

Gus Lewis, RYA Legal and Government Affairs Manager and Howard Pridding, Executive Director of the British Marine Federation, recently met with officials from the Department of Transport (DfT) for an update on proposed regulations relating to blood-alcohol limits and boating.

Blood-alcohol limits for non-professional (recreational) boaters were introduced by Section 80 of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003, although at present this Section is not in force. The DfT has confirmed that it now wishes to bring Section 80 in to force, subject to certain exemptions, and is in the process of producing draft Regulations to effect this.

The RYA and BMF understand that the DfT intends to exempt from the application of blood-alcohol limits those boaters navigating small, slow craft but the RYA and BMF continue to be concerned as to how this exemption will be applied in practice and whether it will be workable.

“We have unresolved concerns regarding which craft will be exempt, which individuals on board would be subject to the blood-alcohol limited and how the rules would be enforced (and by whom), which we do not believe have been addressed properly,” commented Gus.

“Once the draft Regulations are published for consultation then we will have a clearer idea as to what precisely is being proposed and if necessary, we will once again raise with the

Department our concerns over issues of application and enforcement,” concluded Howard.

The RYA and BMF have been advised that the draft regulations will be available for public consultation via the DfT website before Christmas and that the consultation will be open for a period of 12 weeks

Response by the RYA and BMF to the draft regulations will be available to view on both websites when issued.

To update yourself on this issue go to www.rya.org.uk/alcohollimits or the Government Relations service page on www.britishmarine.co.uk.