



GETTING STARTED • 2026 EDITION

The 3 essential documents *to work on a superyacht.*

Without them, you don't step on board, whatever your CV says.
Updated for the 2026 changes to STCW safety training.

BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

Three documents. *No exceptions.*

Every season, talented hospitality and catering professionals miss real opportunities for one reason: paperwork. In 30 years in the yachting industry, we have seen it again and again. Get these three in order before you apply anywhere.

1 STCW Basic Training

The international safety course every crew member needs, whatever the department: deckhand, steward or stewardess, chef, engineer. It is the legal minimum for working on yachts over 24 m in commercial use. About five days; details on the next page.

2 ENG1 seafarer medical, or a recognised equivalent

A medical examination confirming that you are fit to work at sea. It must be issued by a doctor **approved by the UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)**, or be a seafarer medical from a country whose certificates the MCA recognises. It is valid for up to two years.

WATCH OUT Fake “ENG1 doctors” exist. Check that your doctor is on the MCA’s published list of approved doctors before you book.

3 A valid passport, and the right visas

Your passport should be valid well beyond your contract dates (many employers ask for at least six months). Non-EU crew working in the Mediterranean also need to respect the Schengen rules, and crew heading for Florida and the Caribbean usually need a US visa. The right visa depends on your nationality, the yacht’s flag and its itinerary: check with the consulate before you travel.

AND THE SEAMAN’S BOOK?

Useful, but not mandatory everywhere. What you do need is proof of your sea time: testimonials signed by your captain, ideally kept in a service record book. The MCA accepts the PYA Service Record Book, now also available in digital form, as evidence of sea service.

DOCUMENT 1, IN DETAIL

STCW Basic Training, *explained.*

STCW is the International Maritime Organization's standard for seafarer training and watchkeeping, adopted in 1978, revised in 1995 and in 2010 (the Manila amendments), and amended since, most recently in 2024, with changes in force since 1 January 2026. Basic Training is the entry-level course that applies to all positions.

MODULE	WHAT YOU LEARN	REFRESH
Personal Survival Techniques PST	Abandoning ship, life rafts, immersion suits, distress signals.	Every 5 years
Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting FPFF	Preventing fire, extinguishers, breathing apparatus, live-fire drills.	Every 5 years
Elementary First Aid EFA	CPR, injuries, first response until help arrives.	No fixed expiry*
Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities PSSR	Safe working, teamwork, fatigue and, since 2026, preventing violence and harassment on board.	No fixed expiry*
Proficiency in Security Awareness PSA	Security on board, piracy awareness, the ISPS Code. Often included in the same week.	No fixed expiry

* First aid and PSSR do not formally expire under the STCW Code, but some employers, flag states and insurers prefer recent certificates. The PST and fire-fighting refreshers usually take one day each.

Booking your course

PRACTICAL POINTS

- ◆ **Choose an approved course.** Check that the school is approved by the MCA, or by the flag state you will sail under. The MCA publishes its list of approved training providers.
- ◆ **Ask for the current price and dates.** Prices vary by country and school; book early for spring, before the Mediterranean season.
- ◆ **Keep the originals safe.** You will show them at every interview and every flag or port inspection. Keep scans in a secure folder.

WHAT CHANGED IN 2026

The new PSSR, and *who must update.*

IN FORCE SINCE 1 JANUARY 2026**PSSR now covers violence and harassment on board.**

The IMO amendment MSC.560(108) rewrote the PSSR module of STCW Basic Training. It now includes the prevention of, and response to, violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault. Anyone taking PSSR from 1 January 2026 follows the new content.

UK-certified seafarers: under the MCA's notice MGN 718 (updated 3 September 2026), if your PSSR certificate is dated before 1 January 2026 you must complete a free online module of about one hour, "Prevention and Response to Violence & Harassment", **by 31 March 2027.**

Other flag states may apply different rules: check with your flag state or your training school.

Source: gov.uk • MGN 718 (M+F) IMO amendment to PSSR

Where to train

A SHORT LIST, BY HUB

HUB	SCHOOL	WHAT IT STATES
Antibes	Bluewater bluewateryachting.com	5-day STCW Basic Safety Training, MCA-accredited modules. Also in Palma.
Antibes	D&B Crew Services & Training dandbservices.com	MCA- and RYA-accredited; MCA-approved STCW Basic Training.
Palma	Crew Training Solutions crewtrainingsolutions.com	STCW Basic Training accepted by the MCA. Also in Naples.
United Kingdom	UKSA, Cowes uksa.org	5-day STCW Basic Safety Training, security awareness included.
United Kingdom	Maritime Skills Academy maritimeskillsacademy.com	Courses approved by the MCA, including STCW Basic Safety Training.
Fort Lauderdale	Maritime Professional Training mptusa.com	STCW Basic Safety Training in Florida. Check that the certificate suits the flag you will sail under.

Information taken from each school's own website in October 2026. Always confirm approval, dates and price with the school before booking.

THE NEXT STEP

The documents are the start. *THE ROUTE is the plan.*

Which certificates you need after the basics, in what order, by when, and what each one costs, built from your own CV and your department.

FOR CREW NEW TO YACHTING

THE ROUTE

Right tickets, right order.

- ◆ Where you stand today, read from your CV
- ◆ The right certificates in the right order, with timing
- ◆ An indicative cost for every step
- ◆ Your next 90 days, in plain words

Personal licence roadmap

Ready within 48 hours · one-off

€40

Deck, engine, interior or galley: the roadmap follows your department.

Get my Route · €40

Secure checkout · Stripe

Card, Apple Pay or PayPal, no PayPal account needed. After payment, send your CV to contact@freelanceyachting.com.

Yachting careers, built by experts.

QUESTIONS

contact@freelanceyachting.com