

REQUIREMENTS FOR QUALIFICATION AS AN RFPNW

- Ref: (a) International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended (STCW), Regulation II/4
(b) Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 12, Subpart 12.05

1. This enclosure provides guidance for a mariner to qualify for an STCW certification as a rating forming part of a navigational watch.
2. This enclosure applies to:
 - a. A mariner who began the service or training on or after August 1, 1998; or
 - b. A mariner who is issued the STCW certification on or after February 1, 2002.
3. Reference (a) requires all ratings forming part of a navigational watch on a seagoing ship of 500 gross tonnage (GT) to be duly certified to perform such duties. This includes entry level ratings standing navigational watches, such as a lookout watch. It also includes entry level personnel serving in a maintenance department when those persons are required by the Certificate of Inspection to be qualified to augment the navigational watch. This requirement for certification does not apply to a mariner standing navigational watches in a supervised training status or one whose duties are of an unskilled nature. United States statutes and regulations do not provide for a similar rating; however, the duties and responsibilities of an able seaman are such that the STCW's qualification as an RFPNW apply to an able seaman.
4. Applicants for the STCW certification must provide evidence of:
 - a. Either six months of approved, seagoing service and training as a rating forming part of a navigational watch; or
 - b. Satisfactory completion of a course approved or accepted as being special training required by the STCW plus a period of approved sea service. The length of the period of approved sea service will be specified as part of the course's approval and will not be less than two months; and
 - c. Evidence that the applicant meets the standards of reference (b) as regards to eye sight, color vision, and hearing.
5. A day of approved seagoing service for qualification as a RFPNW is an eight-hour day under training carrying out duties associated with navigational watchkeeping functions under the direct supervision of the master, the officer in charge of a navigational watch, or a qualified rating (STCW Regulation II/4). A qualified rating for training purposes is an able seaman holding an STCW certificate. Sea service under training should be documented on Table 1 to this enclosure and signed by the master, chief mate, or an officer in charge of the watch who holds a license of second mate or higher. At least 50% of the service must be performed on a seagoing vessel of at least 200 gross register tons (GRT) (equal to 500 GT). The other 50% may be performed on seagoing vessels that meet the requirements of reference (b) for qualification as an able seaman.

All steering and helm assessments must be completed on a vessel of at least 100 GRT. See Table 1 of this enclosure for specific equipment requirements.

6. In addition to the seagoing service in paragraph 4.a. or 4.b., an applicant must be assessed as meeting the competencies listed in the STCW Code A, Table A-II/4. Table 1 of this enclosure sets forth the competencies in a check-off list format and provides performance measures for the evaluations of competency. This table and the performance measures or their equivalents must be used to document the assessments of a mariner's competencies. Each applicant for STCW certification as an RFPNW must present a competency check-off list with each competency signed by the master, chief mate, or officer in charge of the watch. The signing officer attests that he or she has witnessed the mariner's satisfactory performance in the listed areas based on the performance criteria. Training organizations or designated examiners may submit alternative standards of competence for evaluation and approval.

7. Provided that completion of a training course is approved as such, a mariner who completes the course may be issued an interim STCW certification endorsed "Rating forming part of a navigational watch - lookout duties only." This interim rating will be valid for one year from the date of issue and may not be renewed. Mariners holding this certification may perform lookout duties while completing sea service required for the final rating.

8. Qualification as an RFPNW is an integral part of qualifying for an able seaman rating. Each applicant for a rating as able seaman-unlimited, -limited, or -special valid for service on a seagoing vessel who meets the requirements of paragraph 1 must be qualified as an RFPNW before applying for the able seaman rating.