

This leaflet aims to provide some practical guidance when changing the name of your boat and outlines the process for the two registers in the UK, namely the Part I Register and the Part III Register (Small Ships Register: SSR).

PART I REGISTERED BOATS:

Where your boat is on Part I of the Register, you will need to complete a Change of Name application form and send it off to the UK Ship Register (RSS) with the appropriate fee and the previous Certificate of Registry.

Following receipt of the application form and the appropriate fee, the Registrar will issue a carving and marking note to the owner. In the case of a private boat under 24 metres the owner is required to arrange for the newly issued Name and Port of Choice to be marked conspicuously on the stern.

For craft under 24 metres, the owner is required to certify to the Registrar that the boat has been properly marked by returning the certified carving and marking note within 3 months.

The Registrar will then amend its records accordingly and the boat's new name will appear on the new Certificate of Registry.

PART III – SMALL SHIPS REGISTER (SSR):

Where your boat is on the SSR, the change of name will act in such a way as to lapse the current registration and create a new registration. Therefore you will need to re-apply on a fresh application form with the appropriate fee. You will be required to return the previous Certificate of Registry with the fresh application form.

A registration certificate will normally be issued with no further formality required. The owner must paint or fix on a visible external surface of the boat the number of registration with the prefix 'SSR'. The exact detail of how this must be done is laid down by the Registrar and details are available from the Registry.

COMMON CONCERNS:

The most common concern on changing the name of your boat is that of the paperwork trail.

PART I REGISTERED BOATS:

Where your boat is Part I Registered, your paperwork trail will be intact. Your Bill of Sale will show the former name, keeping a copy of your change of name application form will show the beginnings of the change of name, then the Registry's carving note will show a stage further in the process, with the amended Certificate of Registry finally showing the actual change of name.

SSR BOATS:

Where your boat is on the SSR – the paperwork trail does fall somewhat short. It is therefore down to you to ensure that paperwork traces the change of name. You can do this by writing a covering letter to the Registry to accompany the application form. On the fresh application form, you could put the boat's proposed new name and next to it in brackets the old name e.g. (XXXX formerly XXXXX), keeping a copy of both the letter and the application form. Keep a copy of the old Certificate of Registry showing the old name and the new Certificate of Registry showing the new name. This should help to satisfy a prospective purchaser and/or Customs Officials.

UNREGISTERED BOATS:

Where a change of name is made to an unregistered boat, the only way to achieve a paper trail is to document the change of name yourself on paper e.g. making a diary entry and keeping a note of the change of name from XXX to XXXX and noting the date. Whilst this has no official stamp on it, it is at least an attempt to maintain some form of paper trail. If you are a member of a club or a marina, you might well ask an official of the club or marina to co-sign to acknowledge that he/she knew the boat to be the name of XXX which has now changed to XXXX. Alternatively you can swear a statutory declaration before a solicitor/commissioner for oaths. This a legal document sworn on oath, which may go some way to satisfying a prospective purchaser, customs official etc.

Another possible way of recording the change of name for an unregistered boat would be a letter to the insurance company asking for an acknowledgement which could then be kept on file as part of the ship's papers.

NAMING YOUR BOAT:

You will need to decide on a name by which your boat is to be known. For boats on the Part I Register, the proposed name should not already be the name of a ship on the Part I Register or be similar to such a name.

General restrictions for both registers are that; the proposed name should not be similar to a distress signal, likely to cause offence or embarrassment, have a clear connection with the Royal Family, or have a port as part of its name if that is not the boat's port of choice.

CONTACTS:

To download the forms that you need to change the name of your Part I registered boat, or for an application for the SSR visit the UK Ship Register (RSS) website: <https://www.gov.uk/owning-yacht-sail-boat-motorboat> then follow the link for online registration.

UK Ship Register (RSS)
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW

Tel. No. 02920 448800

Fax No. 02920 448820

Web: <https://www.gov.uk/owning-yacht-sail-boat-motorboat>

For more information kindly contact the RYA Legal Team on 023 8060 4223 or legal@rya.org.uk

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