

Numbering of Small Vessels

Numbering of vessels under SAMSA survey

In terms of the *Licensing of Vessels Regulations, 2002* an "official number" must be issued to a licensed vessel.

Regulation 6 of the licensing regulations mentioned above reads as follows:

“Marking of vessels: 6. The owner of a vessel to which section 68 of the Act applies must ensure that the official number assigned to the vessel by the proper officer and the name of the vessel (if any) are inscribed and continued, in the manner directed by the proper officer, on such features of the vessel as the proper officer may direct”

Unlike pleasure vessels, there is no statutory requirement that this be the only number on a commercial vessel. This makes sense as various other authorities may require their own identification on commercial vessels, for example, Sea Fisheries, Port Captains and the like, in order to identify those vessels for which they are also responsible, but in different ways.

Any pleasure vessels which do fall under SAMSA survey are required to have an approved marking, but in practice we do not issue separate or different numbers to those recreational vessels under SAMSA survey.

Therefore, the ONLY markings which are to be used for SAMSA survey and tracking purposes is the established DT...numbering system, with the addition of the letter "A" "B"....to "R" placed behind the number, to denote the category allocated to the vessel.

(DTC - Cape Town / DTD - Durban / DTE - East London / DTM - Mossel Bay / DTP - Port Elizabeth / DTPN – Port Nolloth / DTR - Richards Bay / DTS - Saldanha Bay/ DTG – Pretoria)

The only exception regarding numbering are the vessels belonging to the SA Police, which may retain their SAPS numbers but otherwise the DT.... system of numbers will be the only numbering system for any and all vessels falling under the SAMSA survey regime and whether commercial or pleasure, will be easily recognisable as falling under SAMSA's immediate jurisdiction.

NB: NSRI vessels are under SAMSA survey and must therefore carry SAMSA numbers as well as their station identification.

Approved Markings for Pleasure Vessels

By regulation, the Authority (SAMSA) and the Authorised Agencies are responsible for issuing approved markings to pleasure vessels, until such time as the Department of Transport finalises a national small vessel database and marking regime.

Pleasure vessels whose owners are affiliated to clubs falling under the control of designated Authorised Agencies are able to get their approved numbers from their clubs i.e. the numbering or marking systems applied to these vessels are agreed to as part of the process when appointing Authorised Agencies.

It is one of the conditions imposed on Authorised Agencies that they record the particulars of the vessel and the owner allocated the approved number (*marking*) and keep records. Agencies have to be ready to forward the details to SAMSA or the the Department of Transport for capturing (*or updating*) a national database of small vessels as required.

Proof of the validity of the vessel's marking is interconnected with the validity of the Certificate of Fitness in that the approved marking (*number*) must be issued by, and traceable through the Agency responsible for issuing the Certificate of Fitness. **In order to maintain proper records, Authorised Agencies are only allowed to survey and issue Certificates of Fitness for their own vessels, and not those of other Authorised Agencies.**

[To view the complete list of currently approved numbers prefixes click \(here\):](#)

- **SAMSA** uses the **DT-** (*plus a letter denoting the port of origin*) prefix system for both commercial and recreational boats with the addition of the category after the number. (eg DTC 139 B). Suffixes will be added as follows; (W) for whale watching vessels, (S) for shark cage diving vessels, and (P) for small passenger vessels.
- **South African Deep Sea Angling Association (SADSAA)** use current club prefixes with the addition of a new "SR" prefix for non-club members whose vessels have been inspected and certified by SADSAA, also with the addition of the category after the number.
- **South African sailing (SAS)** use a national numbering system using the SA prefix for yachts and a ZA prefix for motor vessels, also with the addition of the category after the number.
- **South African Small Craft Association (SASCA) (Ex SAUU)** use the national U system followed by the category and the number. (eg. U-E-560).
- **South African Institute for Skippers (SAIS)** use the prefix A with the addition of the category after the number.
- **SAPS** use the SAPS prefix with the addition of the category after the number.

- **DWA** (Department of Water Affairs and Forestry) use the prefix **DWA**, followed by the number and category.
- **DEMO** numbers are allocated to certain boat retailers who are then able to demonstrate vessels to prospective buyers in a limited way. (i.e. a D, E or R category). They will be issued with the prefix identifying the responsible SAMSA office, followed by the letters **DEMO** and the consecutive number for that port (eg. **DTC DEMO 1**).

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