

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD,

Complainant,

vs.

ROBERT WOODRUFF,

Respondent.

Docket Number 2024- 0332
Enforcement Activity No. 7941962

DEFAULT ORDER

Issued: October 25, 2024

By Administrative Law Judge: Honorable Timothy G. Stueve

Appearances:

**Pablo Morales
USCG Sector Corpus Christi**

For the Coast Guard

Robert Woodruff, pro se

For Respondent

Background

On or about July 17, 2024, the Coast Guard submitted a Complaint against Robert Woodruff (Respondent) for misconduct. The Coast Guard alleges the Respondent refused to submit to a required Part 16 drug test as described by 49 CFR § 40.191(a)(2). The refusal to take a required drug test is Misconduct as described by 46 U.S.C § 7703(1)(B) and defined by 46 C.F.R § 5.27. In aggravation, Respondent intentionally refusing to partake in a required chemical test after being directed to do so was an intentional act intended to circumvent drug testing regulations and undermine marine safety. Based on this charge of misconduct, the Coast Guard is seeking a **12 MONTH OUTRIGHT SUSPENSION** of the Respondent's Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC). The Return of Service for Complaint filed by the Coast Guard indicates the Complaint was delivered to Respondent's residence by Federal Express and signed for by a person of suitable age and discretion residing at that residence, on July 19, 2024 (Attachment A)¹.

On August 21, 2024, the Coast Guard filed a Motion for Default Order (Motion), explaining Respondent failed to file an Answer, and the response time has passed. See 33 C.F.R. § 20.308. The Return of Service for Motion for Default indicates the Motion was delivered to Respondent's residence by Federal Express and signed for by a person of suitable age and discretion on September 18, 2024 (Attachment B)². The Chief Administrative Law Judge assigned the matter to the undersigned on October 15, 2024.

Discussion

¹ The Coast Guard's Return of Service for the Complaint does not indicate the person that signed for receipt of the document. However, the Fedex proof of service attached to the Return of Service for the Complaint shows that "J. Woodruff" signed for the document.

² The Fedex Proof of Service attached to the Return of Service for the Motion for Default Order indicates that "R. Woodruff" signed for the document.

The applicable regulations require a respondent to “file a written answer to the complaint 20 days or less after service of the complaint.” 33 C.F.R. § 20.308(a). An administrative law judge (ALJ) may find a respondent in default “upon failure to file a timely answer to the complaint or, after motion, upon failure to appear at a conference or hearing without good cause shown.” 33 C.F.R. § 20.310(a). Default constitutes an admission of all facts alleged in a complaint and a waiver of respondent’s right to a hearing on those facts. 33 C.F.R. § 20.310(c).

The Complaint filed by the Coast Guard and properly served on Respondent contained instructions that clearly stated “YOU MUST RESPOND TO THIS COMPLAINT WITHIN 20 DAYS” and provided the applicable regulatory provision, 33 C.F.R. § 20.308. The instructions also informed Respondent an extension of time could be requested “within 20 days” of receipt. Respondent failed to respond to the Complaint or the Motion for Default Order.

Accordingly, the undersigned finds Respondent in default pursuant to 33 C.F.R. § 20.310(a). Default constitutes an admission of all facts alleged in the Complaint and a waiver of the right to a hearing. 33 C.F.R. § 20.310(c). See Appeal Decision 2682 (REEVES) (2008).

The undersigned finds the facts alleged in the Complaint sufficient to warrant the suggested sanction of **12 MONTHS OUTRIGHT SUSPENSION**. See 46 C.F.R. § 5.569.

WHEREFORE,

ORDER

Upon consideration of the record, the undersigned finds Respondent in **DEFAULT**.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, in accordance with 33 C.F.R. § 20.310, the undersigned finds the allegations set forth in the Complaint **PROVED**.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, all of Respondent's Coast Guard issued credentials, including Respondent's Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC), are **SUSPENDED OUTRIGHT FOR 12 MONTHS**.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, Respondent shall immediately deliver all Coast Guard issued credentials, licenses, certificates, or documents, including the MMC, by mail, courier service, or in person to: U.S. Coast Guard Sector Corpus Christi, 249 Glasson Drive, Corpus Christi, TX 78406. In accordance with 18 U.S.C. § 2197, if **Respondent knowingly continues to use the Coast Guard issued MMC, Respondent may be subject to criminal prosecution.**

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, pursuant to 33 C.F.R. § 20.310(e), for good cause shown, an ALJ may set aside a finding of default. A motion to set aside a finding of default may be filed with the ALJ Docketing Center in Baltimore. The motion may be sent to the U.S. Coast Guard Administrative Law Judge Docketing Center; Attention: Hearing Docket Clerk; Room 412; 40 S. Gay Street; Baltimore, MD 21201-4022.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, service of this Default Order on the parties serves as notice of appeal rights set forth in 33 C.F.R. § 20.1001-20.1004 (Attachment C).

SO ORDERED.

Done and dated October 25, 2024, at
Alameda, California



Honorable Timothy G. Stueve
Administrative Law Judge
U.S. Coast Guard