

Australian Transport Council

# Uniform Shipping Laws Code

Section 1: Introduction, Definitions and  
General Requirements

(AS AMENDED TO OCTOBER 1993)



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## **PREFACE**

This Code has been adopted by the Australian Transport Council as a basis for uniform legislation of the Commonwealth, States and Northern Territory relating to the survey, manning and operation of commercial vessels in Australia.

The Australian Transport Council which has absorbed all the functions of the former Marine and Ports Council of Australia, comprises Commonwealth, State and Northern Territory Ministers responsible for ports and marine affairs and other transport matters.

It should be noted that provisions of the Code do not have the force of law except to the extent that they are adopted in Commonwealth, State or Territory legislation. This is being done progressively as circumstances permit.

The Council acknowledges the work done by the Association of Australian Port and Marine Authorities in drawing up the initial requirements for the Code.

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**ANNEXURE**  
**UNIFORM SHIPPING LAWS CODE**

**SECTION 1**

**Introduction, Definitions and General Requirements**

This Section is divided into five Parts as follows:

- Part 1 Preliminary
- Part 2 Definitions
- Part 3 Operational Areas and Classification of Vessels
- Part 4 General
- Part 5 Submission of Information

**PART 1—PRELIMINARY**

1. For convenience of presentation and application these Uniform Requirements have been produced in Sections, each dealing with an appropriate area of control. Each Section shall always be read in conjunction with this Section—'Introduction, Definitions and General Requirements' and such other Section or Sections to which a special reference may be made.

These include:

Collision Regulations

Construction—consisting of the following sub-Sections:

- A Preliminary
- B Structural Strength
- C Watertight Sub-division of Passenger Vessels
- D Watertight Sub-division of Class 2 and Class 3 Vessels
- E Passengers, Passenger Accommodation, Guard Rails and Bulwarks
- F Structural Fire Protection
- G Design Loadings
- H Aluminium
- I Copper Nickel Alloy
- J Ferro-Cement
- K Fibre Reinforced Plastic
- L Steel
- M Timber

Crew Accommodation

Emergency Procedures and Safety of Navigation

Engineering

Equipment, Machinery and Materials

Qualifications and Manning, Trading Vessels

Fire Appliances

Hire and Drive Vessels

Life Saving Appliances

Load Lines

Mercantile Marine

Miscellaneous Equipment

Radio Equipment

River Murray Traffic Regulations

Qualifications and Manning, Fishing Vessels

Stability—consisting of the following sub-Sections:

- A Preliminary
- B Simplified Presentation of Stability
- C Stability Criteria

Surveys and Certificates of Survey

2. These Uniform Requirements shall apply to all new vessels and except when otherwise specified in a Section, to all existing vessels as far as is considered reasonable and practicable by the Authority.

## PART 2—DEFINITIONS

3. The definitions set out in clause 4 of this Section shall have the same meaning when used in reference to any Section of these Uniform Requirements unless the contrary intention appears.

4. The following terms shall have the meanings set against them respectively:

*Accommodation Space*—Passenger spaces, corridors, lavatories, cabins, offices, crew spaces, shops, isolated pantries and lockers and similar spaces.

*Approved*—Approved by the Authority

*Authority*—The statutory marine authority of the Commonwealth of Australia or of a State or Territory within the Commonwealth.

*Breadth*—The maximum breadth measured amidships

- (i) in the case of a metal hull—to the moulded line of the frame; and
- (ii) in the case of any other hull—to the outer surface of the hull.

*Cargo Space*—All spaces appropriated for cargo including trunks leading to such spaces.

*Classed Vessel*—A vessel in respect of which there is in force a Classification Certificate.

*Classification Certificate*—A certificate issued by a Classification Society which records the classification accorded to a vessel by that society.

*Classification Society*—An association approved for the survey of vessels.

*Commercial Vessel*—A vessel which is not used solely for pleasure or recreation and the use of which is made, allowed or authorised in the course of any business or in connection with any commercial transaction and subject to any State legislation includes any Government vessel other than one under the control of the Minister for Defence.

*Control Station*—Includes those spaces in which the vessel's radio or main navigating equipment or the emergency source of power is located or where the fire recording or fire control equipment is centralised.

*Crew Space*—Accommodation provided for the crew of a vessel not being accommodation which is also used by or provided for the use of passengers.

*Depth*—The moulded depth measured at the middle of the measured length from the base line to the top of the freeboard deck beams at the side of the vessel.

For the purposes of this definition, the base line is the line projected by the plane forming the top of the keel where a plate keel is fitted. In the case of a timber or composite vessel, the top of the keel shall be read as a reference to the lower edge of the keel rabbet.

In the case of a vessel which has a bar keel or in which the form at the lower part of the midship section is of a hollow character, or thick garboards are fitted, the top of the keel shall be read as a reference to the point where the flat of the bottom continued inwards cuts the side of the keel of the vessel.

In each case the plane shall be horizontal when extended transversely.

*Examiner*—A person appointed by the Authority to conduct examinations of the kinds specified by the Authority.

*Existing Vessel*—A vessel which is not a new vessel.

*Fishing Vessel*—A vessel used or intended to be used for catching fish, whales, seals, walrus or other living resources of the sea but excluding any vessel:

- (a) engaged in harvesting or transportation of algae or aquatic plants; or
- (b) that is primarily a carrier or mother vessel.

*Measured Length*—

- (a) the distance from the fore part of the hull to the after part of the hull, measured at the upper side of the uppermost weathertight deck or, in the case of an open vessel, at the height of the gunwale;



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or

- (b) 96% of the distance between a vertical line passing through a point being the foremost part of the hull and a vertical line passing through a point being the aftermost part of the hull, excluding appendages;

whichever is the greater.

*Note:*

A clarification of certain terms used in the definition of Measured Length is contained in Appendix A of this Section.

*Master*—A person having command or charge of a vessel.

*Nautical Mile*—The International nautical mile of 1852 metres.

*New Vessel*—A vessel the keel of which is laid or which is at a similar stage of construction on or after the coming into force of the applicable provisions. In this definition similar stage of construction means the stage of construction of the vessel at which—

- (a) construction identifiable with the particular vessel has begun; and  
 (b) a portion of the vessel, having a mass of not less than—  
 (i) 50 tonnes; or  
 (ii) one per cent of the estimated mass of all structural material of the vessel as proposed to be completed,

whichever is the less, has been fabricated and finally assembled.

*Open Vessel*—A vessel which has no weathertight deck for the whole or part of the length of the vessel e.g. a rowing boat with open bottom boards or a half cabin vessel with a cockpit aft fitted with loose deck panels.

*Owner*—In relation to a vessel means any person exercising or discharging or claiming the right or accepting the obligation to exercise or discharge any of the powers or duties of an owner whether on his own behalf or on behalf of another and includes a person who is the owner jointly with any other person or persons and the manager or secretary of any body corporate or company.

*Passenger*—Any person other than—

- (i) the master and the members of the crew or other persons employed or engaged in any capacity on board a vessel in the business of that vessel; and  
 (ii) a child under one year of age.

*Passenger Vessel*—A vessel which carries or is certified to carry more than twelve passengers.

*Permit*—Written permission for limited duration giving conditional acceptance of a special operation of a vessel.

*Radio Surveyor*—A person appointed by the Authority to be a radio surveyor.

*Service Space*—Spaces used for galleys, main pantries, stores (except isolated pantries and lockers), mail and specie rooms, workshops other than those forming part of the machinery spaces and trunks to such spaces.

*Special Personnel*—All able bodied persons having some knowledge of safety procedures and handling of safety equipment on board who are not directly—or indirectly—paying passengers, carried on board a vessel in connection with the special purpose of the vessel, or because of the need to be on board because of special work being carried out on the vessel, and who are not members of the crew engaged in navigation, engineering or maintenance of the vessel or attached to the vessel to provide services for other persons on board.

*Superstructure*—A decked structure, including a raised quarter deck, on the freeboard deck extending from side to side of the vessel or with the side plating of the structure not being inboard of the shell plating by more than 4 per cent of the breadth of the vessel.

Where, in pursuance of the above, a lower deck is specified as the freeboard deck of a vessel, any part of the hull which extends above the deck so specified shall be deemed to be a superstructure.

**Surveyor**—A person appointed by the Authority to be a surveyor.

**Tanker**—A cargo vessel constructed or adapted for the carriage of bulk fluid cargoes.

**Tons**—In relation to the grading of vessels means gross tonnage.

**Unclassed Vessel**—A vessel that is not a 'Classed Vessel'.

**Unmanned Machinery Space**—A decked propulsion machinery space which under normal operating conditions is not occupied or is intermittently occupied.

**Vessel**—Any ship or boat or any other description of vessel used in navigation.

### PART 3—OPERATIONAL AREAS AND CLASSIFICATION OF VESSELS

#### 5. Operational Areas shall apply to appropriate Sections of these Uniform Requirements as follows:

##### 5.1 Seagoing

5.1.1 **Unlimited Operations**, in relation to the limits of a vessel's area of operation, means:

all overseas, ocean going and Australian coastal operations without limitation as to geographical range.

5.1.2 **Australian Coastal and Middle-water Operations**, in relation to the limits of a vessel's area of operations, means:

operations within such range as may be specified by the Authority, laterally along the coast and within a limit of 600 nautical miles to seaward; or operations within such lesser limits as may be specified by the Authority.

5.1.3 **Offshore Operations**, in relation to the limits of a vessel's area of operations, means:

operations within such range as may be specified by the Authority, laterally along the coast and within a limit of 200 nautical miles to seaward; or operations within such lesser limits as may be specified by the Authority.

5.1.4 **Restricted Offshore Operations**, in relation to the limits of a vessel's area of operations, means:

operations within a range of 30 nautical miles from the seaward limit of a designated smooth or partially smooth water area or of a safe haven; or operations within such lesser limits as may be specified by the Authority.

5.1.5 **Inshore Operations**, in relation to the limits of a vessel's area of operations, means:

operations within such range, as may be specified by the Authority, laterally along the coast from the base or regular port of departure, and within a limit of 15 nautical miles to seaward of the coast or of designated sheltered water limits; or

operations within such lesser seaward limits as may be specified by the Authority in relation to a specific base or port.

##### 5.2 Sheltered Waters

5.2.1 **Partially Smooth Water Operations**, in relation to the limits of a vessel's area of operations, means:

operations within specified geographical limits in waters designated by the Authority as 'partially smooth'.

6 *Section 1*

5.2.2 *Smooth Water Operations*, in relation to the limits of a vessel's area of operations, means:

operations within specified geographical limits in waters designated by the Authority as 'smooth'.

*Notes:*

1. The Guidelines for determining Sheltered Water Areas are—
  - (i) Partially Smooth Waters—where the wave height, under normal conditions, does not exceed 1.5 metres from trough to crest.
  - (ii) Smooth Waters—where the wave height, under normal conditions, does not exceed 0.5 metres from trough to crest.
2. The relevant State or Territory Authorities should be contacted regarding areas nominated as Smooth and Partially Smooth Waters in their respective States or Territories.

6. **Classification of Vessels shall apply to all Sections of these Uniform Requirements as follows:**

6.1 **Class 1 Passenger Vessels**

Class 1A—Seagoing Passenger Vessel for use in all operational areas up to and including Unlimited Operations.

Class 1B—Seagoing Passenger Vessel for use in all operational areas up to and including Offshore Operations.

Class 1C—Seagoing Passenger Vessel for use in all operational areas up to and including Restricted Offshore Operations.

Class 1D—Sheltered Waters Passenger Vessel for operations in Partially Smooth and Smooth Waters only.

Class 1E—Sheltered Waters Passenger Vessel for use in Smooth Waters only.

Class 1F—'Hire and Drive' Vessels.

*Notes:*

1. Certificates of Survey will not be issued to Class 1A, Class 1B and Class 1C vessels of less than 10 metres in length.
2. Open vessels shall be permitted to carry passengers in sheltered waters only.

6.2 **Class 2 Non-Passenger Vessels**

Class 2A—Seagoing Non-Passenger Vessel for use in all operational areas up to and including Unlimited Operations.

Class 2B—Seagoing Non-Passenger Vessel for use in all operational areas up to and including Offshore Operations.

Class 2C—Seagoing Non-Passenger Vessel for use in all operational areas up to and including Restricted Offshore Operations.

Class 2D—Sheltered Waters Non-Passenger Vessel for operations in Partially Smooth and Smooth Waters only.

Class 2E—Sheltered Waters Non-Passenger Vessel for use in Smooth Waters only.

6.3 **Class 3 Fishing Vessels**

Class 3A—Seagoing Fishing Vessel for use in all operational areas up to and including Unlimited Operations.

Class 3B—Seagoing Fishing Vessel for use in all operational areas up to and including Offshore Operations.

Class 3C—Seagoing Fishing Vessel for use in all operational areas up to and including Restricted Offshore Operations.

Class 3D—Sheltered Waters Fishing Vessel for operations in Partially Smooth and Smooth Waters only.

**Class 3E—Sheltered Waters Fishing Vessel for use in Smooth Waters only.****7. Exemptions and Equivalents**

- 7.1 A vessel of any class may be subject to a restricted area of operations if the manning or the qualifications of the personnel are insufficient for the area of operations allowed by its certificate of survey.

**PART 4—GENERAL****8. Exemptions and Equivalents**

- 8.1 The Authority may, subject to the principles embodied in these Uniform Requirements, exempt a vessel, or vessels included in a specified class of vessel, from the application of any of the provisions of these Uniform Requirements to the extent that the Authority is satisfied that compliance with such provision or provisions is unreasonable or impracticable in relation to that vessel or those vessels.
- 8.2 Where these Uniform Requirements provide that a particular fitting, material, appliance or apparatus, or type thereof, shall be fitted or carried in a vessel, or that any particular provision shall be made, the Authority may allow any other fitting, material, appliance or apparatus, or type thereof, to be fitted or carried, or any other provision to be made to that vessel, if it is satisfied by trial thereof, or otherwise, that such fitting, material, appliance or apparatus, or type thereof, or provision, is at least as effective as that required by these Uniform Requirements.
- 8.3 The Authority will exercise its power under this clause only after receipt of a written application from the owner of the vessel, or the owner of a vessel in the specified class of vessel, which sets out the grounds of the application and which is supported by such evidence as the Authority may, at or after the time of application, require in order to enable it adequately to investigate the application.
- 8.4 The Authority may grant an exemption or make an allowance under this clause upon such conditions as it thinks fit.
- 8.5 Upon the granting of an exemption or making of an allowance under this clause the Authority will, to the extent that it considers necessary or desirable in the interest of uniformity, furnish to each of the other Authorities particulars of the application and supporting evidence provided by the owner and of any tests or trials made by the Authority and a copy of the instrument of exemption or allowance.

**9. Requirements not otherwise Specified**

- 9.1 Where in the case of a vessel provision is not made in these Uniform Requirements to cover a specific matter, the Authority may determine what special provisions shall apply to that matter.

**10. Sufficiency of Machinery, Equipment and Components**

- 10.1 In any respect in which detailed requirements or specifications are not laid down or determined by the Authority for specific items, such items shall be sufficient for the intended service, and conform to good marine practice.

**11. Positioning of Equipment**

- 11.1 Items of equipment required by these Uniform Requirements shall be positioned to the satisfaction of the surveyor.

**12. Materials**

- 12.1 All materials shall be of a good quality conforming to good marine practice and free from defects and when required materials must be covered by test certificates issued by an approved authority. The cost of any tests required for the materials shall be borne by the owner.

**13. Workmanship**

- 13.1 Manufacture and construction shall conform to good marine practice. The Authority may require any item not in accordance with the approved plans and specifications, or any material, workmanship, or arrangement that is deficient to be rectified.

## PART 5—SUBMISSION OF INFORMATION

### 14. Preliminary Information, Plans and Specifications to be Submitted

14.1 When a vessel is to be built or an existing vessel is to be purchased or substantially altered and any doubt exists as to whether these Uniform Requirements shall apply or which certificates will be required, the office of the Authority should be contacted, by the owner or intending owner, as soon as possible. The basic information necessary for initial assessment by the Authority is as follows:

- (a) vessel Identification, e.g. name or construction number if any;
- (b) Name of owner or intending owner;
- (c) Hull construction material;
- (d) Principal dimensions of vessel;
- (e) Nature of the service in which the vessel will be engaged;
- (f) Intended area of operations of the vessel;
- (g) Gross tonnage(s) or estimated lower and upper limits of gross tonnage(s);
- (h) Whether the vessel is to be classed or is classed and if so the name of the Classification Society and details of the Classification;
- (i) Whether the vessel will hold or holds a Load Line Certificate and/or Cargo Ship Safety Construction Certificate issued by a Classification Society; and
- (j) Whether the vessel, being an existing vessel, holds any other certificates relating to survey and if so the type of each certificate, its date of expiry and the name of the authority who issued the certificate.

14.2 When a vessel is to be built or an existing vessel is to be purchased, chartered or substantially altered for operations within the jurisdiction of the Authority the owner, or intending owner, shall comply with the requirements of the Survey and Certificates of Survey Section and, to ensure that the requirements of other appropriate Sections relating to the construction, equipment and outfitting of that vessel shall be met, submit appropriate information, plans and data to the Authority for assessment and approval.

14.2.1 The information submitted shall be in accordance with the following:

- (a) Information must be sufficient in detail to ensure that all the relevant requirements have been incorporated in the design. Extraneous and irrelevant information should be omitted where practicable. Written material shall be submitted in the English language.
- (b) Where any doubt exists, as to the information required to be submitted, clarification should be sought from the Authority.
- (c) Print outs should be clear, easy to read and properly identified.
- (d) The number of copies submitted shall be sufficient to permit the retention of two by the Authority.
- (e) Where a design is amended, subsequent to the initial submission, every plan, specification, etc, affected by the alteration, shall be amended accordingly and the date of amendment recorded. As necessary revised copies shall be forwarded immediately to the Authority.
- (f) Drawings and plans should be submitted according to one or more of the following scales: 1:1, 1:2, 1:5, or multiples of 10 thereof.

14.2.2 The extent of the information to be submitted will be dependent on classification and size of the vessel. The following may be used as a general guide:

- (a) All the information nominated in sub-clause 14.1 unless such information has previously been submitted in accordance with that sub-clause

- (b) the general arrangement plans
- (c) the construction plans, including transverse and longitudinal section
- (d) the lines plan
- (e) plans, specifications or data sheets to cover:
  - (i) the scantlings of all members, including methods of fastening
  - (ii) the details of the closing devices
  - (iii) the bilge pumping arrangements
  - (iv) the details of the oil fuel system, including tanks, filling and venting arrangements, piping and valves
  - (v) where applicable, the arrangements for the loading, carriage and discharge of liquid cargoes
  - (vi) the structural fire protection arrangements and fixed fire appliances
  - (vii) the details of the rudder and stern frame, propeller brackets, engine and thrust seatings, propeller shafting, bearings and couplings, steering gear and alternative method of steering
  - (viii) where applicable, the welding schedule, the laminating schedule or the plastering programme
  - (ix) electrical equipment and wiring.
- (f) the preliminary stability information; and
- (g) such further plans, information and data as the Authority may require to determine the proper construction, machinery, equipment and safety of the vessel.

APPENDIX A

CLARIFICATION OF TERMS USED IN DEFINITION OF MEASURED LENGTH

(as referred to in Clause 4)

The following terms used in the definition of Measured Length should be interpreted as follows:

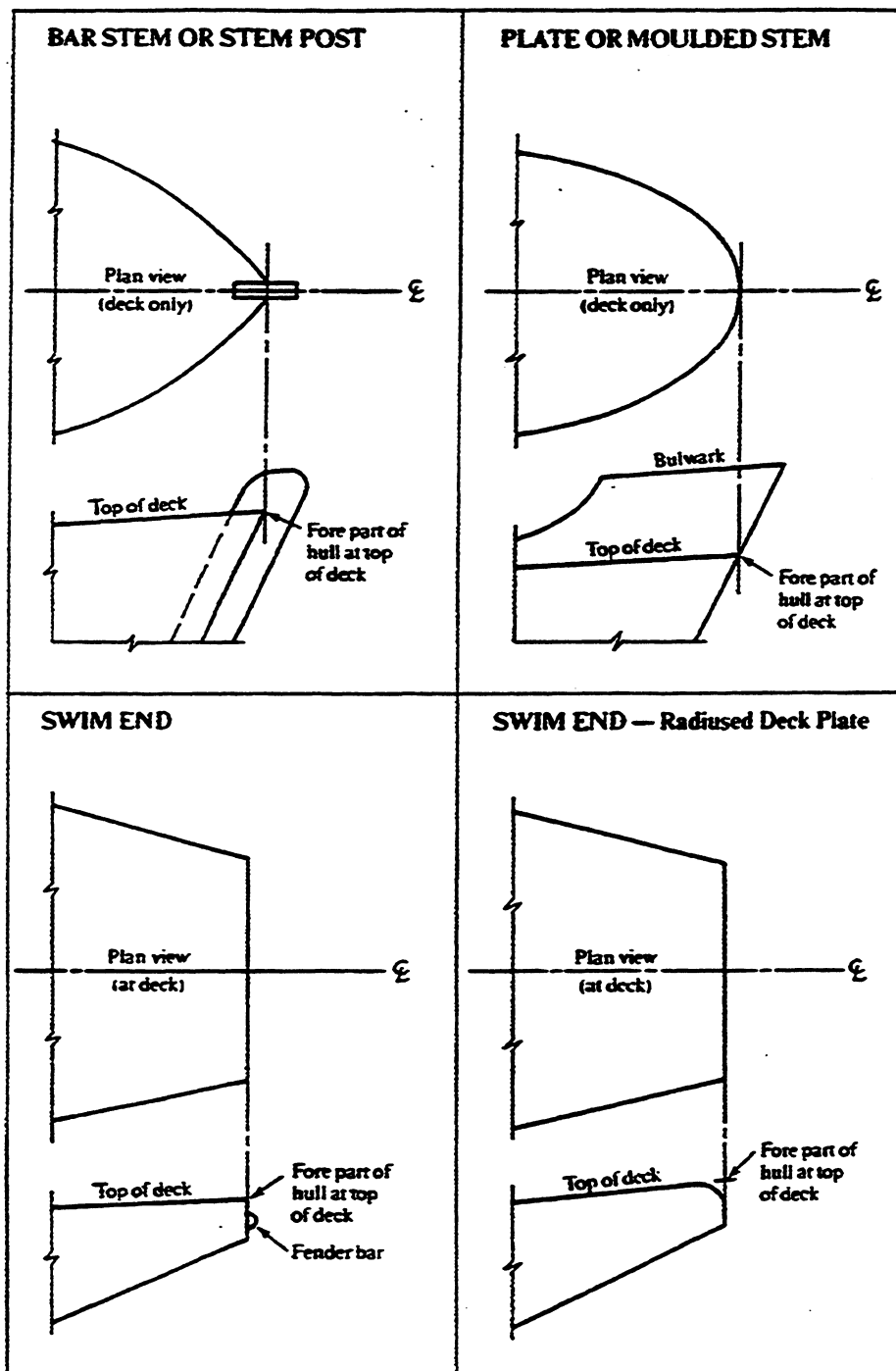
*Fore part of the hull*—The leading edge of the shell plating, planking or other structural material or, in the case of bar stems or stem posts, the intersection of the outside of the shell plating or planking with the stem bar or post but, in all cases, excluding any member added to the exterior of the hull, e.g. fender, sponson, rubbing strip, etc.

*After part of the hull*—The trailing edge of the shell plating, planking or other structural material or, in the case of stem bars or posts, the intersection of the outside of the shell plating or planking with the stem bar or post but, in all cases, excluding any member added to the exterior of the hull, e.g. fender, sponson, rubbing strip, etc.

*Height of gunwale*—The top edge of the fore and after member which is fitted round the inside of the vessel at the top of the side shell plating, planking or other structural material.

As a further guide to the interpretation of Measured Length reference should be made to the Guidance for Measuring Diagrams included in this appendix.

**MEASURED LENGTH**  
**GUIDANCE FOR MEASURING—SHEET 1**  
**FORE PART OF HULL**

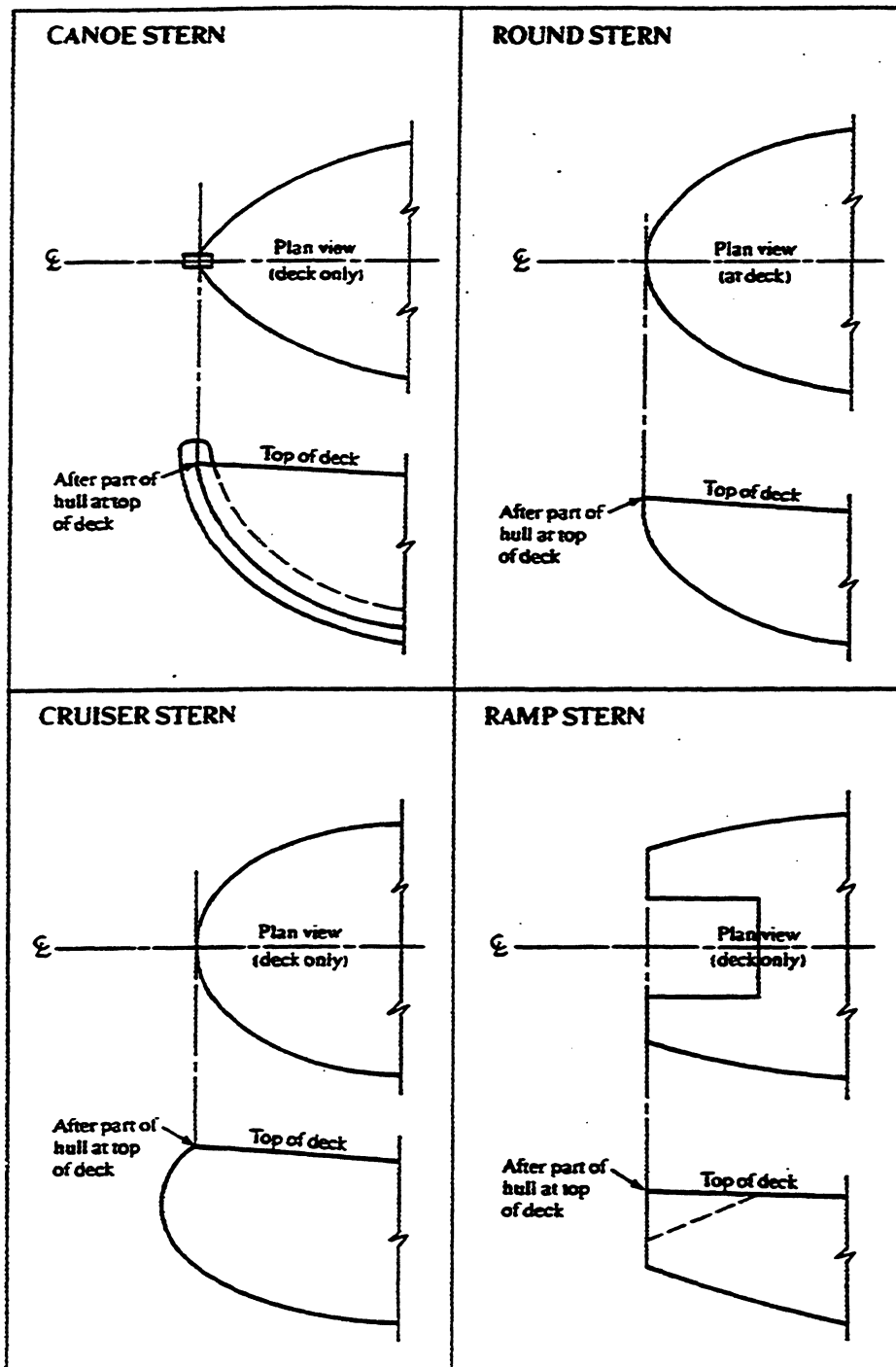




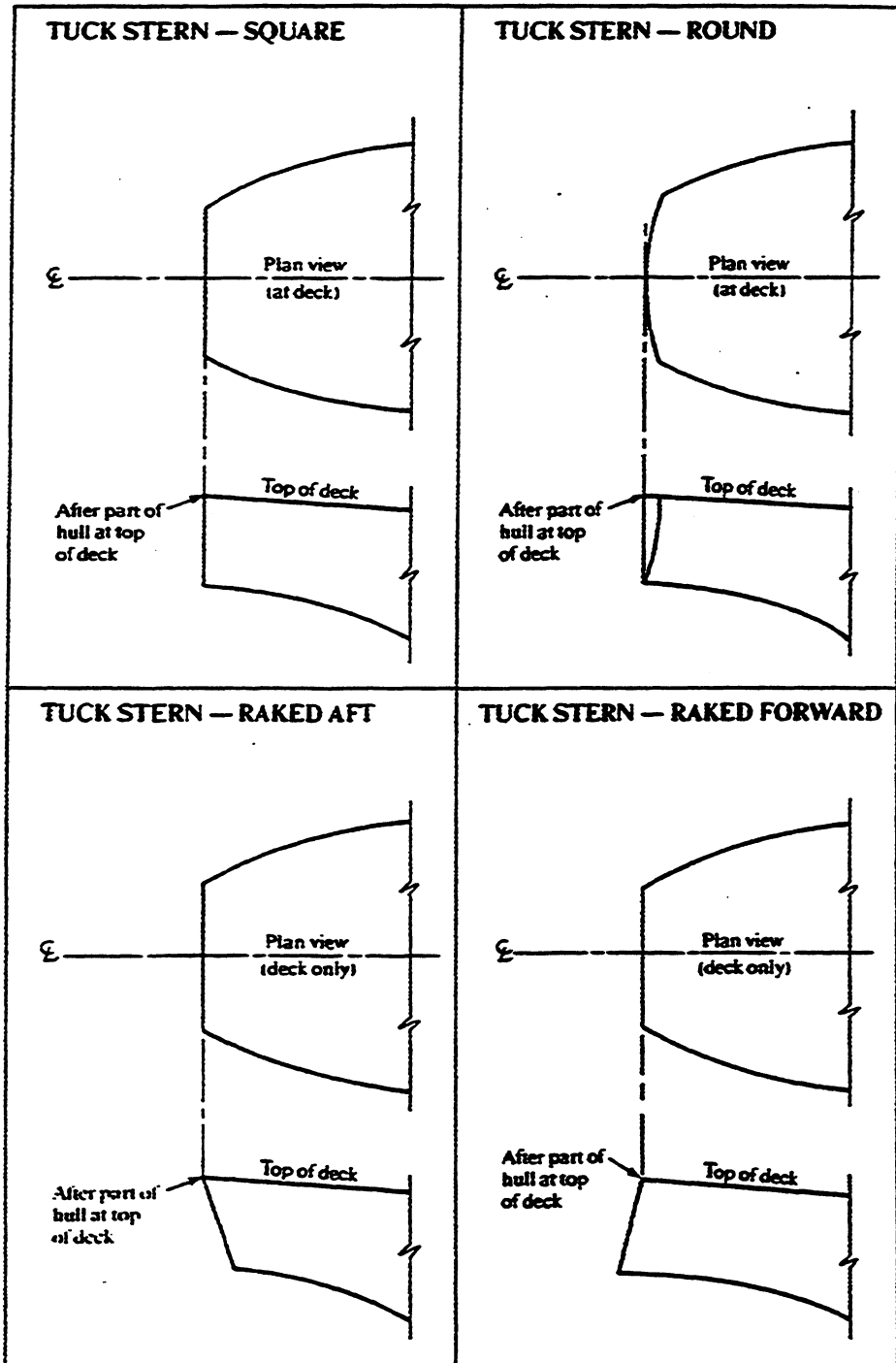
**MEASURED LENGTH**

**GUIDANCE FOR MEASURING—SHEET 2**

**AFTER PART OF HULL**

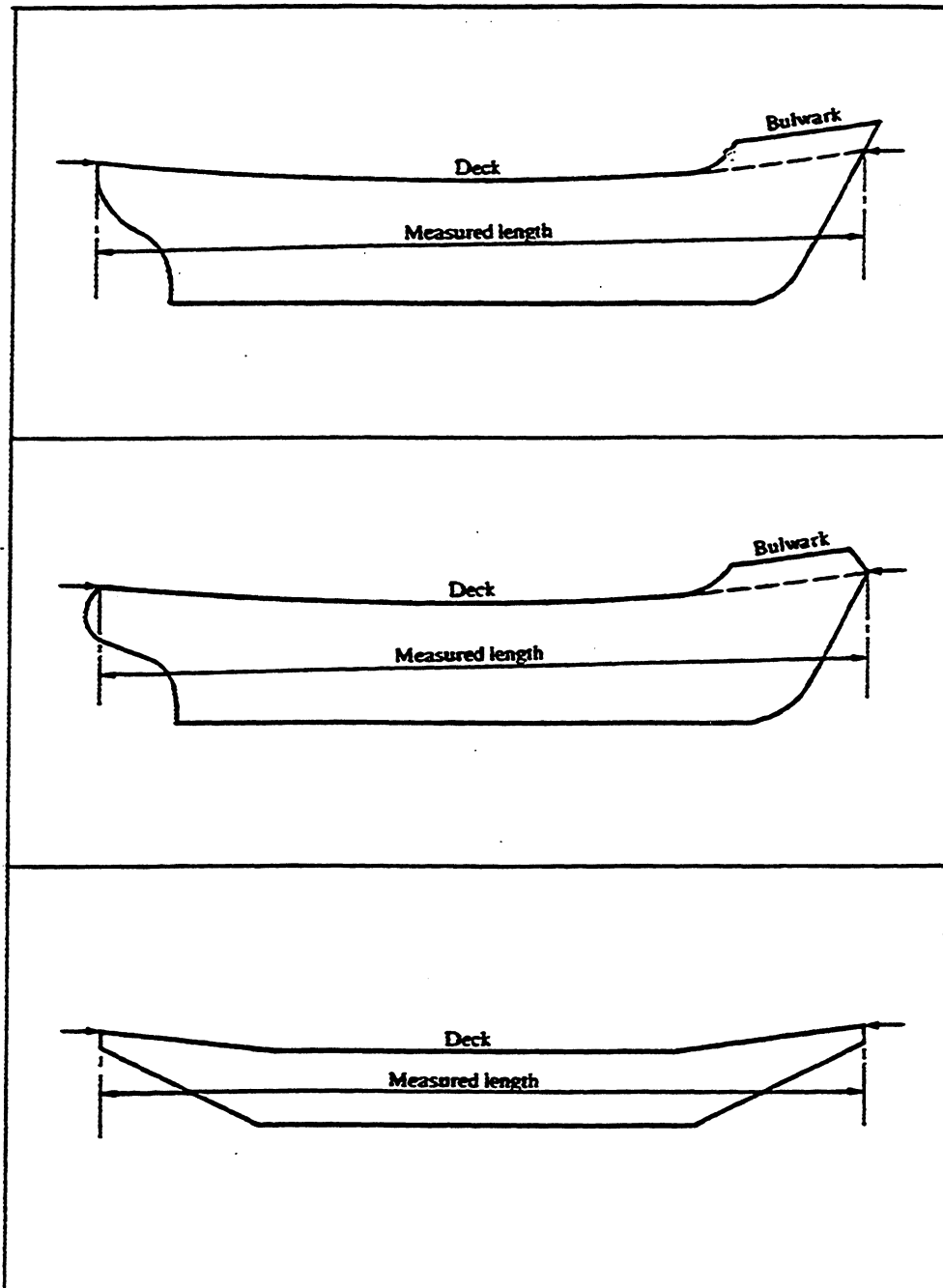


**MEASURED LENGTH**  
**GUIDANCE FOR MEASURING—SHEET 3**  
**AFTER PART OF HULL (Cont.)**



*Note:* SWIM ENDS—Measure as illustrated for Fore Part of Hull.

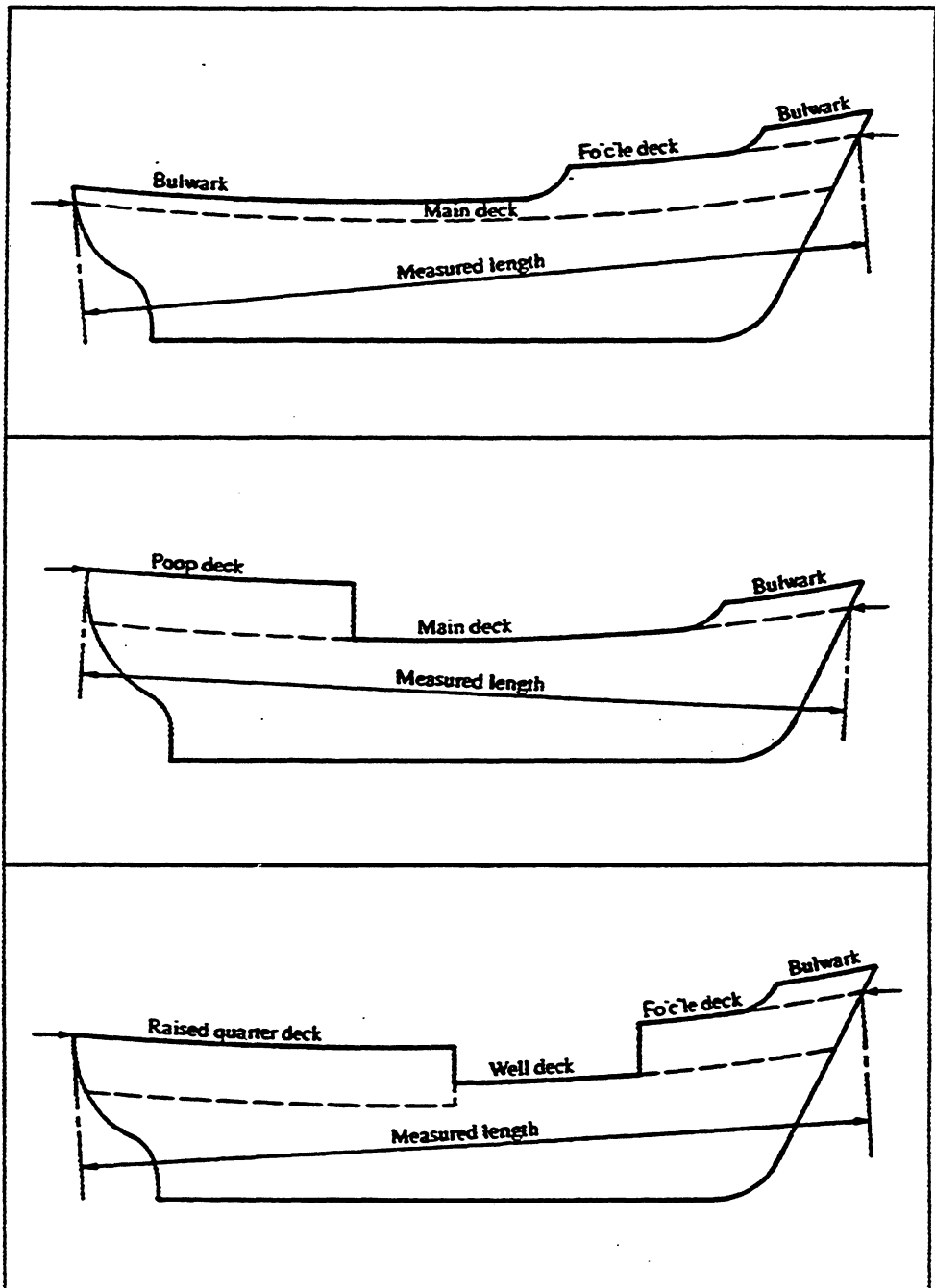
**MEASURED LENGTH**  
**GUIDANCE FOR MEASURING—SHEET 4**  
**SINGLE DECK VESSELS**



**MEASURED LENGTH**

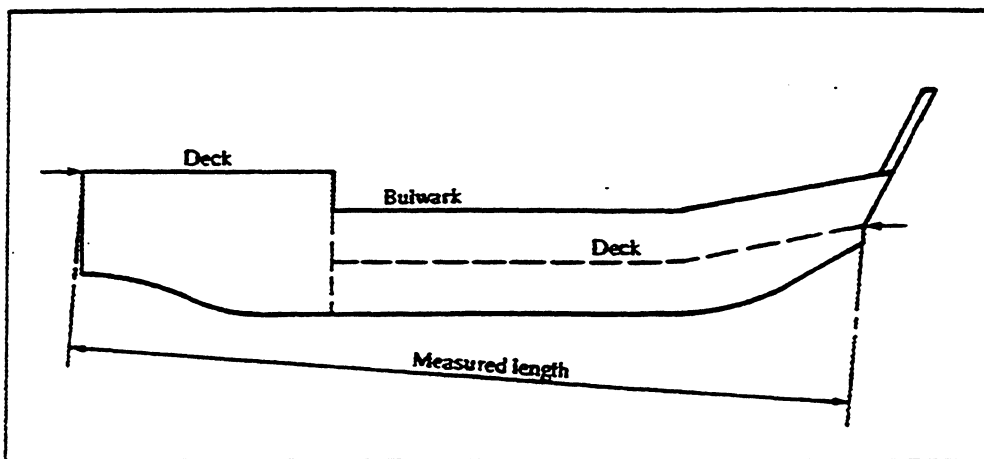
**GUIDANCE FOR MEASURING—SHEET 5**

**MULTIPLE DECK VESSELS**

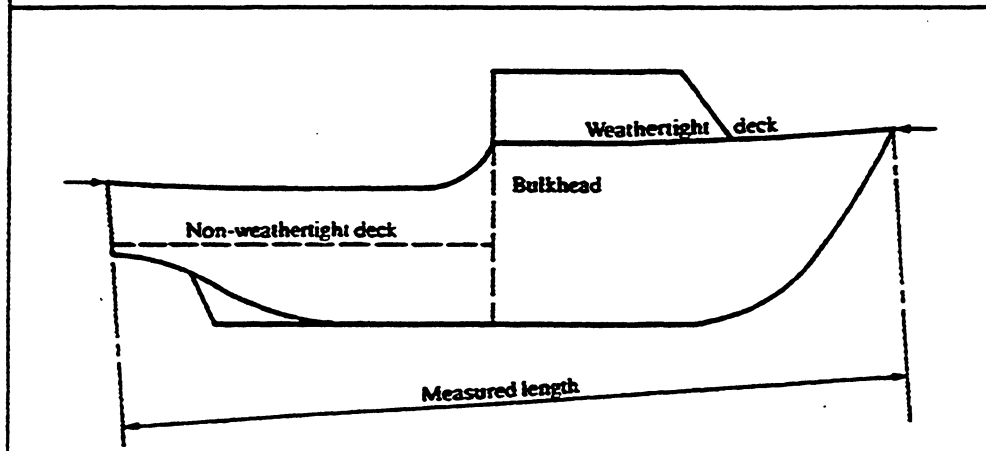
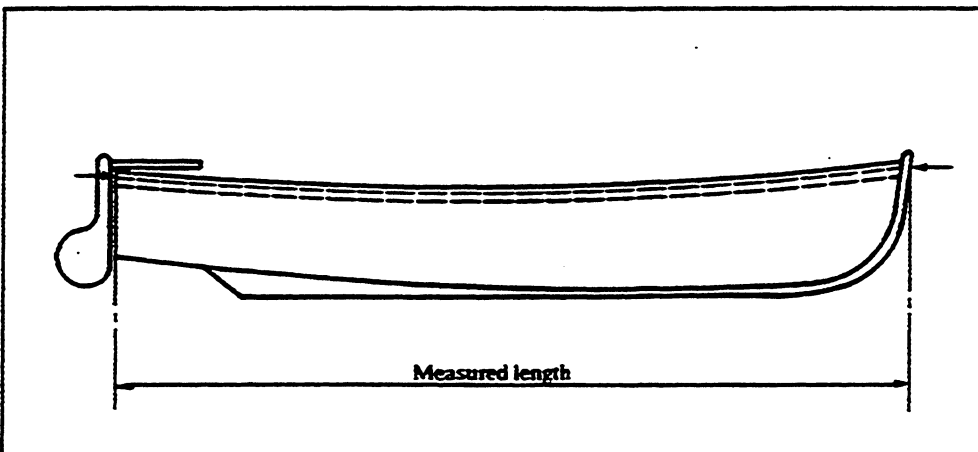


**MEASURED LENGTH**  
**GUIDANCE FOR MEASURING—SHEET 6**

**LANDING BARGES, ETC**



**OPEN VESSELS**



## MEASURED LENGTH

### GUIDANCE FOR MEASURING—SHEET 7

#### MEASURING ON EXISTING VESSEL

*Measurement should, wherever possible, be taken in a direct line between the two defined extremities.*

On an existing vessel this would normally be achieved by setting up sight boards at the stem and stern, together with as many intermediate sights as are necessary to circumvent obstructions or breaks in the uppermost weathertight deck or, if the vessel is out of the water, by measuring between plumb lines dropped from the defined extremities, in which case, care should be taken to ensure that the measurement is taken between points on the plumb lines which are equidistant from the points of origin (i.e. the top of deck or gunwale).

However, the measurement could be taken, when agreed to by the Authority and the owner, by means of a tape laid along the deck or decks. It is a fact that the measurement thus taken will be in excess of the true measurement due to the curvature of the deck, as illustrated in the sketch below where the sheer of the deck has been exaggerated for clarity. In most cases this increase in length will be of little concern; however, if the measurement is critical, the length should be checked by either of the two methods described above.

#### MEASUREMENT OF LENGTH ( $L_m$ ) BY TAPE LAID ON DECK

*Note: Sheer exaggerated for clarity.*

