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Volume: 54

Issue: 16

Date: 20 Rajab 1446 - 20 January 2025

Monday

Regulation No: 2025/R-14

MCAR 138C - Requirements for Seaplane Platform License

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**Maldives Civil Aviation Authority
Republic of Maldives**

Maldivian Civil Aviation Regulations

MCAR 138C - Requirements for Seaplane Platform License

Issue 1.00, 20 January 2025

Foreword

Maldives Civil Aviation Authority, in exercise of the powers conferred on it under Articles 5 and 6 of the Maldives Civil Aviation Authority Act 2/2012 has developed this Regulation.

This Regulation shall be cited as “MCAR 138C - Requirements for Seaplane Platform License” and shall come in to force on 1 May 2025.

The existing “Procedure and Requirements for Licensing Water Aerodromes and Floating Platforms” as listed in ASC 14-2 dated 04 February 2009 will be repealed as from 1 May 2025.

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Chapter 1 – General

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this regulation is to prescribe minimum requirements for site selection, seaplane platform construction and installation, required resort facilities and rescue equipment at seaplane platform in order to meet the licensing requirements.

1.2 Applicability

This regulation is applicable to seaplane platforms and water runways which do not meet the certification criteria for Water Aerodromes prescribed in MCAR 138A – Water Aerodrome Rules. This regulation does not cover contingency/emergency landing sites. CAA shall be notified in writing if a seaplane platform or landing site is to be used for contingencies or emergencies.

1.3 Use of Seaplane Platforms

A seaplane shall not take-off or land at any place in the Maldives unless:

- a) The place has been licensed under this regulation, or
- b) The use of the place is authorized by the CAA and:
 1. The aircraft is of a type authorized under that regulation to land and take off from the place, and
 2. The aircraft is engaged in operations of a class specified by the CAA in the instrument of authorization for that place;

and unless the aircraft complies with any conditions subject to which the seaplane platform may have been licensed or to which the place may have been authorized.

1.4 Definitions

Definitions of the terms and abbreviations used in this regulation, unless the context requires otherwise, are in MCAR-1 Definitions.

When the following terms are used in this regulation, they have the following meanings:

'Licensee' – means license holder.

'Seaplane Platform' – a platform used for the purpose of embarkation and disembarkation of passengers or cargo by seaplane.

'Water Runway' – A defined area on water, intended for the landing and take-off run of seaplane along its length.

‘Seaplane Platform License’ – a license issued under this regulation for the purpose of landing, take-off of a seaplane and embarkation and disembarkation of passengers or cargo by seaplane.

‘Goods’ – Anything taken on a seaplane as personal belongings, baggage or cargo;

‘Response Time’ is the time between the initial call to the Rescue Services and the first effective intervention at the accident site by a rescue vessel.

‘Rapid Response Area’ is the area bounded by 300 meter from the end of water runway and 150 meter laterally on each side of water runway.

‘Seaplane Handling Agent’ – Person designated by the licensee who will be responsible for communication on arrival/departure of the seaplane with the operator, handling of passengers, preparing a passenger manifest and load sheet and providing assistance during emergency evacuation of the seaplane and other related emergency scenarios.

‘Nature Reserved Designated Area’ – are marine areas that are environmentally protected and preserved as reserves.

‘Protected Areas’ – an area which is protected from large waves. The structure providing protection can be natural or constructed.

Chapter 2 – Application Procedures

2.1 Application Procedures

- 2.1.1 All the applications for licensing of seaplane platforms shall be forwarded to Maldives Civil Aviation Authority, on application form MCAA/AD/02 available at CAA website. Upon making an application for the grant of a licence, the applicant shall pay all requisite charges in accordance with MCAR-187.
- 2.1.2 When more than one platform is being installed the coordinates for each platform shall be listed in the application form to be included in the license.
- 2.1.3 If there is an intention of moving the platform to other locations due to seasonal requirements then these should be included in the application documentation.
- 2.1.4 The applicant shall request CAA for an inspection once the platform is installed, safety equipment is obtained and personnel are trained as specified in this Regulation. The cost of travel, accommodation, and food for the CAA inspector(s) shall be borne by the applicant.
- 2.1.5 A license will be issued only to one applicant per lagoon.
- 2.1.6 The applicant shall provide the following when applying for a seaplane platform license:
- a) Application Form MCAA/AD/02
 - b) No objection letter from the Ministry of Tourism.
 - c) No objection letter from Ministry of Fisheries, where applicable.
 - d) Approval from Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
 - e) No objection letter from relevant City/Island Council, where applicable.
 - f) No objection letter from Resort owner or Management.
 - g) Training records of Seaplane Handling Agents.
 - h) A risk assessment for the area of operation.
 - i) Aerial Chart depicting the seaplane platforms and water runways.
 - j) If the applicant is not the owner/legal possessor of the proposed area then the application shall be forwarded with a no objection letter or agreement copy from the landlord of the proposed area to use the intended lagoon/reef or protected water.

2.2 Aerial Chart

2.2.1 An aerial chart shall be produced and the chart shall show the following:

- a) A clear image of the location showing, reefs, lagoons and island.
- b) Name of the seaplane platform and Island name.
- c) Reference Point (RP) with coordinates.
- d) Landing and take-off runways with direction, dimensions, with coordinates.
- e) Location of platforms with coordinates.
- f) If mooring, is provided, location of mooring buoy and its coordinates
- g) Fixed obstacles and hazardous areas in and in the vicinity of the movement area.
- h) A legend showing the icons used and their meaning.
- i) A horizontal linear scale showing both meters and feet.
- j) Approach/Take-off surface with allowable heights.
- k) Symbol showing the direction of north.
- l) Production date.

Note: RP is normally taken from the geometric center of boundary enclosing all the water runways.

Chapter 3 – Seaplane Platform License

3.1 Seaplane Platform License

3.1.1 A seaplane platform license is issued when CAA is satisfied that the seaplane platform and water runway is compliant with the requirements contained in this regulation. The seaplane platform license shall be valid for 1 year and extended maximum twice subject to the conditions specified in clause 3.2.

3.2 Extension of a Seaplane Platform License

3.2.1 The validity of the seaplane platform license issued by the CAA may be extended by the licensee, twice, for a period of 1 year each time.

3.2.2 The seaplane platform license extension referred in clause 3.2.1 can only be issued by an inspector accepted by CAA or licensees' quality system, provided the result of inspection for extension conducted within the preceding 12 months had been found fully satisfactory.

3.2.3 Notwithstanding the privilege granted for the licensee in 3.2.1 and 3.2.2, whenever circumstances reveal a serious risk to aviation safety, the CAA shall carryout the inspection specified above for the purpose of extension.

3.2.4 Inspector conducting the inspection for extension shall possess the relevant knowledge and experience on the licensing requirements for seaplane platforms and water runways.

3.2.5 Inspection for extension of license shall ensure the following areas:

1. All physical infrastructure meets the requirements of this regulation;
2. All required markings and safety equipment are properly installed;
3. Condition of the underwater anchor is not deteriorated;
4. Training of the handling agents are current and up to-date;
5. Emergency Exercises has been conducted according to ERP;
6. The location of landing areas, platforms, buoys are in compliance with the aerial chart.

3.3 Renewal of a Seaplane Platform License

3.3.1 When a license is issued, and extended by the licensee twice, request shall be made to CAA for renewal of the license at least 30 days before the expiry of the license.

3.4 Amendment of a Seaplane Platform License

- 3.4.1 The licensee may request CAA for the amendment of seaplane platform license when:
- a) there is a change in the ownership or management of the licensee;
 - b) there is a change in the use or operation of the seaplane platform or water runways;
 - c) there is any change on the original conditions of the license.

3.5 Cancellation or Suspension of a Seaplane Platform License

- 3.5.1 CAA may suspend or cancel a seaplane platform license if there are reasonable grounds to believe that:
- a) a condition to which the seaplane platform license was subjected has been breached or not complied with;
 - b) the facilities, operations or maintenance are not up to the standards required in the interests of the safety of air navigation.
- 3.5.2 Before suspending or canceling a seaplane platform license, CAA must give to the licensee a notice that describes the non-compliance with this regulation and invites the holder to submit a corrective action plan acceptable to the CAA.
- 3.5.3 CAA may take into account any reasons the licensee within the time allowed, prior to making a decision about suspension or cancellation.
- 3.5.4 If the licensee wishes to surrender the license, the licensee shall give not less than 7 days, a written notice to the CAA of the date on which the holder will surrender the license.
- 3.5.5 CAA will cancel the seaplane platform license on the date specified by the licensee for surrender of the license.
- 3.5.6 If CAA cancels a seaplane platform license, licensee shall return the seaplane platform license to the CAA within 7 days.
- 3.5.7 The license issued by Maldives Civil Aviation Authority will cease to be valid, if
- Failure to pay the annual fees for the aerodrome license, which shall be paid to Maldives Civil Aviation Authority.
 - The contract with the owner/legal possessor expires or cease to be valid (if applicable).
 - Any of the mandatory equipment and facilities specified in this circular lacks.

3.6 Transfer of Seaplane Platform License

- 3.6.1 CAA may give its consent to transfer the seaplane platform license to a transferee when:
- a) the current licensee notifies the CAA in writing, at least 30 days before ceasing to operate the seaplane platform, that the current holder will cease to operate the seaplane platform on the date specified in the notice.
 - b) the current licensee notifies CAA in writing, of the name of the transferee.
 - c) the transferee applies to the CAA in writing, at least 30 days before the current licensee ceases to operate the seaplane platform license to be transferred to the transferee
 - d) the requirements set out in regulation are met in respect of the transferee; and
- 3.6.2 If CAA does not consent to the transfer of a seaplane platform license CAA shall notify the transferee, in writing, of its reasons no later than 14 days after making that decision.

3.7 Interim Seaplane Platform License

- 3.7.1 The CAA may grant an interim seaplane platform license to an applicant under this regulation if the applicant's application is for a license to operate a seaplane platform for which an existing seaplane platform license is in force; and
- a) The holder of the seaplane platform license has given the CAA notice under regulation MCAR 138C clause 3.5 for the license to be cancelled; and
 - b) The cancellation of the existing seaplane platform license will have effect before the CAA can fully consider the applicant's application; and
 - c) The CAA is satisfied that the applicant will be able to properly operate and maintain the seaplane platform for the duration of the interim seaplane platform license; and
 - d) The grant of the interim seaplane platform license is not detrimental to aviation safety.
- 3.7.2 An interim seaplane platform license issued pursuant to this regulation shall expire on:
- a) The date on which the seaplane platform license is issued; or
 - b) The expiry date specified in the interim seaplane platform license; whichever is earlier.

3.8 Removal of the Seaplane Platform

- 3.8.1 The seaplane platform and anchoring blocks shall be removed and notified to CAA within six months from the date of cancellation of the license.
- 3.8.2 In case where the licensee wishes to re-start the operations using the same platform, then licensee may request CAA to extend the removal of the platform up to 1 year provided that licensee ensure that the platform condition is not degraded such that it would be detached from its position and the platform does not create any environmental hazards.

Chapter 4 – Operational Requirements

- 4.1 The seaplane platform facilities shall be made available to any AOC holders, with the permission of the licensee.
- 4.2 During emergencies the seaplane platform shall be made available to any AOC holders. The licensee shall make available the Seaplane Handling Agent, Transfer Vessel and all Equipment, including emergency services during such operations.
- 4.3 The seaplane operator shall ensure that information on/pertaining to current weather conditions at the destination are available prior to departure.
- 4.4 The licensee, the resort or the seaplane operator shall provide a passenger transfer vessel (PTV) for the purpose of transferring passengers to and from the seaplane platforms.
- 4.5 The PTV shall be at least 200 m away from the seaplane platform and the landing area when the seaplane is ready to land or at take-off and shall not obstruct the water runway.
- 4.6 The licensee and the seaplane operator shall ensure that instructions are given to the PTV vessel drivers about the direction of water runway, and the movements of the seaplane for taxi and the specific time of its arrivals.

Chapter 5 – General Requirements for Site Selection

- 5.1 When selecting a site for a water runways or installation of seaplane platform, the following shall be taken into consideration:
- a) The location of the proposed water runway or seaplane platform is inside the house reef of the island. If the location is not inside the house reef, whether adequate safety measures are taken to protect the area of operation;
 - b) Depth of sea bed in the proposed area of operation and the size of seaplane intended to be operated;
 - c) Distance of water runway or seaplane platform from the servicing resorts and islands;
 - d) Maritime movements in the location;
 - e) Navigable airspace;
 - f) Environmental effects on the surrounding community;
 - g) Available length of clear and safe water runway strip with respect to the size and type of seaplane intended for use.
 - h) The cross wind operations are kept to a minimum and tailwind operations should be avoided.
 - i) Landing and take-off areas shall be oriented to permit operations into wind.
 - j) Nature Reserved designated areas shall not be used.
 - k) Water runway strip be free from large obstructing coral rubbles to a definite depth.

Chapter 6 – Physical Characteristics and Safety Equipment

6.1 Physical Characteristics

6.1.1 Number and orientation of water runways

Water conditions are affected by factors such as tides, currents, and weather conditions. The orientation and location of water runways shall be determined based on the surrounding water conditions and wind patterns.

Multiple potential water runway configurations may be used at a location to minimize the negative effects of surrounding water conditions and cross winds. Where multiple runway configurations exist, the boundary and the coordinates of the runways shall be depicted on the aerial chart.

6.1.2 Length of water runways

The length of the water runway to be provided shall be adequate to meet the operational requirements of the critical seaplane for which the runway is intended and shall be not less than the longest length determined by applying the corrections for local conditions to the operations and performance characteristics of the relevant seaplanes.

6.1.3 Width of water runways

The width of the water runway shall be not less than 60m.

6.1.4 Depth of water runways

The depth of the water measured at low tide level in the water runway shall not be less than 1.8m or less than 0.3 m below the hull or floats when the seaplane is stationary and loaded to maximum take-off weight.

Where it is impractical to provide the required depth of the water runway due to geographical conditions, the width of the runway having the required depth may be reduced to not less than 30m. In these cases, the shallow areas beyond 30m shall be depicted on the aerial chart.

6.1.5 Taxi channels

Taxi channels shall be provided to permit the safe and expeditious handling of traffic.

Wingtip to wingtip clearance for passing seaplanes (dual directional taxi channels) shall be not less than 5 m.

The depth of the water measured at low tide level in the taxi channel shall not be less than 1.8 m or less than 0.3 m below the hull or floats when the seaplane is stationary and loaded to maximum take-off weight.

6.1.6 Mooring areas

Mooring areas shall be provided, whenever necessary, for the mooring of seaplane and to permit the embarkation and disembarkation of passengers, loading and unloading of cargo.

When mooring areas are provided:

- a) The size of the mooring areas shall be adequate to permit expeditious handling of the peak hour traffic.
- b) The depth of the water measured at low tide level in the mooring areas shall not be less than 1.8 m or less than 0.3 m below the hull or floats when the seaplane is stationary and loaded to maximum take-off weight.
- c) The mooring area shall be designed in such a manner as to provide a minimum clearance of 5 m (16.4 ft.) between any part of the seaplane and any object it could come into contact with depending on water level.

6.1.7 Shore facilities

A seaplane platform (fixed or floating), ramp or beach shall be provided to permit the embarking and disembarking of passengers and crew, loading and unloading of cargo and refuelling.

Where a platform is provided it shall:

- a) be designed and maintained in such a way that permits constant use without causing injury to persons or damage to seaplane;
- b) be attached or anchored in a manner that prevents it from shifting position or becoming detached;
- c) have access from the shore that provides for the safe movement of crew and passengers; and
- d) have at least two bull rails or provision for appropriate number of tie-down cleats at each seaplane parking position to secure the seaplane.

When a seaplane is normally secured in a position where any seaplane component overhangs the platform and constitutes a hazard to the movement of crew and passengers, the hazard shall be clearly indicated:

- a) by means of cones; and/ or
- b) by means of hashed red and white markings; and
- c) in a manner easily identifiable to crew and passengers.

Where a ramp or beach is provided it shall be:

- a) built 1.5 times the width of floats of the largest seaplane intended to use the facility;

- b) located in such a manner as to provide a minimum clearance of 1.8m between a seaplane wing and any object it could come into contact with; and
- c) constructed with a slope not steeper than 8:1.

6.2 Safety Equipment

6.2.1 In the interest of passenger safety the licensee shall provide the following equipment on the seaplane platform:

- a) 30m life line rope;
- b) 01 life buoy;
- c) 01 flashing yellow light/beacon (if located outside the house reef and in open water);

Note: The flashing yellow/beacon when provided its height shall not be more than one (1) meter above the level of the platform. The beacon and its fixing strut shall be made out of frangible material. The beacon shall be ON from dusk to dawn.

- d) An Emergency Box with the following minimum safety equipment.
 - 01 Axe;
 - 01 Crow Bar;
 - 01 Tin snipper;
 - 01 Harness cutting tool.

Note: The emergency boxes may be placed in an alternative location if a safety risk assessment indicates that it does not impair the safety of seaplane operation.

6.3 Platform Buoyancy

6.3.1 Seaplane platforms shall provide adequate support and buoyancy for the loads imposed by the proposed operations.

Note: Guidance material for the design of seaplane platform is in Appendix I.

6.4 Signs

6.4.1 A no smoking signage shall be fixed on the seaplane platform that is visible to passengers and crew.

Chapter 7 – Limitation and Marking of Obstacles

7.1 Obstacle limitation surfaces

7.1.1 A take-off climb/approach surface shall be established for the water runways as shown in Figure 1 provided in Appendix 1:

Take-off climb /approach Surface

7.1.2 Description – The take-off climb/approach surface shall be either straight or curved and established at the end/beginning of the water runway.

7.1.3 Characteristics – The limit of the take-off climb /approach surface:

- a) The width of the inner edge shall not be less than that of the associated water runway or the total width of water runway and protective buffer whichever is greater;
- b) The inner edge shall start at 60m from end/beginning of water runway;
- c) The length of the take-off climb /approach surface shall not be less than 2500 m from the inner edge;
- d) The slope of the take-off climb/approach surface shall be a minimum of 4 % (1:25);

Table 1 - Dimensions and slopes of obstacle limitation surfaces

Approach type – non-instrument	
Take-off climb/approach surface	
Width of inner edge	Refer 7.1.3 (a)
Location of inner edge	60 m from end/beginning of water runway
Divergence take-off climb/approach surface	10 %
Length (minimum)	2500 m
Slope of take-off climb/approach surface (maximum)	4% (1:25)

7.2 Objects and obstacles

7.2.1 No fixed object shall be permitted on a water runway.

7.2.2 Fixed objects or structures that are located within the movement area shall not penetrate OLS unless:

- a) those structures are for air navigation purposes; or
- b) are essential to the safety of aircraft operation;
- c) are frangible.

7.2.3 A mobile object shall not penetrate take-off climb/approach surfaces, unless procedures are in place to ensure the object is removed during approach and departure operations.

7.3 Other objects

7.3.1 Where a safety risk assessment indicates that an object is hazardous to seaplane located on the movement area or in the air in the immediate vicinity of the movement area, it shall be:

- a) removed; or
- b) marked; and/or
- c) lighted in accordance with ASC- 139-5, Chapter 6.

Chapter 8 – Emergency Response Planning

8.1 Emergency Response Plan

8.1.2 The licensee shall prepare an Emergency Response Plan (ERP) for the water runway or seaplane platform and shall submit the ERP to CAA. ERP shall include by minimum the following:

- a) A general location chart showing facilities with details of emergency facilities.
- b) Categories of seaplane accidents/incidents and the procedures for dealing with such emergencies
- c) Emergency response facilities
- d) Post-Emergency recovery procedures
- e) Key telephone numbers

8.2 Response time

8.2.1 The operational objective of the rescue service shall be to achieve a response time not exceeding three (03) minutes to the Rapid Response Area in optimum visibility and surface conditions.

8.2.2 The Seaplane Handling Agent(s) shall be in attendance on the transfer vessel at take-off and landing and shall monitor the take-off in case there is an emergency related with the seaplane taking-off. During bad weather conditions, a standby vessel can be deployed near landing and take-off sites of the seaplane.

8.3 Emergency exercises

8.3.1 The licensee shall ensure that an operational emergency exercise that depicts a water rescue scenario is conducted at least once in three (03) years according to the ERP.

8.3.2 Emergency exercise schedules shall be made available to the CAA. The CAA may choose to observe these exercises.

8.4 Training of seaplane handling agents

8.4.1 The licensee shall ensure that the Seaplane Handling Agent shall have undergone CAA approved training (once every three (03) years) to take operational responsibilities and shall be trained for firefighting, emergency rescue scenarios and other safety matters.

Appendix I: Guidance for Design of Seaplane Platforms

1. Fixed Platforms

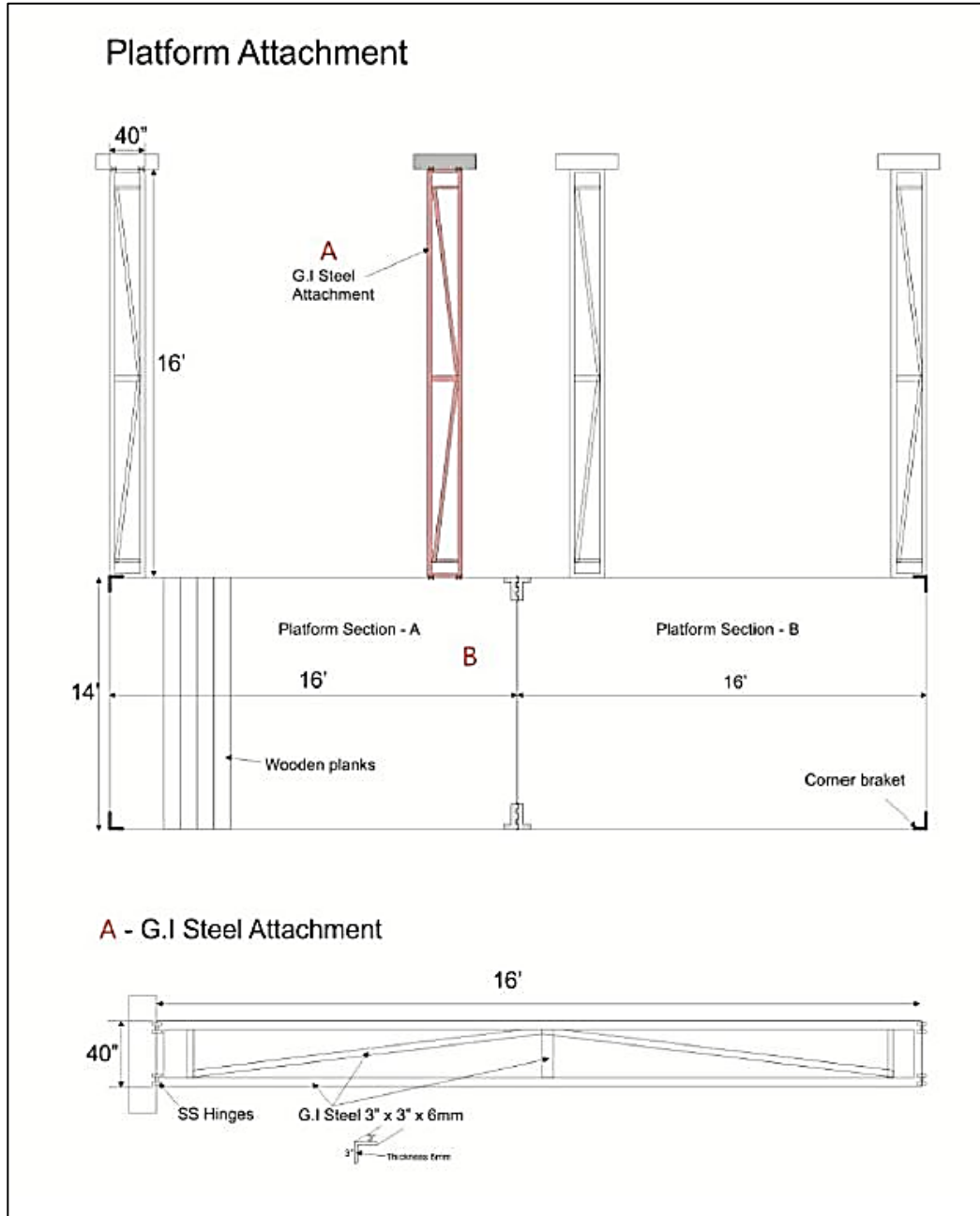


Figure 1

2. Floating Platforms

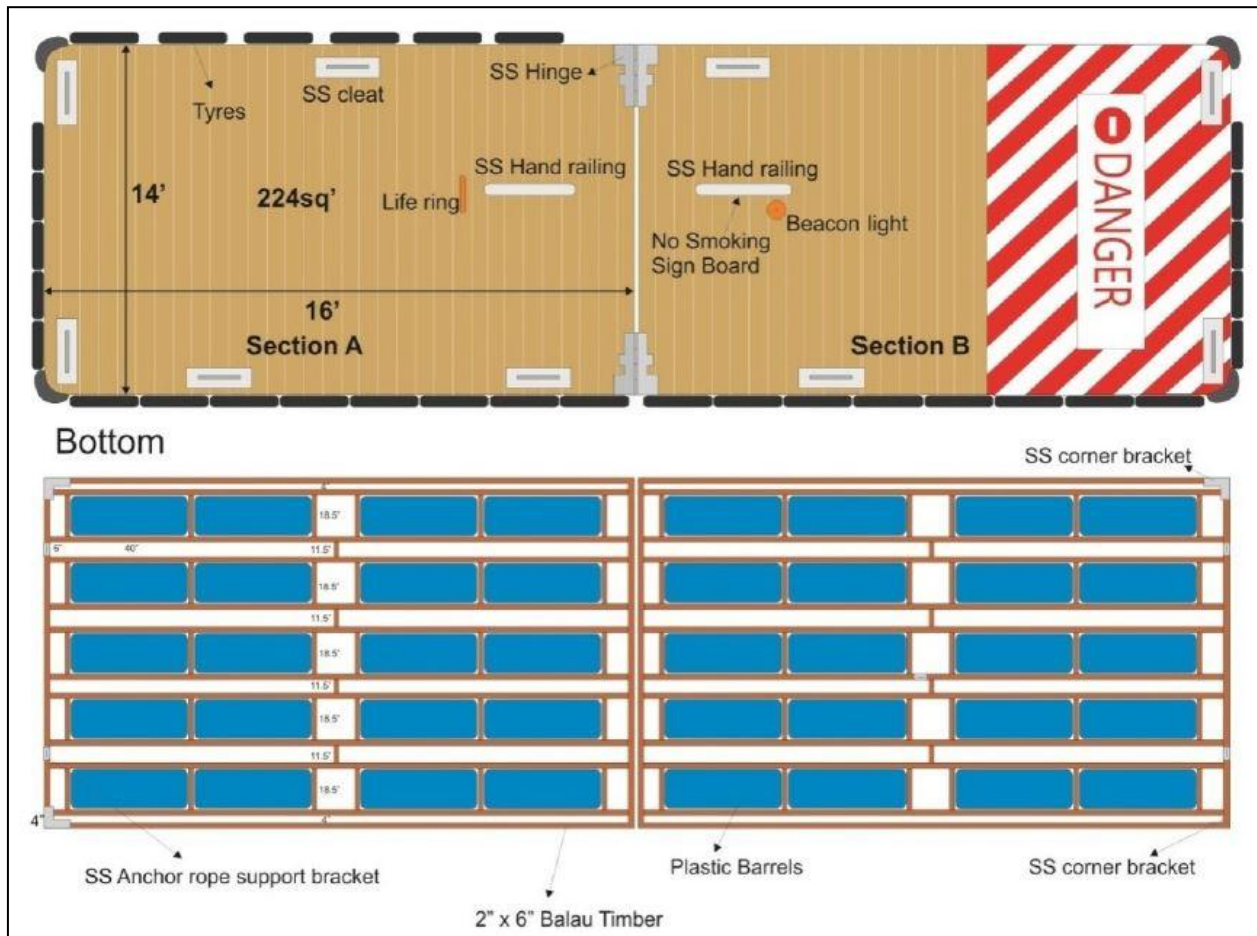


Figure 2

3. Anchoring and mooring system

The typical anchoring system is shown in the figure below. The licensee shall ensure that the anchoring system is capable of handling adverse weather conditions.

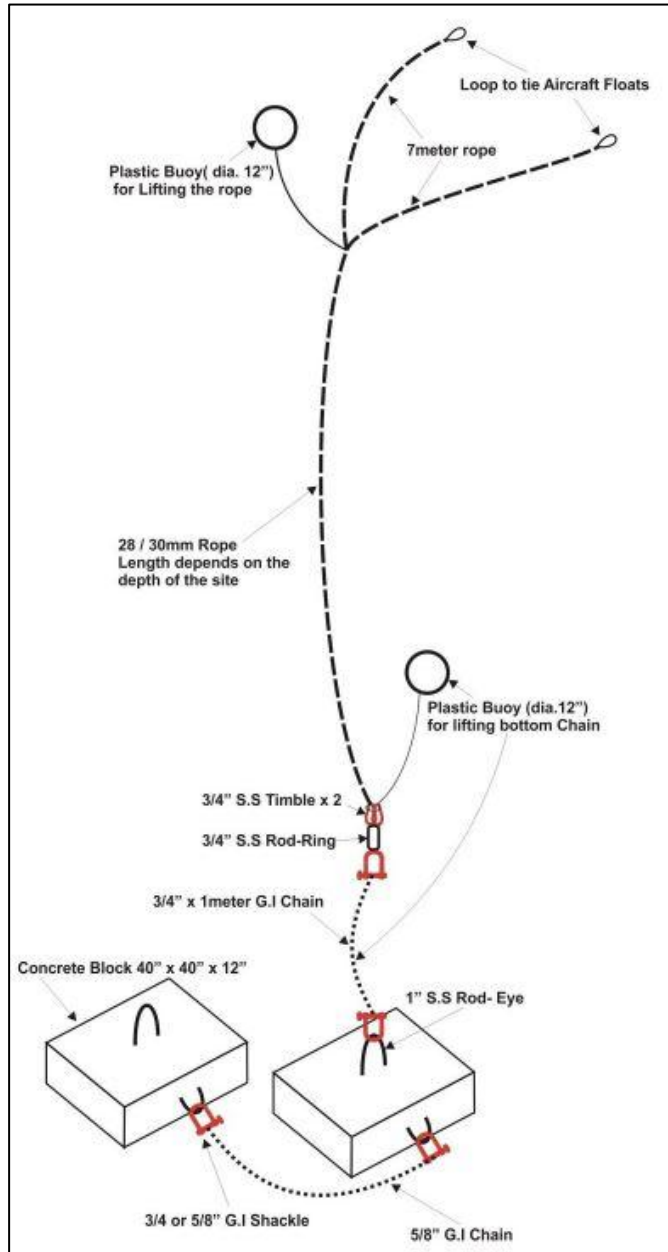


Figure 3

4. Mooring Bollards

Mooring bollards are stainless steel posts installed as a deck-fitting on the platforms which is used to secure seaplanes. Please refer to the dock drawings (Figure 2) for location of the bollards.

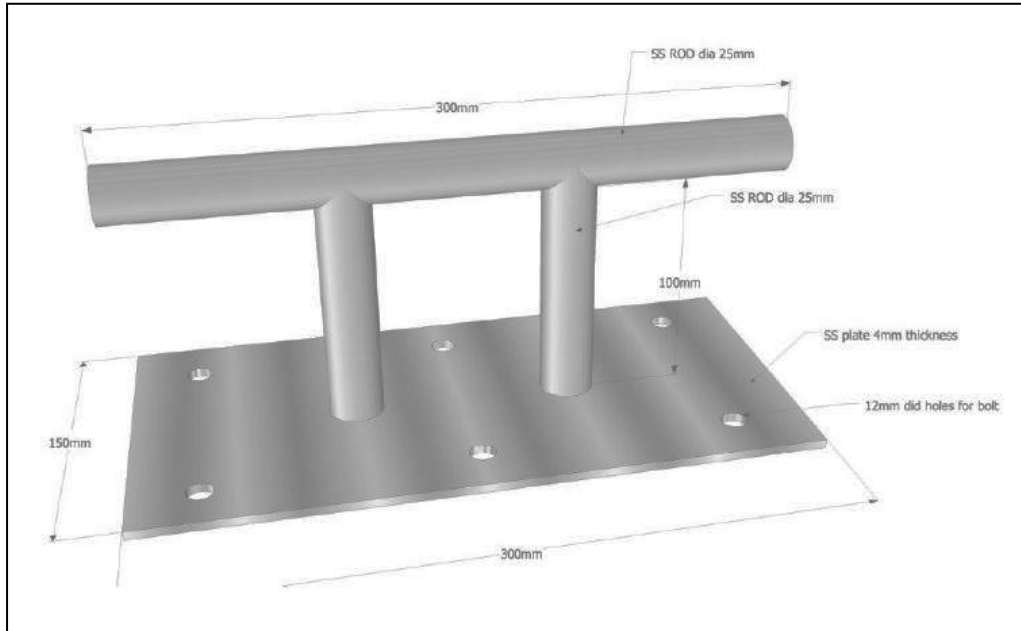


Figure 4

5. Signage and Other Notices

No Smoking Sign



Figure 5

6. Dock Markings

The dock markings should be painted as shown in the figure below.

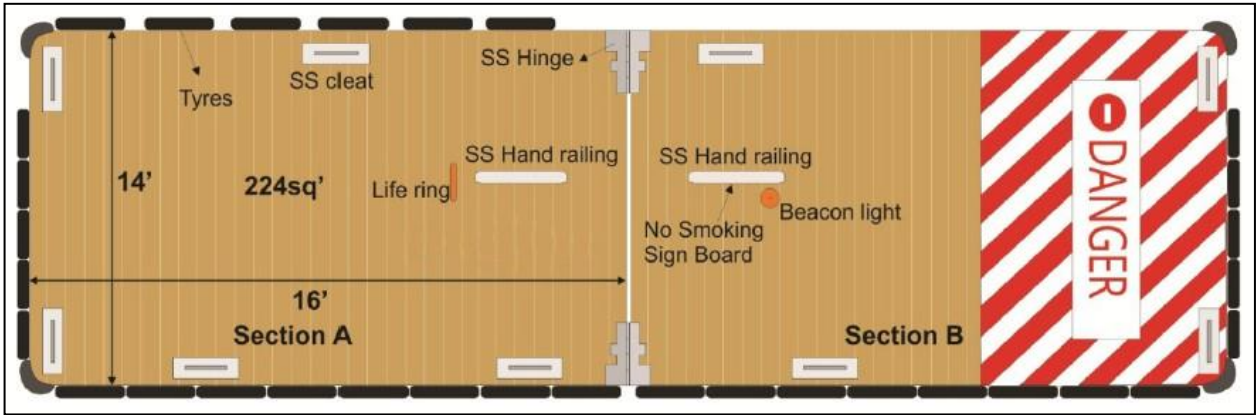


Figure 6

7. Safety Buoy

The quality of the plastic should be inspected for cracks and if cracks are visible the lifebuoy should be replaced with a new one.



Figure 7

Appendix II: Sample Aerial Chart

