

## REQUIREMENTS FOR QUALIFICATION AS AN RFPEW

- Ref: (a) Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 12, Subpart 12.15  
(b) International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended (STCW), Regulation III/4  
(c) COMDTINST M16000.8B Marine Safety Manual Volume III, Chapter 16

1. This enclosure provides guidance for entry-level engineering ratings to qualify for:

- a. An STCW certification as a rating forming part of an engine room watch in a manned engine room or designated to perform duties in a periodically unmanned engine room; and
- b. An endorsement on a merchant mariner's document (MMD) as a qualified member of the engine department (QMED) as oiler, fireman/watertender, and/or junior engineer.

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 first issued one of the specified QMED endorsements on or after February 1, 2002. Subsequent endorsements may be issued in accordance with the regulations in reference (a).

3. Reference (b) requires all ratings forming part of an engineering watch on seagoing vessels powered by main propulsion machinery of 750 kilowatts (kW) (1,000 horsepower [HP] or more) to meet STCW standards. STCW certification requirements do not apply to a mariner who is standing engineering watches in a supervised training status and is an extra member of the watch.

4. Applicants for the QMED ratings identified in paragraph one to be valid for service on any seagoing vessel must provide evidence of:

- a. Six months of approved, seagoing service and training as a rating forming part of an engineering watch; or
- b. Satisfactory completion of a course approved or accepted as being special training required by the STCW and 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.

5. A day of approved seagoing service for qualification as a RFPEW is an eight-hour day associated with engine room watchkeeping functions and involving the performance of duties carried out under the direct supervision of a qualified engineer officer or a qualified rating (STCW Regulation III/4). A qualified rating for training purposes is a watchstanding QMED who has held that rating for at least one year. Sea service under training should be documented on the second page of Table 1 to this enclosure and signed by the chief engineer or first assistant engineer. The service must be performed on a vessel of at least 1,000 horsepower (750kW) that meets the criteria of reference (c) for qualification as a qualified member of the engine department (QMED). At least two-thirds of the required seagoing service must have been performed on a steam vessel or the STCW certification will be limited to motor vessels only.

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-III/4. Table 1 restates the knowledge, understanding, or proficiency (KUP) for each competency in a check-off list format and provides interim assessment standards for evaluations. This table or its equivalent must be used to document the assessments of a mariner's proficiencies. Each applicant for one of the specified QMED endorsements and STCW certification must present a competency check-off list with each KUP signed by the chief engineer, first assistant engineer of a vessel, or officer in charge of the watch holding a license of a least second assistant engineer, and serving on a vessel with main propelling machinery of more than 750 kW (1,000 HP). The signing officer attests that he or she has witnessed the mariner's satisfactory performance in the listed areas based on the performance criteria. The enclosed check-off list is also being published in the Federal Register for public comment. If changes to the table are required as a result of the public comments, mariners who began the assessments before the date a change is published may complete the qualification process using the enclosed table.

7. In addition, the mariner must complete a U. S. Coast Guard examination to qualify for an endorsement as a QMED unless the mariner has attended a course that has been approved as a substitute for the examination. The mariner must also meet all pertinent requirements of reference (a) for issuance of an MMD such as meeting medical standards, meeting character standards including a review of the National Driver's Register, and passing a drug screening.

8. An applicant who is otherwise qualified for a watchstanding QMED endorsement but who elects to not complete basic safety training may be issued a merchant mariner's document with the appropriate endorsement(s); however, and STCW certification will not be issued. The watchstanding QMED ratings shall be limited to service on vessels not required to comply with the STCW; however, non-watchstanding QMED ratings (electrician, machinist, refrigerating engineer, deck engineer, and pumpman) will not be restricted. Mariners who elect this option may find themselves at a career disadvantage later due to limited career paths or employment opportunities. RECs should advise mariners of this possibility.

9. Graduates of approved training courses that lead to a watchstanding QMED endorsement must also provide proof of meeting the STCW's competencies (table 1) unless the course's approval indicates that course completion satisfies the STCW's competencies.