



September 19, 2008

New Medical Navigation & Vessel Inspection Circular Released

Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular (NVIC) 04-08, was signed by the Coast Guard on September 15, 2008. The NVIC, titled **MEDICAL AND PHYSICAL EVALUATION GUIDELINES FOR MERCHANT MARINER CREDENTIALS**, provides guidance for evaluating the physical and medical conditions of applicants for merchant mariner credentials. The guidance is designed to assist medical practitioners, the maritime industry, individual mariners, and Coast Guard personnel in evaluating a mariner's physical and medical status to meet the requirements of domestic and international maritime standards. NVIC 04-08 was a collaborative effort between the Coast Guard and the maritime industry, including the Merchant Personnel Advisory Committee (MERPAC) and the Towing Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC).

NVIC 04-08 replaces NVIC 02-98, incorporating developments and advancements in modern medical practices as well as improvements in the medical evaluation process. It puts current Coast Guard practices into writing, making them transparent, and promotes consistent application. Currently incomplete medical information is one of the leading causes of delays in processing credential applications. Use of these guidelines will help reduce these delays. Credential applicants are encouraged to share the NVIC with their medical examiners to ensure that any additional information is submitted with their physical exam so that the applications are ready to be evaluated at the NMC.

The Coast Guard is committed to improving the MLD program by reducing credential processing time, improving customer service, and improving the consistency of our products and services. We anticipate that public safety will improve as a result of this NVIC, since mariners and the medical community will be aware of the guidance being used by the Coast Guard to evaluate occupational risks.

If you have specific questions on using the NVIC, please contact the NMC Medical Branch via email at MARINERMEDICAL@uscg.mil or by calling the Mariner Information Call Center at 1-888-IASKNMC (1-888-427-5662).

The NVIC 04-08 and the associated enclosures can be found on the Coast Guard's Internet site at: <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/nvic/2000s.asp#2008>.

For more information on other improvements we're making to Mariner Licensing and Documentation, go to our web site at <http://www.uscg.mil/nmc> or to <http://homeport.uscg.mil> and select Merchant Mariners under the list of Missions.

Sincerely,

David C. Stalfort
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard