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

Subj: REQUIREMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON STANDARDS OF TRAINING, CERTIFICATION AND WATCHKEEPING FOR SEAFARERS, 1978, AS AMENDED (STCW) FOR CONTINUING COMPETENCY IN FIREFIGHTING

Ref: (a) STCW regulation VI/3

1. This policy letter provides information about the requirements for periodic renewal of a mariner's competency in the skills associated with firefighting. Available information indicates that misconceptions exist concerning these requirements.
2. Reference (a) requires that mariners having charge of firefighting operations complete training in advanced firefighting. The same training is also required of candidates for certification as an officer in charge of either a navigational watch or engineering watch.
3. Advanced firefighting training is only required to be completed once; there is no requirement for periodic renewal of competency. A requirement does exist however, for a mariner to demonstrate continued competency in fire fighting and fire prevention, one of the elements of basic safety training (BST). Competency in this area must have been established within the five years previous to being assigned certain duties on a seagoing vessel. Evaluators must be careful to not confuse these differing requirements for continued competency.
4. Since 1987, United States regulations have required applicants for most licenses that authorize service on seagoing vessels to complete advanced firefighting training. Also since 1987, if the requirement for completion of advanced firefighting had never been met previously, an applicant for an upgrade of a license has been required to complete advanced firefighting training. As a result of these regulatory requirements, most U. S. licensed officers have completed advanced firefighting and have no further requirement for training in this area.

DONALD J. KERLIN  
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