

STCW Frequently Asked Questions: Medical Certificates

1. How does a mariner with an STCW endorsement get a medical certificate in the event that he or she is not issued one by March 24, 2014?

The Coast Guard will proactively issue medical certificates to all mariners currently holding valid STCW endorsements without further application. The NMC will mail a medical certificate to each mariner holding a current STCW endorsement at the mailing address the Coast Guard has on record for the mariner. Contact the NMC at IASKNMC@ucg.mil, or by phone at 1-888-IASKNMC if you have not received your medical certificate by March 24, 2014.

2. What form does a mariner have to submit when applying for a medical certificate?

46 CFR 10.302(a) requires that in order to obtain a medical certificate, a mariner must provide evidence of meeting the medical and physical standards on a CG-719K or CG-719K/E, as appropriate. A CG-719B form is not required when applying for a medical certificate only.

3. How does a mariner apply for a medical certificate?

Applicants for an original medical certificate must comply with 46 CFR 10.302. Further guidance is provided in NVIC (01-14).

4. In regards to the medical certificates that will be issued to current STCW certificate holders beginning January 2, 2014, how will the expiration date of the medical certificate be determined?

Because the Coast Guard expects to issue a large number of medical certificates in the first year after publication of the regulations, the expiration dates on these medical certificates will vary depending upon when your MMC expires. The examination date and the expiration date of the medical certificate may be adjusted so that the month and date of expiration will be the same as the expiration date of your current credential. The year of expiration will be adjusted to the maximum allowable for that purpose (STCW/FCP/national endorsement).

- 5. I have been sailing on international voyages for years under the MLC requirement for a medical certificate. As such, I renew my ENG-1 every 2 years in addition to the required USCG 5-year certificate. I receive each from the same physician although I also have to pay separately for the certificate. Will the USCG begin to accept the MLC ENG-1 certificates with the new changes?**

No. 46 CFR 10.302(a) requires that in order to obtain a medical certificate, a mariner must provide evidence of meeting the medical and physical standards on a CG-719K or CG-719K/E form, as appropriate.

- 6. I have a question concerning members of the steward's department and entry-level mariners who do not have a VI-1 or Basic Safety endorsement on their MMC because they haven't renewed yet but sail on vessels subject to STCW. Entry-level mariners receive a 5-year national medical certificate only. Is this certificate valid for a mariner to sail on vessels subject to STCW and, if not, which USCG physical form does a mariner need to have completed in order to obtain the proper medical certificate? As of this date, all entry-level mariners, even if they have VI-1 on their MMCs, are only required to submit the CG-719K/E.**

No, the 5-year only medical certificate is not valid for a mariner to sail on vessels subject to STCW. These mariners should obtain an STCW compliant medical certificate valid for 2 years. Such a certificate can be obtained by completing a CG-719K/E for entry level personnel as described in 46 CFR 10.215 and Part 10 Subpart C.

- 7. If a mariner has an entry-level endorsement and he or she sails on vessels subject to STCW, will he or she get a medical certificate issued and for how long? Won't entry-level mariners on vessels subject to STCW need a 2-year medical certificate?**

Entry-level mariners usually get 5-year medical certificate. In the event that a mariner wants to sail on a vessel subject to STCW, he or she must obtain a physical examination on a CG-719K/E form, at which time he or she will receive a medical certificate with the different expiration dates entered, depending on the vessel's service.

8. Can a mariner provide a copy of a medical certificate to port state control officials if they lose their original? How does a mariner obtain a duplicate medical certificate?

A mariner can provide a photocopy of a medical certificate to port state control officials if they lose their certificate. However, there is no guarantee that port state control officials will accept it. 46 CFR 10.229 states that, upon request, a mariner may be issued a duplicate medical certificate after submitting an application with an affidavit describing the circumstances of the loss. The Coast Guard will only issue the duplicate medical certificate after confirming the validity of the mariner's credentials and the validity of the mariner's TWIC.

9. (ADDED 02/14/14**) Will the medical certificate be issued electronically as a PDF document, as well as a paper certificate that the mariner puts in their MMC booklet?**

No, the medical certificate will only be issued by the Coast Guard, and will not be issued electronically.

10. (ADDED 02/14/14**) Can companies obtain medical certificates for mariners in their employ?**

Yes, if the company is identified as the third-party representative by the mariner.

11. (ADDED 02/14/14**) Where will medical certificates be sent?**

The Coast Guard will mail medical certificates to all mariners who hold a valid STCW endorsement as of 17 January 2014, without further application. The medical certificate will be mailed to the address that the mariner used in his or her last credentialing transaction with the Coast Guard. To change your contact information, you may fill out the "Mariner Personal Contact Information Validation Form" available on the National Maritime Center's (NMC) website, or you may call the NMC's customer service center at 1-888-427-5662.

12. (ADDED 02/14/14**) How does a mariner obtain a new medical certificate when the transaction is not part of an MMC renewal, raise of grade or a new endorsement? For example, the medical certificate expires in year 2 of the 5-year period of validity of the MMC.**

The mariner must submit a CG-719K or CG-719K/E in a timely manner. See NVIC 01-14.

13. (ADDED 02/14/14**) What is the period of medical cert validity? 2 years?**

Medical certificates will have 3 expiration dates as stated in 46 CFR 10.301.

14. (ADDED 02/14/14**) If a mariner is sailing only on his or her national endorsement, what is the period of validity of his or her medical certificate?**

The medical certificate would be valid for a maximum period of 5 years.

15. (ADDED 02/14/14**) Will the Coast Guard accept a medical certificate issued by Liberia in accordance with STCW as part of an MMC renewal application?**

No. 46 CFR 10.302(a) requires that in order to obtain a medical certificate, a mariner must provide evidence of meeting the medical and physical standards on a CG-719K or CG-719K/E form, as appropriate.

16. (ADDED 03/24/14**) Do all mariners with STCW endorsements have to have a current medical certificate now or by 1 January 2017? Many mariners are being issued certificates that are either expired or will expire soon. Do these mariners need to do anything now or will they be legal as long as they have a current medical certificate by 1 January 2017?**

Mariners holding STCW endorsements will be issued a medical certificate by 24 March 2014. Once a medical certificate is issued, mariners must keep the medical certificate with their merchant mariner credential (MMC). If an STCW endorsement holder does not receive a medical certificate by 1 April 2014, he or she should contact the National Maritime Center (NMC).

The NMC has recently discovered that some mariners have been issued medical certificates which will expire between January and September 2014. To resolve this issue, the NMC is taking the following actions:

- A new medical certificate will be issued with an STCW expiration date in 2015. This only applies to mariners whose MMC containing STCW endorsements was originally issued during the period of January to September 2012, and
- Mariners who have medical waivers with an annual submission requirement will still receive a time-limited medical certificate that corresponds to the appropriate required submission dates.

17. (ADDED 03/24/14**) Which medical certificate application is referenced in 46 CFR 10.227(d)(6)? Does a mariner have to send a CG-719B along with their CG-719K in order to renew a medical certificate?**

The application for a medical certificate is either a CG-719K or CG-719K/E, as appropriate. This application should be submitted to your local regional examination center (REC) in a timely manner. No, a CG-719B is not required when applying for a medical certificate. See NVIC 01-14.

18. (ADDED 03/24/14**) Does a mariner need a new medical certificate if he or she is not actively sailing?**

No, mariners do not need to obtain a new medical certificate unless they are actively sailing. However, they will be required to obtain one at their next credentialing transaction which requires a medical evaluation.

19. (ADDED 03/24/14**) Some mariners are sailing on vessels subject to STCW and may be calling upon a country signatory to the Maritime Labour Convention. Some of these mariners signed on before the STCW final rule was published, are expected to be on board for a lengthy assignment, and may not be able to verify if they have received their new medical certificate until they get off the ship. Will these mariners be in violation of the final rule if they do not have their new medical certificate in their possession?**

No, these mariners will not be in violation of the final rule. A merchant mariner credential meets the requirements of the medical certificate until an actual medical certificate is issued. The Coast Guard recognizes that there may be significant delays between Coast Guard issuance and receipt by the mariner.

A mariner can confirm issuance of a medical certificate by contacting the National Maritime Center (NMC). In the event that port state control officials need to verify if a mariner has a valid medical certificate, they may contact the NMC for confirmation.

20. (AMENDED 05/27/15**) Will MMCs be issued if no medical certificate has been provided?**

Original MMCs will not be issued without approval for a medical certificate. Renewal of MMCs or application for a new endorsement require application for a medical certificate or an unexpired, medical certificate issued by the Coast Guard. Applicants for a raise of grade must meet the requirements for medical certification for the endorsement sought (see 46 CFR 10.231(c)(8)) A mariner seeking a document of continuity need not present an application for a medical certificate.

21. (ADDED 07/07/14**) First class pilot: How recent does the CG-719K physical exam form need to be in order to use it for renewal of a first class pilot's medical certificate?**

Thirty calendar days from the date the physical examination was performed, for first class pilots. 46 CFR 11.709(b) specifically states that the results of the physical examination must be recorded on a CG-719K form and submitted to the Coast Guard no later than 30 calendar days after completion of the physical examination.

22. (ADDED 07/07/14**) Does the Mariner sailing on vessels subject to STCW have to get a new physical at the two year mark?**

Mariners with STCW endorsements have received medical certificates and must obtain a new physical when seeking to renew that expiring medical certificate.

23. (ADDED 07/07/14**) I recently submitted my application for renewal of my license well in advance of its expiration date. I have already received my medical certificate based on the expiration date of my present license which expires on 9 November 2014. Will my newly issued license also have a medical certificate with it or do I need to file another application to get a new medical certificate?**

You received your current medical certificate as part of the Coast Guard medical certificate surge operation to aid U.S. vessels in rapid compliance with Maritime Labour Convention requirements for medical certification. You will receive a new medical certificate after evaluation of the recently submitted CG-719K. You should receive it, or a letter requesting additional medical information, around the same time you receive your new Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC). If you don't, you may contact the National Maritime Center (NMC) at 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662) to determine the status of your medical evaluation.

24. (ADDED 07/07/14**) As an employer, am I required to keep the current CG-719K on file or is the certificate good enough?**

No, the mariner must maintain the current medical certificate with his or her MMC and a mariner may not be employed or engaged without a valid medical certificate per 46 CFR 15.401.

25. (ADDED 07/07/14**) Does the mariner need to attach a statement requesting a 2 yr medical certificate or how will the NMC know which certificate they are trying to obtain?**

The completed CG-719K or 719K/E is sufficient to apply for a medical certificate without an additional statement. Medical certificates are issued with specific expiration dates for service under STCW, national, or pilot endorsements. However mariners may receive a time limited certificate based on medical condition.

26. (ADDED 07/07/14**) Should we wait until the new physicals come out specifically for the medical certificates in order to apply for them?**

Mariners can use the current forms available on the NMC's website when applying for a medical certificate.

27. (ADDED 07/07/14**) If a mariner has no medical waiver, will the medical certificate expiration date coincide with the mariner's MMC expiration date?**

For mariners holding STCW endorsements, the Coast Guard surged issuance of the medical certificates and those dates coincided with the issuance of the MMC. In the future, as the Coast Guard issues medical certificates based upon receipt of a CG-719K or 719 K/E, the expiration date will be based upon the completion of the Coast Guard's medical evaluation.

28. (ADDED 07/07/14**) When is the actual date that merchant mariners without STCW endorsements have to have a medical certificate?**

For mariners holding only a national endorsement issued before 24 January 2014, their MMC serves to document their medical certification and a separate medical certificate will not be issued until the first credential transaction after 24 January 2014.

29. (ADDED 07/07/14**) Should we indicate on all applications being sent to the Regional Exam Center (REC) that medical certificates are requested?**

No, it is not necessary to indicate on the CG-719 K or 719 K/E that a medical certificate is being requested.

30. (ADDED 07/07/14**) For raise of grade applications, will up to 3-year-old physicals still suffice or will they require new physicals in order to get the medical certificate?**

For raise of grade applications, a mariner will be required to either hold a valid medical certificate or apply for one. However, during the transition period, mariner's holding only a national endorsement need not submit the CG-719K or 719 KE if it's been less than 3 years since their last physical.

31. (ADDED 07/07/14**) If a mariner's medical certificate will expire during a foreign voyage, may they continue to serve on the vessel until the conclusion of the voyage?**

If the period of validity of a medical certificate expires in the course of the voyage, then the medical certificate will continue in force until the next port of call where a licensed medical practitioner recognized by the U.S. is available, provided that the period does not exceed 90 days.

32. (ADDED 07/07/14**) Pilots: Is the Coast Guard issuing medical certificates to pilots when they submit their annual physical or are they waiting until the pilots renew?**

In accordance with NVIC 01-14, The Coast Guard will issue a medical certificate to each qualified mariner when processing an application that requires a medical evaluation such as issuing an original, raise-in-grade or renewal MMC. The NMC has established a process to issue medical certificates to pilots when they submit their annual physical after 23 January 2014.

33. (ADDED 07/07/14**) Pilots: What will trigger the issuance of a medical certificate to a pilot (i.e., the submission of a 719B or a 719K)?**

The triggering event for the issuance of a medical certificate to a pilot who only holds a national endorsement will be the first to occur of either: 1) submission of a CG-719B seeking renewal or other transaction requiring a medical evaluation; or 2) submission of a CG-719K documenting the results of an annual pilot physical under 46 CFR 11.709. Pilots who also hold an STCW endorsement should already have received a medical certificate.

34. (ADDED 07/07/14**) Pilots: Does the Coast Guard consider the “date of examination” on the medical certificate (established by the date the Coast Guard approves the issuance of a medical certificate) to equate to the date of “the individual’s most recently completed Coast Guard-required physical examination” for the purposes of 11.709(b) and (d)?**

Yes. For the purposes of 46 CFR 11.709(b) and (d), the Coast Guard considers the “individual’s most recently completed Coast Guard required physical examination” to be the same as the date of examination on the medical certificate. To reiterate, the Coast Guard considers the date of examination to be the date that the Coast Guard approves the issuance of a medical certificate. It will not coincide with the date the medical practitioner signed the form CG-719K or CG-719K/E. (See NVIC 01-14.)

35. (ADDED 07/07/14**) Pilots: If medical certificates are issued to first class pilots on two year cycles, and submission of the most recent CG-719K is due bi-annually 30 days after that physical is completed, how will medical certificates be renewed so that there is no gap affecting the validity of the endorsement?**

Mariners are responsible for holding a valid medical certificate. In accordance with 46 CFR 11.709 (b), every other year first-class pilots are required to submit a physical examination on a CG-719K form to the Coast Guard no later than 30 calendar days after completion of that physical examination in order to receive a medical certificate. Mariners must be cognizant of the expiration dates on their medical certificates and the applicability of the dates to their current employment. Renewals should be submitted in sufficient time so that the medical certificate does not lapse. Mariners should monitor the NMC website for information on processing time. Additionally, mariners with medical conditions should submit their applications early to allow adequate processing time.

36. (ADDED 07/07/14**) Pilots: If the regulations now require a physical exam every 2 years, will ship pilots still have to submit an annual CG-719K to the Coast Guard, or will they also go to every 2 years?**

Annual physicals are still required. However, every other year, in accordance with the medical certificate requirements found in 46 CFR 11.709(b) the results of the physical examination must be recorded on a CG-719K form and submitted to the Coast Guard no later than 30 calendar days after completion of the physical examination.

37. (ADDED 07/07/14**) U.S. mariners working on foreign-flagged vessels:**

1. Does a U.S. mariner with a national OIM endorsement, but no STCW endorsement, working on a foreign-flagged jack-up rig off the west coast of Africa, need a medical certificate?

2. If so, how long will it be valid for?

3. Does the answer change if the mariner also has an OIM endorsement issued by another country?

1 and 2: A U.S. mariner working on a foreign-flagged vessel must comply with the requirements of that flag-state Administration.

3: No. The mariner would still have to comply with the requirements of the flag state Administration as well as meeting the new medical certificate requirements for the national endorsement at the next credential activity requiring a medical and physical evaluation.

38. (ADDED 07/07/14**) Which medical certificate will a mariner with basic training and entry-level endorsements receive?**

Entry-level mariners who submit a CG-719K/E will receive a medical certificate which will indicate that he or she is not fit for look-out duties, as well as being marked “no” for any exam requirements not covered by the CG-719K/E. The medical certificate will have the same three expiration dates as any other medical certificate.

39. (ADDED 07/07/14**) Basic training is an STCW endorsement, so shouldn't the mariner receive the full medical certificate?**

Yes and no. An entry-level mariner serving on vessels to which STCW applies will receive a medical certificate that provides all three expiration dates. If the mariner submitted a CG 719 K/E, his or her medical certificate would only document the medical qualifications documented on the CG 719 K/E. Mariners who submit a CG-719K/E will receive a medical certificate which will indicate that he or she is not being fit for look-out duties, as well as being marked "no" for any exam requirements not covered by the CG-719K/E. The medical certificate will have the same three expiration dates as any other medical certificate.

40. (ADDED 07/07/14**) If a mariner has completed basic training and holds an entry-level endorsement (OS, WI, SD (FH)) and is issued an entry-level medical certificate valid for two years, does it meet all requirements under the MLC and STCW final rule to sail on international (STCW) voyages?**

Yes; however, the entry-level credential will not be endorsed for lookout duties unless the mariner completes and submits a CG-719K.

41. (ADDED 07/07/14**) How does a chief cook or steward acquire a medical certificate if he or she does not hold an STCW endorsement, but has basic training and sails on a vessel to which STCW applies during the transition period?**

Mariners currently holding valid entry-level endorsements who are sailing on vessels to which STCW applies must hold a basic training certificate. To apply for a medical certificate, these mariners should submit the following to a regional examination center (REC): a statement indicating they serve on vessels to which STCW or MLC applies (include full name, mariner reference number, and current address); and a copy of a valid basic safety training or basic training certificate. No physical examination or fees are required. If these mariners also wish to have the basic training endorsement issued, they should submit form CG-719B to an REC with Section I - Personal Data completed and ensure their address is current. In Section II- Type of Transaction, they should indicate that they are requesting a medical certificate and issuance of a basic training endorsement. They must also submit the statement and certificates described in the paragraph above. No physical examination or fees are required. If they are in the process or preparing to renew their MMC, mariners should also clearly identify that they will require that their medical certificate be issued.

42. (ADDED 05/27/15**) If my STCW medical certificate expires, does that make my STCW endorsements invalid on an otherwise valid MMC until I receive a new STCW medical certificate?**

No. The expiration of your medical certificate does not affect the validity of your MMC endorsements. However, as stated in 46 CFR 15.401(c)(1), a mariner may not serve under the authority of their MMC endorsement unless they maintain a current medical certificate. Furthermore, if the medical certificate expires in the course of a voyage, then it will continue in force until the next port of call where a licensed medical practitioner recognized by the U.S. is available, provided that the period does not exceed 90 days. A mariner needs to maintain their medical certificate after it is issued, in some cases for those mariners who hold only a national endorsement, the medical certificate may not be issued until 2019.

43. (ADDED 05/27/15**) If I have a valid medical certificate and I'm renewing or applying for a raise of grade or endorsement, can I use my medical certificate in lieu of a USCG physical?**

Yes. For renewals, see 46 CFR 10.227(d)(6). For raise of grade requirements, refer to 46 CFR 10.231(c)(8) there are some transactions where the requirement for the new endorsement may require a different medical evaluation.

44. (ADDED 05/27/15**) Do applicants for an endorsement as operator of uninspected passenger vessels or master 100 GRT need a valid medical certificate?**

An applicant for an MMC endorsement must either hold a valid medical certificate or have submitted an application for an appropriate medical certificate. See 46 CFR 10.225(b)(7) and 10.227(d)(6) or 10.231(c)(8).

45. (ADDED 05/27/15**) I am requesting that the Coast Guard consider allowing mariners to return to work while waiting for their medical certificate renewal. I would like to recommend that the Coast Guard allow a mariner to continue to work onboard U.S. flag vessels on domestic routes only and not have to comply with the STCW requirements to obtain a valid Medical Certificate until January 2017. However, each mariner must satisfactorily complete an annual physical examination that meets the same physical standards for a USCG credential renewal process to serve in the capacity the mariner is being assigned onboard.**

46 CFR 15.401(c) states that a person may not employ or engage an individual in a position required to hold an MMC unless that individual maintains a current medical certificate. Once a mariner has been issued a medical certificate, he or she must maintain an unexpired medical certificate in order to comply with the manning provision of 46 CFR 15.401. See [NVIC 1-14](#), paragraph 5.

46. (ADDED 05/27/15**) When a mariner's medical certificate is restricted such that he or she is not able to serve under the authority of a specific endorsement, shouldn't the endorsement be removed from his or her MMC?**

No. Under the current regulations a mariner's professional qualifications will not be removed when he/she isn't medically qualified. Now that the mariner is required to hold both the MMC and the medical certificate, the vessel operator must ascertain that the individual holds the appropriate medical certificate for the position in which they are employed. See 46 CFR 15.401.

47. (ADDED 05/27/15**) Are mariners required to renew their STCW endorsement when they renew their medical certificate?**

The renewal requirements for endorsements to the MMC and for the medical certificate are separate. A mariner may maintain their STCW endorsements by renewing them every 5 years. However, in order to sail where STCW is required, the mariner must hold a valid and current medical certificate, and for STCW, that medical certificate is valid for 2 years. A mariner who is continuously working under STCW endorsements will need to renew the medical certificate every 2 years, but a mariner who holds STCW endorsements but does not use them would not be required to renew their medical certificate every 2 years.

48. (**ADDED 07/22/15**) Medical Certificates for Pilots: I am writing concerning NVIC No. 01-14 as it applies to the requirement of physical examinations for First Class pilots. I received a medical certificate after submission of my CG-719K physical last year. I received my physical on Jan 20th, 2014, and according to 46 CFR 11.709(b) it is valid until the last day of the month in which I received the physical, or in my case Jan 31, 2015. The problem is the Medical Certificate I received has an expiration date of Feb. 7th, 2016. Now I understand that I still need to have a yearly physical exam, but how do I calculate the date it is required by?

NVIC 01-14 says that my certificate expires on the date indicated on my medical certificate Feb.7th, 2016. Does this mean that I have to complete my 2015 physical by Feb. 7th, 2015, one year prior to the expiration date?

NVIC 01-14 also says I need to comply with 46 CFR 11.709(b) that says my physical expires one year after my last physical at the end of the month in which I had my physical. That would be January 31st. Using these standards I can never reach the expiration date shown on my Medical Certificate for First Class Pilot without being out of compliance. My thinking is that the Medical Certificate should trump the requirements of 46 CFR 11.709(b) as it allows the expiration dates to be synchronized with other mariner documents. If so, it would reason that a modification of language is needed for 46 CFR 11.709(b).

Pilots must comply with two distinct medical requirements.

The first requirement is to hold a valid medical certificate which for pilots is a two year validity period. Each time a medical certificate is issued, the date of the examination on the medical certificate becomes the new date of the “individual’s most recently completed Coast Guard required physical examination” for the purposes of meeting the annual physical requirements of 46 CFR 11.709. In your case, that date is February 7, 2014, the date your physical was approved by the Coast Guard.

The second is to complete an annual examination recorded on a CG-719K. This requirement already existed before the STCW Final Rule. In accordance with 46 CFR 11.709 (b), every other year the physical examination must be submitted to the Coast Guard.

The year following submission of the CG-719K to the Coast Guard, the new annual physical, which does not have to be submitted to the Coast Guard, must be completed by the first day of the month following the anniversary date of the date of examination on the medical certificate. So in your situation, your annual physical examination must be completed by the March 1, 2015.

The next year, which is also the year the medical certificate must be renewed, the physical examination must be completed before the first day of the month following the date of the last physical examination. By regulation, this physical exam must be submitted to the Coast Guard within 30 days of the date the physical examination was completed, but should be submitted earlier to ensure the medical certificate does not expire. Your CG-719K must be submitted not later than March 1, 2016, to have been within 30 days of the date of your physical examination. You may not serve as a pilot while your medical certificate is expired.