

Frequently Asked Questions: Courses

1. I need to locate a course approved by the United States Coast Guard (USCG). How do I do this?

To view courses that are approved by the USCG, visit our [Approved Courses](#) page. Once there, you can search by state, course name, or school:

- If searching by [state](#), you will use the interactive map to select the state you wish to take the course in. Once the state is selected, it will bring up a list of schools that offer courses, and will provide their contact information.
- If searching by [course name](#), you will choose the course you wish to take from the drop down menu. Once the course is selected, it will bring up a list of schools that offer that course, and will provide their contact information.
- The [school](#) search option will provide a list of all schools that offer Coast Guard Approved Courses, what courses they have, and will provide their contact information.

2. How do I know if a course will cover a specific exam?

To determine if a specific course will cover the exams you are required to take you will need to contact the school directly. To find their contact information, visit our [Approved Courses](#) page and search by school.

3. I took a course through a USCG-approved school/ program. When does my course certificate expire?

Once issued, course certificates taken in lieu of an exam are valid for 1 year. Expiration dates for all other courses are listed below:

- Course certificates for Automatic Radar Plotting Aids (ARPA), Bridge Resource Management, Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), Officer in Charge of Navigational Watch (OICNW), Medical Care Provider, and Vessel Security Officer (VSO) never expire.
- Once issued, course certificates for Firefighting, Tankerman, Radar Observer, and Basic Safety Training are valid for 5 years.
- Once issued, certificates for Flashing Light are valid for 1 year.

4. I received an Approval to Test or Awaiting Information letter; however, I took a course for this. Why was the course not accepted?

There could be several reasons why the course you provided is not acceptable.

- The course certificate may have been expired when received by the National Maritime Center (NMC). Please refer to [Question 3](#) of this FAQ list to see what the timeframes are for specific exams. Once expired, the course certificate is no longer accepted by the NMC.
- The course you took may not have covered all exam requirements. Please contact the school you attended to speak with them regarding this issue and, if needed, work with them to have it resolved.
- You may have submitted your application prior to the course being completed or before the course data was submitted.
- The course taken could have been completed during a time that was outside of the course effective dates. This means that the school did not have the appropriate USCG approval.
- If the issue is outside of these reasons or if you are unable to resolve the issue, please contact the NMC's [Customer Service Center](#).