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NMC Policy Letter No 12-01
31 October 2001

From: Commanding Officer, U. S. Coast Guard National Maritime Center
To: Distribution

Subj: CONTINUING COMPETENCY IN BASIC SAFETY TRAINING (BST)

Ref: (a) Amendments to Part B of the Seafarers' Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) Code of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, contained in STCW.6/Circ.5

1. PURPOSE. This policy letter provides information about recent interpretations of the STCW that were published in reference (a). As a result of these interpretations by the Maritime Safety Committee of the International Maritime Organization, the application of the requirement for renewal of basic safety training has been changed.

2. ACTION. Commanding officers of units with marine safety responsibilities should bring this policy letter to the attention of the maritime industry with interests in the personnel field. This policy letter will be distributed by electronic means only. It is available on the World Wide Web at **http://www.uscg.mil/STCW/m-policy.htm**.

3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. NMC policy letter 1-01, *Renewal of Basic Safety Training,* is superseded and cancelled.

4. BACKGROUND.

   a. STCW Code A-VI/6, paragraph 2.2 indicates that a mariner must provide evidence of having achieved the required standard of competence to undertake the tasks, duties and responsibilities listed in column 1 of tables A-VI/1-1, A-VI/1-2, A-VI/1-3 and A-VI/1-4 within the previous five years. It then provides further information about the methods of demonstrating such competence.

   b. In accordance with the STCW Code Part A, mariners were required to demonstrate that they had maintained competency in each element of BST at intervals not exceeding five years.

5. DISCUSSION.

   a. Reference (a), issued on May 30, 2000, provides updated guidance to Parties to the STCW for uniform interpretation of the requirements for revalidation of training including the four elements of BST. The guidance applies to mariners who have completed initial training in BST or who completed one of the interim methods for determining competence in BST as set forth in NMC Policy Letter 5-99, *Evidence of Completion of Basic Safety Training.*

b. In view of this guidance, a mariner who has met the requirements for initial competency in BST and who is actively serving on seagoing ships will be considered as having demonstrated continuing competence in BST provided he or she completes at least one year of sea service within the past five years. This five-year period is a running calendar in which credit for competency in BST extends for five years beyond the critical date (see paragraph 5.c) at which the mariner has completed one year of sea service.

c. To determine the critical date, review the mariner's sea service starting with the current date and go backwards in time until one year of sea service is counted. The period of validity for continuing competence in BST is then five years from the date where the mariner has completed one year of sea service. For example, if on 1 October 2001, you count backward and determine the mariner completed one year of sea service on 1 June 2000, then the mariner is considered to be competent in the four elements of BST through 31 May 2005. Using similar dates, if on 1 October 2001 a mariner completed one year of sea service on 1 June 1996, then the BST would have been valid until 31 May 2001. Because 31 May 2001 has passed (today's date in this example is 1 October 2001), the mariner has not retained competency in BST.

e. The critical date determined in paragraph c is not fixed in time. As a mariner continues to serve on a seagoing vessel, the critical date, and through that the expiration date of BST, will advance in time.

d. If a mariner cannot prove evidence of one year of sea service within the past five years, the mariner will no longer be considered competent in BST and must complete a U. S. Coast Guard approved or accepted training course approved for revalidation of BST.

e. Regional Examination Centers may accept discharges, or sea service letters prepared in accordance with current standards, as proofs of sea service.

f. Sea service is considered to be actual sea service on a seagoing ship in any capacity.

E. J. FINK

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All Activity Commanders
All RECs