

Increased Processing Times for Credentials, Security Endorsements, and Services

The National Maritime Center (NMC) is presently experiencing elevated processing times and inventories for merchant mariner credential (MMC) applications, and other products and services. Those increases can be partly attributed to the recent lapse of appropriations (government furlough) and the surge of applicants seeking security endorsements required by January 1st, 2014. During the first 6 months of 2013, the NMC was providing an average of 500 security endorsements per month. Since September, the NMC has averaged nearly 3000 security endorsement applications and has issued over 2400 endorsements monthly. These submissions are in addition to our normal expected MMC applications. As a result, the NMC currently has a standing inventory level of application requests that has not been experienced since 2009; therefore, customers may note an increase in the time it takes to process applications and to respond to customer inquiries in the Call Center. The system generated e-mails that mariners receive indicating potential production and delivery dates are not accurate at this time. We are looking into resolving this discrepancy.

Following the lapse in appropriations in October, initial steps to reprioritize credentialing evaluation and production efforts were enacted, and those efforts continue. The NMC has significant experience responding to and managing periods and volumes of increased credential, product, and service requests, and has implemented additional contingency plans within our legal and operational authorities to address those products and services that are being negatively impacted. We hope such efforts will reduce our elevated response and processing times in the near future.

As always, you are highly encouraged to continue sending in your applications for all products and services in a timely fashion, and we will do everything to restore the same level of product and service delivery you have become accustomed to. Thank you for your patience while we process your requests. We will continue to update you as we move forward in this effort.

Sincerely,

/J.P. Novotny/

Jeffrey P. Novotny
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Commanding Officer