

The Captain's Corner

Many changes have taken place with NMC and REC operations since January, when we moved into our new building and began aggressively transitioning REC operations, and the improvements resulting from these changes have been remarkable. Many eyes are upon the MLD program. Congress is watching the improvements we're implementing, as is the senior leadership of the Coast Guard. The marine industry and individual mariners, our direct customers, have praised the service they are receiving.

On April 1st, we will reach yet another major milestone in the restructuring and centralization efforts. This date will start the transition of RECs Seattle and San Francisco, at which we will be halfway through the transition schedule. This will be followed by RECs New York and Portland in May; Charleston and Honolulu in June; Miami in July; and Houston and Boston in September.

As each REC transitions, more credential applications are being processed through the centralized processes at NMC. The RECs are now sending nearly 1,000 applications each week to the NMC, a 100% increase from January. Despite this increase in inventory, we've continued to make dramatic improvements in our processing system, thanks to the hard work and dedication of each of you at the RECs and NMC. Since January, the age of the inventory of work in process has been reduced by 40%! Moreover, the cycle time for conducting evaluations of credential applications has decreased a phenomenal 70%! This means that mariners are getting their credentials faster, which is our goal.

Thank you for your continued dedication to improving the MLD program and providing better service for the mariners.

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

New NMC Deputy Director: Ike Eisentrou

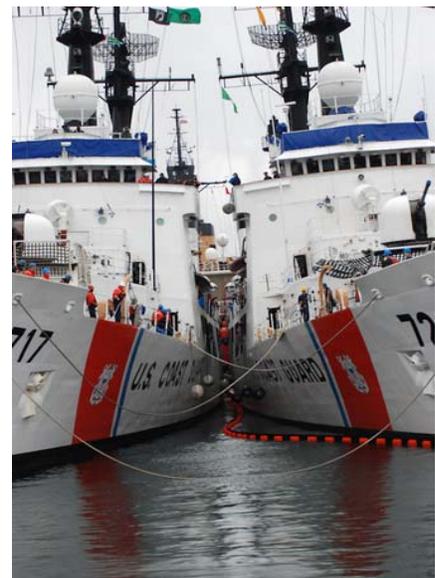
Captain Stalfort has announced that Ike Eisentrou has been selected as Deputy Director of the NMC, effective March 16, 2008. Mr. Eisentrou was previously the NMC-4 Division Chief.

New Employees:

CTR Deborah Bond, NMC-4
 CTR Shane Bonifant, NMC-5
 CTR Roxanne Canby, NMC-4
 CTR Lucille Chauncey, NMC-4
 CTR Abigail Cochenour, NMC-4
 CTR Kristen Doepp, NMC-4
 CTR Michael Lewis, NMC-4
 CTR Mary McKenzie, NMC-4
 CTR Joseph Pedersen, NMC-5
 GOV Richard Shade NMC-2
 CTR Deb Stottlemeyer, NMC-4
 CTR Lisa Torbidoni, NMC-5
 CTR Susan Weisenburg, NMC-5

Welcome to NMC West Virginia!

NMC Staffing: 74% Capacity





Staff Additions and Changes

NMC-0 - Command Staff Administrative Assistant - **Ms. Karen Quigley** has accepted a new position as the Administrative Assistant for the Command Staff. Karen is the current Admin Assistant in NMC-4.

NMC-13 - QA and Training Branch - **LCDR Mike Washburn** has received a two-year extension in his current assignment.

NMC-23 - Course Oversight Branch - **LCDR Richard Paciorka**, currently working at MSU Morgan City, LA and who has REC New Orleans experience, will be receiving orders for a four-year tour at NMC.

NMC-32 - Mail Specialist - **Mr. Andy Ferguson** has accepted the position as Mail Specialist. Andy is the current Admin Assistant in NMC-5.

NMC-4 Division Chief - **Mr. Jeff Brandt** has accepted a new position as the Mariner Information Division Chief (NMC-4). Jeff will be moving to this position from his current position as the Program Support Division Chief (NMC-3).

NMC-51 - Safety/Security Evaluation Branch - **LCDR Ann DeYoung**, currently working at REC Honolulu, will be receiving orders for a four-year tour at NMC.

Employee Award

At the February 28 All-Hands meeting, **Charlotte Willis, NMC-4** was honored with a Time Off Award for her exceptional response to a request for information regarding a World War II Merchant Marine Veteran.

Congratulations!

U.S. Merchant Mariner Heroes and History

Members of the United States Merchant Marine have played vital roles in every American war effort since the Revolutionary War, when the Continental Navy commissioned privateers to combat enemy merchant ships. There are two websites dedicated to preserving and sharing this educational information about our primary customers and their heritage.

These stories of the heroics of the US Maritime Service and US Merchant Mariner Corps will inspire you. The NMC Training Room on the 3rd Deck is named after two of these heroes.

<http://www.usmm.org/index.html>

<http://www.usmm.net/>



Position Announcements

Health Systems Specialist
GS 9, NMC-5, Closing Date: April 3rd

Marine Transportation Specialist
GS 12, NMC-2, Closing Date: April 3rd

See USA Jobs: <http://www.usajobs.gov/>
Search: Homeland Security, US Coast Guard



Mariner Licensing and Documentation (MLD) New Procedures to Reduce Credential Processing Time

The National Maritime Center, in an effort to improve customer service and reduce credential processing time, will implement new procedures on April 7, 2008 to encourage mariners to respond within 90 days to requests for additional information needed to complete processing of their merchant mariner credential. Currently 25,949 credential requests are in process nationwide. More than 33% or 8,542 of these credentials are missing critical information needed to complete an evaluation of the application. In all cases, letters have been sent to the mariners asking them to submit information so the Coast Guard can continue processing their application.

Many mariners respond to these requests in a timely manner and the application is processed quickly. In other cases, processing is suspended while the Coast Guard waits for the mariner to respond. Analysis shows that 5,274 credentials requested have been in this suspended state for over 90 days, greatly contributing to the total processing time for these mariners.

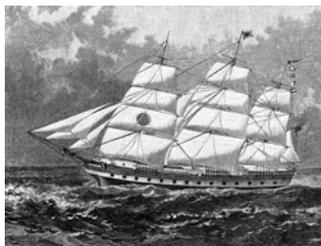
Historically, applicants have been given one year to respond to these “awaiting information” requests. It is a common misconception that this one-year period was driven by regulation when in fact it was set by an internal policy dating back many years. According to the Code of Federal Regulations parts 10.202 (a) and 12.02-9(e), only an “approved” application is valid for one-year. An approved application is defined by Coast Guard Commandant Instruction as one which contains all the information and service required by law or regulation.

In order improve customer service and reduce credential processing time, the National Maritime Center (NMC) will be implementing a 90-day time frame for mariners to respond to these awaiting information requests. Instructions for this 90-day time frame will be included in letters sent to mariners beginning April 7, 2008. When a mariner receives a letter from the NMC requesting additional information, the individual will have 90-days from the date of the letter to provide the requested information. During this time frame, Coast Guard will be contacting the mariner as a follow up to remind them about the pending request.

If the mariner does not respond during this 90-day time frame the entire application will be withdrawn from processing and mailed back to the address listed on the mariner’s application (CG Form 719B). Any user fees paid by the mariner that were not used, such as examination and/or issuance fees, will be applied to a future application should the mariner choose to reapply. If the mariner obtains the information after the 90-day time frame has expired, they can simply reapply and we will continue to process the credential as fast as possible. Mariners who choose not to reapply will be offered prompt refunds upon request.

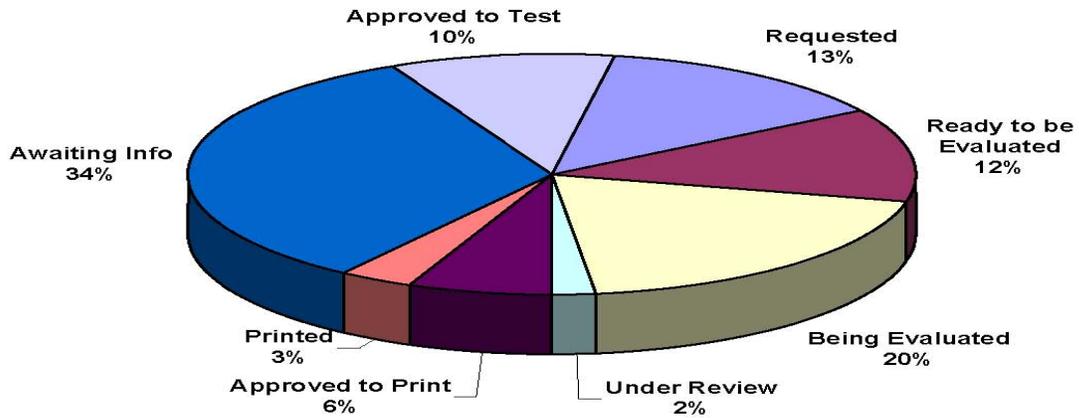
Currently, mariners that submit a complete application and who don’t have significant medical or security issues are receiving their credentials within 10 to 28 days. Missing information results in delays.

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Work In Progress Breakdown



The ten most common types of information missing from credential applications forwarded to NMC include:

1. Missing or Insufficient Sea Service
2. Amplifying Information from Physician
3. Missing Training Certificate(s) (First Aid/CPR, Radar, BST, Bridge Resource Management, Basic & Advanced Fire Fighting, GMDSS, ARPA)
4. Missing Issuance User Fee
5. Missing or Insufficient Tankerman Requirements - Proof of Transfers/Service, Recency, or Training
6. Missing or Incomplete STCW Assessment(s)
7. Missing Examination User Fee
8. Missing or Incomplete TOAR-Towing Officer's Assessment Record
9. Missing FCC License
10. Missing Continuity Renewal Statement

The Coast Guard is working hard to ensure mariners receive their credentials in a timely fashion. Mariners can also help by ensuring the information listed above is included in their application and by responding promptly to requests, should the Coast Guard find information missing from their application.

As we continue to improve the Mariner Licensing and Documentation program, we ask for your patience and welcome your suggestions. Please email your comments and suggestions for improvements to iasknmc@uscg.mil.

Sincerely,
David C. Stalfort
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard
Commanding Officer, National Maritime Center



NMC and REC Transition Status

The transition of Regional Examination Centers to the National Maritime Center continues to make excellent progress. As of mid-March, eight RECs have begun transition. Three of them, Anchorage, Juneau, and New Orleans, are on schedule to complete the process March 31. The NMC is now receiving more than 900 credential requests per week. Seattle and San Francisco will begin transition activities in March 31, which will put us past the halfway point of the transition. The RECs and the NMC continue to receive compliments on customer service and application processing speed. We thank Mariners for their patience during the transition. Congratulations to the NMC-REC team for the significant progress to date.

Weekly MMD File Audit Results

Each week, Captain Stalfort and Deputy Director Ike Eisentrout conduct an informal "find a file" audit. Here are the March 7, 2008 results:

One of the files in our audit was an MMD renewal. In addition to being please with a successful audit, I was especially pleased to see how quickly we are producing credentials.

Congratulations to a team from REC New Orleans and an evaluation team at NMC consisting of Joe Gainer, the ATS Super Evaluator, and DaShawn DeCou, the Government Reviewer, for their efforts. The team was able to renew an MMD and get it in the mail to the mariner in 5 days!

I'm sure this mariner will be delighted by the service. Results like this validate the customer testimonials we're receiving and provide yet another indication that centralization is working.

Thank you REC New Orleans, Joe and DaShawn!

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

MARK YOUR CALENDAR! NMC Grand Opening

The NMC has started planning a Grand Opening Ceremony, with a tentative date of either June 27 or June 30. Coast Guard, Homeland Security, and Congressional officials will participate. Maritime Industry participation is also planned. Details will be published soon. Watch The Wave and the MMLD Website: <http://www.uscg.mil/stcw/> for more information.

The Wave Newsletter has a New Editor

Beginning with the April 2008 Issue, Michael C. Lewis, NMC-4 will take over the duties from Candice Kobetz, NMC-0. Mr. Lewis joins the NMC from The Journal newspaper in Martinsburg.

Please send all questions, suggestions, or comments to him at:

Michael.C.Lewis@uscg.mil
304-433-3481



NMC Audit for STCW Compliance

During the week of March 31st, two representatives from our counterparts to the north, Transport Canada, will be visiting NMC. The purpose of the visit is to conduct an audit of how the United States has implemented and is carrying out the International Convention on Standards of Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW).

The STCW is an international treaty to which the U.S. is a signatory. The STCW sets forth standards for training, sea service and levels of competence for mariners working on sea-going ships. The STCW also requires that each country undergo an external audit of its mariner licensing and documentation program to assess whether the country is complying with the STCW. The representatives from Transport Canada will conduct this audit. Later this year, CG-546 will conduct a similar audit of Canada's mariner licensing and documentation program.

The auditors are from NMC's equivalent in Canada. In addition to looking at NMC's operations, the auditors will look at the policy shops in Coast Guard Headquarters and go on field visits to REC Baltimore and to several schools providing Coast Guard-approved training.

The auditors will concentrate on NMC-2 and NMC-5, but may also look at other parts of the NMC. They will talk to people at all levels of NMC and ask probing questions about how each of us does our job and how the NMC evaluates and ensures that mariners issued STCW certificates meet the standards of the STCW. It is also an opportunity for NMC to get a neutral outside assessment of how we carry out our mission.

“The pessimist complains about the wind; the optimist expects it to change; the realist adjusts the sails.”

~ *William Arthur Ward*

Behind the Scenes: REC Memphis

Located in the southwest corner of Tennessee, on a high bluff above the Mississippi River, Memphis is the fourth-largest inland port in the U.S. The city is known as America's Distribution Center, due to its centralized location in the Mid-South region. It is home to FedEx, and many other railroad and highway freight carriers.

Most common licenses: Towing vessel licenses are our bread & butter. Master, Mate & Apprentice Mate are the most common, followed by Master 200 and below. The Western River route is the most common route, followed by Great Lakes, Inland & Western Rivers route.

Most common vessels in port? Towing barges and harbor cruises. Most of the vessels are passing through to other ports of call.

Memphis is well known for its musical heritage: home to Elvis Presley's Graceland and also the Beale Street blues scene. Gaming casinos abound in Mississippi, just a few miles south of the Tennessee state line.

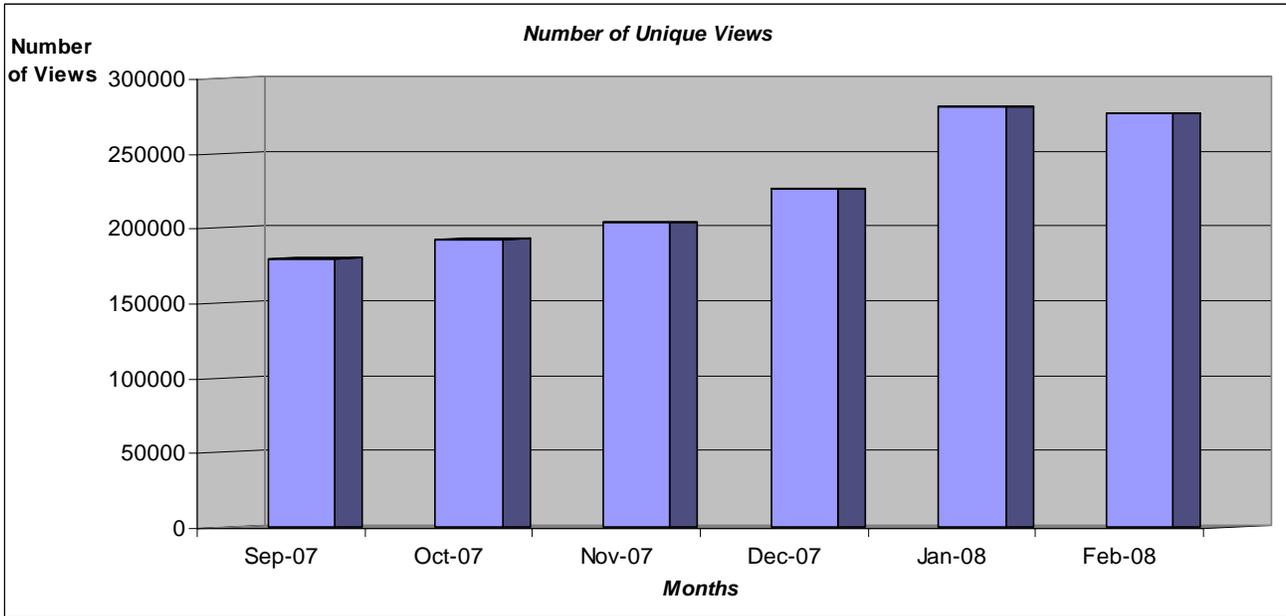
Memphis has a moderate climate, with four distinct seasons. The area has enjoyed some fairly mild winters for the last few years, with hot and dry summers. The fall colors are unbelievable in late October and early November every year. The area is subject to tornadoes and recently made national and international news as a result of the worst series of winter storms in many years.

Favorite local cuisine: In Memphis, BBQ is king.



MLD Website Update

Following up on last month's MLD article, the following graphs illustrate the increasing use of the **Mariner Licensing and Documentation (MLD) Website**. The first graph shows site activity over the last six months, clearly usage has increased substantially.



This chart depicts the growth in site content, reflecting the continuous improvement effort of the Mariner Information Division to provide Mariners with useful, relevant, and current information.

