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MARINE SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETIN (MSIB) 04-03

June 1, 2003

**Qualification For Issuance of Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS)
Endorsements**

The U. S. Coast Guard's National Maritime Center (NMC) has issued policy letter 06-03 providing guidance on qualifications for, and issuance of, GMDSS endorsements to International Convention of Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended (STCW) certificates for licensed mariners and radio officers. NMC policy letter 06-03 is available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/marpers/pag/06-03.pdf>.

For further information on issues regarding STCW and Merchant Marine licensing, please contact the U.S. Coast Guard Regional Examination Center in your area or visit the National Maritime Center's web site at <http://www.uscg.mil/nmc>.

F. J. Sturm
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
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U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



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NMC Policy Letter 06-03
May 13, 2003

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

To: Distribution

Subj: QUALIFICATION FOR ISSUANCE OF GLOBAL MARITIME DISTRESS AND
SAFETY SYSTEM (GMDSS) ENDORSEMENTS

- Ref: (a) STCW Code Section A-IV/2
(b) STCW Code Section B-IV/2, Para. 45
(c) 46 CFR 12.25-45
(d) 46 CFR 10.205(n)
(e) 46 CFR 10.603

PURPOSE. This policy letter provides guidance on qualifications for, and issuance of, GMDSS endorsements to International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended, (STCW) certificates for licensed mariners and radio officers.

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 marine personnel issues and to institutions that offer U. S. Coast Guard approved training. 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 **DIRECTIVES AFFECTED.** National Maritime Center Policy Letter 2-99 is superseded and cancelled.
4. **BACKGROUND**
 - a. The 1995 amendments to the STCW require the master and all navigational watch officers onboard vessels required to be GMDSS compliant to hold an STCW-95 certificate endorsed as operator in the GMDSS system. In addition, any shipboard personnel with assigned duties in the operation of the GMDSS must have the appropriate STCW certificate endorsements.
 - b. Sea-going vessels voluntarily relying on the at-sea maintenance provision of the GMDSS must have onboard a trained person designated to perform at-sea maintenance of GMDSS installations). This individual must hold an STCW certificate endorsed as GMDSS Maintainer.

*For the latest information on STCW and Licensing,
visit our web site at <http://www.uscg.mil/nmc>*

Subj: QUALIFICATION FOR ISSUANCE OF GLOBAL MARITIME DISTRESS AND SAFETY SYSTEM (GMDSS) ENDORSEMENTS

5. **DISCUSSION.** The requirements to qualify for the STCW-95 endorsement for GMDSS radio operator and/or maintainer are defined in references (a) through (e). Enclosure (1) provides amplifying guidance and equivalencies for demonstrating competence.



E. J. FINK

Encl: (1) GMDSS qualification requirements

Dist: Commandant (G-MSO)
All District Commanders (m)
All COs, MSOs
All Activity Commanders
All RECs
All Schools w. approved GMDSS courses

Enclosure (1) to NMC Policy Letter 06-03

The following tables describe the methods of qualifying for an STCW 95 endorsement to radio operator and/or maintainer.

To qualify for an STCW-95 endorsement as GMDSS operator:

If you are a licensed or unlicensed deck or engine department mariner or a licensed radio officer who:	You may;	Or, you may;
<p>Completed a 35-hour GMDSS course <u>before</u> August 1, 1998, AND received an FCC GMDSS operator's license or a "Proof of Passing" certificate for an FCC GMDSS operator's license <u>before</u> August 1, 1998:</p>	<p>Pass a GMDSS written examination given by a designated examiner with at least a 75% passing grade; AND</p> <p>Present evidence of practical assessment by a designated examiner for the competencies contained in Table B-IV/2 of the STCW Code.</p>	<p>Successfully complete a Coast Guard approved GMDSS course of at least 70 hours.</p>
<p>Received an FCC GMDSS operator's license or a "Proof of Passing" certificate for an FCC GMDSS operator's license <u>on</u> or <u>after</u> August 1, 1998:</p>	<p>Successfully complete a Coast Guard approved GMDSS course of at least 70 hours.</p>	

To qualify for an STCW-95 endorsement as GMDSS radio maintainer:

<p>All licensed or unlicensed deck and engine department or radio officers who hold an FCC GMDSS maintainer license, may:</p>	<p>Or, you may;</p>
<p>Provide a certificate of completion from a course specializing in the maintenance and repair of radio electronics completed within five years of the date of application.</p> <p>The course certificate or supporting documentation must establish that the scope and content of training was equivalent to that outlined in section B-IV/2 of the STCW Code for maintenance of GMDSS installations.</p> <p>If the certificate of course completion is greater than five years old, the applicant must show at least one year of experience in the maintenance and repair of radio electronics within five years of the date of application. <i>(acceptable evidence includes military, shipboard, shoreside or other jobs related to the maintenance and repair of radio electronics)</i></p>	<p>Complete a Coast Guard approved GMDSS Maintainer course.</p>