel;
 - operational profile;
 - type of vessel; Warship, Govt or Merchant Ship (determined by operational profile);
 - key hazards and risks;
 - ownership;
 - platform Authority;
 - Operating Duty Holder; and
 - Registration of Vessel – lifecycle phase⁷.

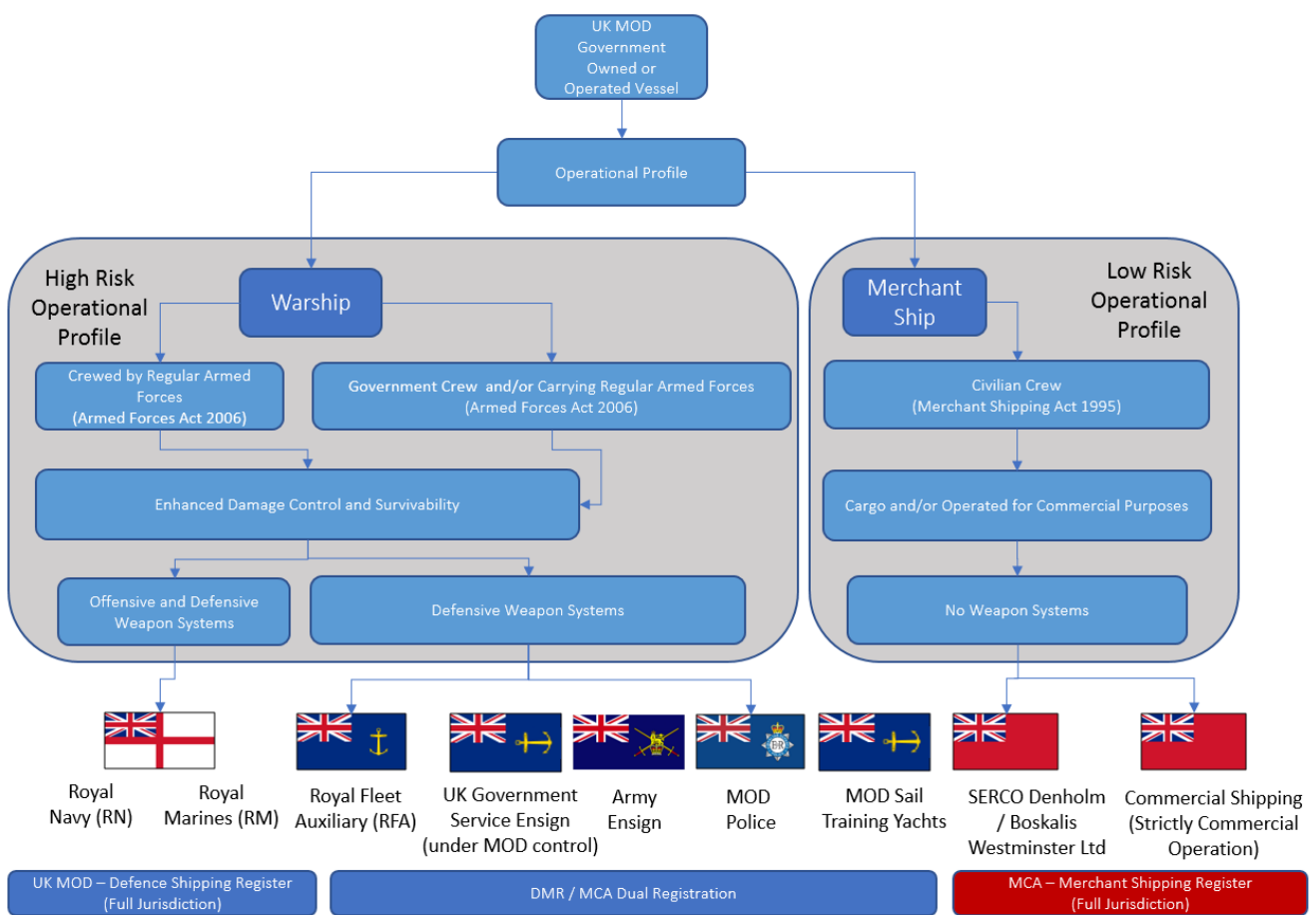


Figure A1: In-Service: UK Merchant Register or Defence Register process diagram.

⁷ Registration of the vessel predominately focuses on in-service status however special considerations need to be taken into account during sea trials and transfer of ownership between the shipyard and UK MOD.

MCA UK Merchant Shipping Registration

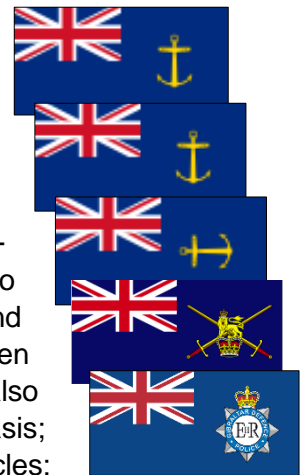
2. The UK Shipping Register of Merchant Ships (Part I) is administered by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and addresses the UK Government's obligations as a flag state according to applicable maritime Rules for that registered ship type as UK Merchant Shipping, enacted under clauses of the Merchant Shipping Act (MSA95).



3. Registration of a ship on the UK Shipping Register of Merchant Ships is a two-stage process comprising of registration and addressing certain certification requirements, depending on the ship type and operational risk profile. Ships registered under this process are required to fly the red ensign. Registration establishes the legal owner of the ship and the particulars of the ship in order to establish which ship type is applicable. It also it defines the nation under which its operation is legislated and the protection it can receive whilst in international waters and following port state control in foreign waters. The UK Merchant Safety Management Certificate (under the ISM code) is the means by which individual ships may demonstrate continued conformance with the rules on safety and environmental protection resulting from IMO and ILO treaties and Conventions. UK registered merchant ships are assigned to a specific ship class at the point of registration, which defines their type of permitted use. It also determines which certification they must hold and specifies the inspection and survey regime required to comply with this certification. The classes are established and assigned by the Flag State or delegated to Classification Societies (known as Recognised Organisations), who can also conduct surveys and inspections.

UK Defence Shipping Registration

4. The Defence Register aims to follow the same process as the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) UK Merchant Shipping Register. The Defence Register is updated on a 6-monthly basis and published annually alongside the DMR Annual Assurance Report (AAR). The Defence Register comprises of all vessels owned by, operated by, or operated on behalf of the UK MOD. It considers the significant stages of a ship's lifecycle, using the CADMID⁸ cycle, and is split into three elements Acquisition⁹, In-Service, and Disposal. The data captured in the Defence Register is linked to key documentation within the Defence Compliance Register, both owned and managed by DMR. The data is managed by DMR and key stakeholders are given the opportunity to verify the data before it is formally published, which also includes information on miscellaneous (novel) platforms on a case-by-case basis; decommissioned warships still under UK MOD ownership; autonomous vehicles; and Army amphibious craft and boats.



⁸ Concept, Assessment, Design, Manufacture, In-service, Disposal (CADMID)

⁹ Acquisition comprising of Concept/Assessment/Design/Manufacture, including trials and commissioning as a subset.

Defence Safety Assurance (DSA) 02 – Maritime Regulation Set 601

5. The Defence Register includes the following information, which is aligned to the data captured in the UK Merchant Shipping Register (MCA – red ensign):

- ships Name;
- ship Type by UKSR civil or NATO Designation;
- IMO Number;
- Radio Call Sign (and/or MMSI Number);
- Construction Material;
- Length and Displacement;
- base Port;
- builder/Where Built;
- year of build / launch /In-service (commission) date;
- flag Status (acquisition, commissioned, de-commissioned);
- Classification Society;
- particulars of the Operating Duty Holder (ODH);
- particulars of the Platform Authority (PA).

6. The Defence Register will include links to the Naval Authority System (NAS) Certification, Combat Safety Summary (CSS), Command Safety and Environmental Summary (CSES), and Operating Safety Statement Review (OSSR).

Operating Duty Holder (ODH) and Platform Authority (PA)

7. The Accountable Person who ensures the ship is being ‘Operated Safely’, may be an ODH holding the duty of care for the safety of those on-board each vessel and the safety of third parties, as defined in their Document of Compliance (DOC). They are also responsible for the environmental protection activities required when the vessel is being operated. The PA is the supporting Accountable Person responsible for the ‘Safe to Operate’ providing safety and environmental protection assurance of the platform and integrated systems and equipment through the vessel’s lifecycle.

Certification Strategy

8. A Certification Strategy should be in place for each ship and documented in a Certification Plan, agreed with the DMR Registrar. The Certification Strategy specifies the appropriate class notation selected according to the ship type and its particulars. It should also detail surveys to be undertaken by the Registration Authority (MCA or DMR/NAG) and details any surveys to be delegated to Classification Societies or other Recognised Organisations. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has delegated authority to selected Classification Societies and Certifying Authorities for some Merchant ship types. The Naval Authority Group (NAG) is authorised by DMR to provide a similar certification coverage for ‘Key Hazard’ areas, as defined in the DSA 02. Naval Authority Group (NAG) give Recognised Organisation (RO) status to Maritime Commissioning and Testing Authority (MCTA) as well as Lloyds Register (LR) and Det Norske Veritas & Germanischer Lloyd (DNV-GL) class societies. Laid-Up Submarines (LUSM) will be kept on the Defence Register as an UK MOD asset. These don’t have an ODH and are not certificated by the Naval Authority Group (NAG) but will have an annual inspection regime put in-place.

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