

CONVENTION CONCERNING
THE CERTIFICATION OF ABLE SEAMEN

Date of entry into force: 14 July 1951

Article 1

No person shall be engaged on any vessel as an able seaman unless he is a person who by national laws or regulations is deemed to be competent to perform any duty which may be required of a member of the crew serving in the deck department (other than an officer of leading or specialist rating) and unless he holds a certificate of qualification as an able seaman granted in accordance with the provisions of the following articles.

Article 2

1. The competent authority shall make arrangements for the holding of examinations and for the granting of certificates of qualification.

2. No person shall be granted a certificate of qualification unless -

- (a) he has reached a minimum age to be prescribed by the competent authority;
- (b) he has served at sea in the deck department for a minimum period to be prescribed by the competent authority; and
- (c) he has passed an examination of proficiency to be prescribed by the competent authority.

3. The prescribed minimum age shall not be less than eighteen years.

4. The prescribed minimum period of service at sea shall not be less than thirty-six months: Provided that the competent authority may -

- (a) permit persons with a period of actual service at sea of not less than twenty-four months who have successfully passed through a course of training in an approved training school to reckon the time spent in such training, or part thereof, as sea service; and
- (b) permit persons trained in approved sea-going training ships who have served eighteen months in such ships to be certificated as able seamen upon leaving in good standing.

5. The prescribed examination shall provide a practical test of the candidate's knowledge of seamanship and of his ability to carry out effectively all the duties that may be required of an able seaman, including those of a lifeboatman; it shall be such as to qualify a successful candidate to hold the special lifeboatman's certificate provided for in Article 22 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1929, or in the corresponding provision of any subsequent Convention revising or replacing that Convention for the time being in force for the territory concerned.

Article 3

A certificate of qualification may be granted to any person who, at the time of the entry into force of this Convention for the territory concerned, is performing the full duties of an able seaman or leading deck rating or has performed such duties.

Article 4

The competent authority may provide for the recognition of certificates of qualification issued in other territories.

[Code of Federal Regulations]
[Title 46, Volume 1]
[Revised as of October 1, 2002]
From the U.S. Government Printing Office via GPO Access
[CITE: 46CFR12.05-3]

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PART 12--CERTIFICATION OF SEAMEN--Table of Contents

Subpart 12.05--Able Seamen

Sec. 12.05-3 General requirements.

(a) To qualify for certification as able seaman an applicant must:

(1) Be at least 18 years of age;

(2) Pass the prescribed physical examination;

(3) Meet the sea service or training requirements set forth in this part;

(4) Pass an examination demonstrating ability as an able seaman and lifeboatman; and,

(5) Speak and understand the English language as would be required in performing the general duties of able seaman and during an emergency aboard ship.

(b) An STCW endorsement valid for any period on or after February 1, 2002, will be issued or renewed only when the candidate for certification as an able seaman also produces satisfactory evidence, on the basis of assessment of a practical demonstration of skills and abilities, of having achieved or maintained within the previous 5 years the minimum standards of competence for the following 4 areas of basic safety:

(1) Personal survival techniques as set out in table A-VI/1-1 of the STCW Code.

(2) Fire prevention and fire-fighting as set out in table A-VI/1-2 of the STCW Code.

(3) Elementary first aid as set out in table A-VI/1-3 of the STCW Code.

(4) Personal safety and social responsibilities as set out in table A-VI/1-4 of the STCW Code.

(c) An STCW endorsement valid for any period on or after February 1, 2002, will be issued or renewed only when the

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candidate for certification as able seamen meets the requirements of STCW Regulation II/4 and of Section A-II/4 of the STCW Code, if the candidate will be serving as a rating forming part of the navigational watch on a seagoing ship of 500 GT or more.

[CGD 80-131, 45 FR 69240, Oct. 20, 1980, as amended by CGD 95-062, 62 FR 34537, June 26, 1997; CGD 95-062, 62 FR 40140, July 25, 1997]

[Code of Federal Regulations]
[Title 46, Volume 1]
[Revised as of October 1, 2002]
From the U.S. Government Printing Office via GPO Access
[CITE: 46CFR12.05-7]

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Subpart 12.05--Able Seamen

Sec. 12.05-7 Service or training requirements.

(a) The minimum service required to qualify an applicant for the various categories of able seaman is as listed in this paragraph.

(1) Able Seaman--Any Waters, Unlimited. Three years service on deck on vessels operating on the oceans or the Great Lakes.

(2) Able Seaman--Limited. Eighteen months service on deck in vessels of 100 gross tons or over which operate in a service not exclusively confined to the rivers and smaller inland lakes of the United States.

(3) Able Seaman--Special. Twelve months service on deck on vessels operating on the oceans, or the navigable waters of the United States including the Great Lakes.

(4) Able Seaman--Special (OSV). Six months service on deck on vessels operating on the oceans, or the navigable waters of the United States including the Great Lakes.

(5) After July 31, 1998, to receive an STCW endorsement for service as a ``rating forming part of a navigational watch'' on a seagoing ship of 500 GT or more, the applicant's seagoing service must include training and experience associated with navigational watchkeeping and involve the performance of duties carried out under the direct supervision of the master, the officer in charge of the navigational watch, or a qualified rating forming part of a navigational watch. The training and experience must be sufficient to establish that the candidate has achieved the standard of competence prescribed in table A-II/4 of the STCW Code, in accordance with the methods of demonstrating competence and the criteria for evaluating competence specified in that table.

Note: Employment considerations for the various categories of able seaman are contained in Sec. 157.20-15 of this chapter.

(b) Training programs approved by the Commanding Officer, National Maritime Center, may be substituted for the required periods of service on deck as follows:

(1) A graduate of a school ship may be rated as able seaman upon satisfactory completion of the course of instruction. For this purpose, school ship is interpreted to mean an institution which offers a complete course of instruction, including a period of at sea training, in the skills appropriate to the rating of able seaman.

(2) Training programs, other than those classified as a school ship, may be substituted for up to one third of the required service on deck. The service/training ratio for each program is determined by the Commanding Officer, National Maritime Center, who may allow a maximum of three days on deck service credit for each day of instruction.

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(c) A certificate of service as Able Seaman, Great Lakes--18 months' service, is considered equivalent to a certificate of service as Able Seaman--Limited.

(d) A certificate of service as Able Seaman with the following route, vessel, or time restrictions is considered equivalent to a certificate of service as Able Seaman--Special:

(1) Any waters--12 months.

(2) Tugs and towboats--any waters.

(3) Bays and sounds--12 months, vessels 500 gross tons or under not carrying passengers.

(4) Seagoing barges--12 months.

(e) An individual holding a certificate of service endorsed as noted in paragraphs (c) or (d) of this section may have his or her merchant mariner's document endorsed with the equivalent category, upon request.

[CGD 80-131, 45 FR 69240, Oct. 20, 1980, as amended by CGD 95-072, 60 FR 50460, Sept. 29, 1995; CGD 95-062, 62 FR 34537, June 26, 1997; CGD 95-062, 62 FR 40140, July 25, 1997; USCG-1998-4442, 63 FR 52189, Sept. 30, 1998]

[Code of Federal Regulations]
[Title 46, Volume 1]
[Revised as of October 1, 2002]
From the U.S. Government Printing Office via GPO Access
[CITE: 46CFR12.03-1]

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PART 12--CERTIFICATION OF SEAMEN--Table of Contents

Subpart 12.03--Approved and Accepted Training

Sec. 12.03-1 Coast Guard-accepted training other than approved courses.

(a) When the training and assessment of competence required by part 10 of this chapter or by this part 12 are not subject to approval under Sec. 10.302 of this chapter, but are used to qualify to hold an STCW certificate or endorsement for service on or after February 1, 2002, the training and assessment must meet the following requirements:

(1) The training and assessment must have written, clearly defined objectives that emphasize specific knowledge, skills, and abilities, and that include criteria to be used in establishing a student's successful achievement of the training objectives.

(2) The training must be set out in a written syllabus that conforms to a Coast Guard-accepted outline for such training and includes--

(i) The sequence of subjects to be covered;

(ii) The number of hours to be devoted to instruction in relevant areas of knowledge;

(iii) The identity and professional qualifications of the instructor(s) to be conducting the training or providing instruction;

(iv) The identity of other media or facilities to be used in conducting the training; and

(v) Measurements at appropriate intervals of each candidate's progress toward acquisition of the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities stated in the training objectives.

(3) Except as provided in paragraph (a)(4) of this section, documentary evidence must be readily available to establish that all instructors--

(i) Have experience, training, or instruction in effective instructional techniques;

(ii) Are qualified in the task for which the training is being conducted; and

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(iii) Hold the level of license, endorsement, or other professional credential required of those who would apply, on board a vessel, the relevant level of knowledge, skills, and abilities described in the training objectives.

(4) Neither a specialist in a particular field of non-maritime education, such as mathematics or first aid, nor a person with at least 3 years of service as a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, specializing in a particular field, need hold a maritime license or document to conduct training in that field.

(5) A simulator may be used in training if--

(i) The simulator meets applicable performance standards;
(ii) The instructor has gained practical operational experience on the particular type of simulator being used; and
(iii) The instructor has received appropriate guidance in instructional techniques involving the use of simulators.

(6) Essential equipment and instructional materials must afford each student adequate opportunity to participate in exercises and acquire practice in performing required skills.

(7) A process for routinely assessing the effectiveness of the instructors, including the use of confidential evaluations by students, is in place.

(8) Documentary evidence is readily available to establish that any evaluation of whether a student is competent in accordance with standards, methods, and criteria set out in part A of the STCW Code is conducted by a designated examiner who has experience, training, or instruction in assessment techniques.

(9) Records of the student's performance are maintained for at least 1 year by the offeror of the training and assessment.

(10) To ensure that the training is meeting its objectives, and the requirements of paragraphs (a) (1) through (9) of this section, its offeror must either--

(i) Be regulated as a maritime academy or marine academy pursuant to 46 CFR part 310; or

(ii) Monitor it in accordance with a Coast Guard-accepted QSS, which must include the following features:

(A) The training must be provisionally certified, on the basis of an initial independent evaluation conducted under a Coast Guard-accepted QSS, as being capable of meeting its stated objective.

(B) The training must be periodically monitored in accordance with the schedule stipulated under the Coast Guard-accepted quality-standards system.

(C) Each person conducting the initial evaluation or the subsequent periodic monitoring of the training shall be knowledgeable about the subjects being evaluated or monitored and about the national and international requirements that apply to the training, and shall not himself or herself be involved in the training and assessment of students.

(D) Each person evaluating or monitoring the training shall enjoy convenient access to all appropriate documents and facilities, and opportunities both to observe all appropriate activities and to conduct confidential interviews when necessary.

(E) Arrangements must be such as to ensure that no person evaluating or monitoring the training is penalized or rewarded, directly or indirectly, by the sponsor of the training for making any particular observations or for reaching any particular conclusions.

(11) Each person conducting the initial evaluation under paragraph (a)(10)(ii)(A) of this section or the periodic monitoring of the training under paragraph (a)(10)(ii)(B) of this section shall communicate his or her conclusions to the Commanding Officer, National Maritime Center, NMC-4B, 4200 Wilson Boulevard, suite 510, Arlington, VA 22203-1804, within 1 month of the completion or the evaluation of the monitoring.

(12) Each offeror of the training shall let the Coast Guard or someone authorized by the Coast Guard observe the records of a student's performance and records otherwise relating to paragraphs (a) (1) through (10) of this section.

(b) The Coast Guard will maintain a list of training each of whose offerors

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submits a certificate, initially not less than 45 calendar days before offering training under this section, and annually thereafter, signed by the offeror or its authorized representative, stating that the training fully complies with requirements of this section, and identifying the Coast Guard-accepted QSS being used for independent monitoring. Training on this list will offer the training necessary for licenses and STCW endorsements under this part. The Coast Guard will update this list periodically and make it available to members of the public on request.

(c) If the Coast Guard determines, on the basis of observations or conclusions either of its own or of someone authorized by it to monitor the training, that particular training does not satisfy one or more of the conditions described in paragraph (a) of this section--

(1) The Coast Guard will so notify the offeror of the training by letter, enclosing a report of the observations and conclusions;

(2) The offeror may, within a period specified in the notice, either appeal the observations or conclusions to the Commandant (G-MS) or bring the training into compliance; and

(3) If the appeal is denied--or the deficiency is not corrected in the allotted time, or within any additional period judged by the Coast Guard to be appropriate, considering progress towards compliance--the Coast Guard will remove the training from the list maintained under paragraph (b) of this section until it can verify full compliance; and it may deny applications for licenses for STCW endorsement based in whole or in part on training not on the list, until additional training or assessment is documented.

[CGD 95-062, 62 FR 34536, June 26, 1997, as amended by USCG-1998-4442, 63 FR 52189, Sept. 30, 1998]

[Code of Federal Regulations]
[Title 46, Volume 1]
[Revised as of October 1, 2002]
From the U.S. Government Printing Office via GPO Access
[CITE: 46CFR12.05-9]

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Subpart 12.05--Able Seamen

Sec. 12.05-9 Examination and demonstration of ability.

(a) Before an applicant is certified as an able seaman, he or she shall prove to the satisfaction of the Coast Guard by oral or other means of examination, and by actual demonstration, his or her knowledge of seamanship and the ability to carry out effectively all the duties that may be required of an able seaman, including those of a lifeboatman. The applicant shall demonstrate that he or she:

(1) Has been trained in all the operations connected with the launching of lifeboats and liferafts, and in the use of oars;

(2) Is acquainted with the practical handling of boats; and

(3) Is capable of taking command of the boat's crew.

(b) The examination, whether administered orally or by other means, must be conducted only in the English language and must consist of questions regarding:

(1) Lifeboats and liferafts, the names of their essential parts, and a description of the required equipment;

(2) The clearing away, swinging out, and lowering of lifeboats and liferafts, and handling of lifeboats under oars and sails, including questions relative to the proper handling of a boat in a heavy sea;

(3) The operation and functions of commonly used types of davits;

(4) The applicant's knowledge of nautical terms; boxing the compass, either by degrees or points according to his experience; running lights, passing signals, and fog signals for vessels on the high seas, in inland waters, or on the Great Lakes depending upon the waters on which the applicant has had service; and distress signals; and,

(5) The applicant's knowledge of commands in handling the wheel by obeying orders passed to him as wheelsman, and knowledge of the use of engineroom telegraph or bell-pull signals.

(c) In the actual demonstration, the applicant shall show his ability by taking command of a boat and directing the operation of clearing away, swinging out, lowering the boat into the water, and acting as coxswain in charge of the boat under oars. He shall demonstrate his ability to row by actually pulling an oar in the boat. He shall also demonstrate knowledge of the principal knots, bends, splices, and hitches in common use by actually making them.

(c-1) The applicant must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection, his knowledge of pollution laws and regulations, procedures for discharge containment and cleanup, and methods for disposal of sludge and waste material from cargo and fueling operations.

(d) Any person who is in valid possession of a certificate as able seaman endorsed, any waters--12 months and who can produce documentary evidence of sufficient service to qualify for a certificate as able

seaman endorsed, any waters--unlimited, may be issued a new document bearing this endorsement without additional professional examination. The applicant shall surrender for cancellation the document bearing the limited endorsement. No physical examination will be required at the time of this exchange unless it is found that the applicant obviously suffers from some physical or mental infirmity to a degree that in the opinion of

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the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection, would render him incompetent to perform the usual duties of an able seaman at sea. If such condition is believed to exist, the applicant shall be required to undergo an examination by a medical officer of the Public Health Service to determine his competency.

[CGFR 65-50, 30 FR 16640, Dec. 30, 1965, as amended by CGD 71-161R, 37 FR 28263, Dec. 21, 1972; CGD 94-029, 61 FR 47064, Sept. 6, 1996; USCG-2002-13058, 67 FR 61278, Sept. 30, 2002]