



Global Standards for Global Compliance

In 1984, the International Standards Organization (ISO) created Technical Committee 188 to write standards for *Small Craft*. TC 188 really came into prominence in the 1990s when the European Union needed a suite of standards to support its Recreational Craft Directive (RCD). Since that legislation came into force (1996), all manufacturers wanting to sell their products into Europe, have adopted the ISO Small Craft standards.

While the impetus came from the EU for its RCD legislation, these are truly international standards written with input from many countries far beyond Europe.

The World is moving to ISO Standards

An increasing number of countries around the world are writing legislation, like Europe, that uses ISO's Small Craft standards as its way of measuring conformity with its own legislation. Australia and New Zealand, for example, were very quick to say that they would allow CE marked products onto their market, because they were using ISO standards that their governments recognise. Post Brexit, the UK has done the same. Saudi Arabia introduced their own small craft legislation in 2024 that obliges conformity with many of the Small Craft ISO standards.





ISO Recognition where there is no legislation

A great many countries around the world do not have regulations for the design and construction of boats but everywhere has general product safety requirements. How do these countries assess safety, in the absence of specific legislation? If the country is a paid-up member of ISO, they will use the same Small Craft ISO standards.

This means that very many countries, Hong Kong, Mauritius, Bangladesh, UAE, to name just a few, will often request ISO conformity, even if they have no specific legislation that demands it.

The USCG has recently referred to an ISO for the first time (ISO 13590 for Personal Watercraft) and Canada has done so for a while.

In other words, the Small Craft ISO standards are now the world's default means of measuring safety for small craft, regardless of the legislative regime.

Expertise in Small Craft ISO Standards

Since the legislation that brought ISO standards to prominence was in Europe, it is fair to say that the EU Certification Bodies (Notified Bodies) have the longest experience of their application. HPi Verification Services was a Notified Body before the RCD became mandatory in 1998 and its staff have sat on many of the Small Craft ISO Working Groups. Recently, HPiVS staff have been the Project (technical) Leader for ISO 6185-3 for RIBs and is currently in this role for the stability standard, ISO 12217-2. HPiVS has sponsored recent ISO TC 188 Small Craft plenary meetings.

HPiVS is at the heart of the march to global compliance.



Contact Us Today

To discuss the interpretation or application of ISO standards or the legislation in place for boat design and construction, anywhere in the world, contact HPi Verification Services.

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