

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

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Complainant.

v.

GAUTHIER PIERRE BANKS

Respondent.

ALJ Docket No. 2025-0111

MISLE Activity No. 8013648

Honorable George J. Jordan

Administrative Law Judge

DEFAULT ORDER

This matter comes before me on the United States Coast Guard's (Coast Guard) Motion for Default Order (Motion for Default). As of the date of this order, Gauthier Pierre Banks (Respondent) has not replied to the Complaint nor the Motion for Default. Upon review of the record and pertinent authority, the allegations in the Complaint are **PROVED**.

On March 5, 2025, the Coast Guard issued a Complaint against Respondent seeking to revoke his Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC) for being a user of a dangerous drug in violation of 46 U.S.C. § 7704(b), as defined by 46 C.F.R. § 5.35. Specifically, the Coast Guard alleges Respondent tested positive for cocaine metabolites after taking a required random drug test. On March 7, 2025, the Coast Guard filed its Return of Service providing the Complaint was delivered to Respondent's residence by express courier and signed for by a person of suitable age and discretion residing at the residence on March 5, 2025. Subsequently, the Coast Guard filed a Motion for Default on June 9, 2025. Coast Guard's Return of Service for the Motion for Default filed June 10, 2025, provides the Motion for Default was delivered to Respondent's residence by express courier and signed for by a person of suitable age and discretion residing at the residence that same day.

To date, more than twenty days have passed since the service of the Motion for Default and Respondent has neither filed an answer nor requested an extension of time to file an answer. 33 C.F.R. § 20.308(a). As Respondent has neither filed an answer nor asserted good cause for failing to do so, I find Respondent in **DEFAULT**. 33 C.F.R. § 20.310(a); Appeal Decision 2700 (THOMAS) (2012). A default constitutes an admission of all facts alleged in the Complaint and a waiver of the right to a hearing on those facts. 33 C.F.R. § 20.310(c). Therefore, I find the following factual allegations in the Complaint **ADMITTED**:

1. On May 9, 2024, Respondent took a required random drug test, pursuant to 46 C.F.R. Part 16.
2. A urine specimen was collected from Respondent by Andy Harris of Harris Chiropractic Clinic, Smithfield, Virginia, in accordance with 49 C.F.R. Part 40.
3. Respondent signed a Federal Drug Testing Custody and Control Form for providing urine specimen ID # Y44380229.
4. Urine specimen ID # Y44380229 was received by and subsequently analyzed, pursuant to 49 C.F.R. Part 40 by Medtox Laboratories, Inc., a SAMHSA certified laboratory.
5. On May 16, 2024, urine specimen ID # Y44380229 tested positive for cocaine metabolites, as reported by Medtox Laboratories, Inc.
6. On May 28, 2024, Dr. Alicia Howard, the Medical Review Officer, determined that Respondent failed a chemical test for dangerous drugs, raising the presumption of use, established by 46 C.F.R. § 16.201(b)
7. Respondent has been the user of a dangerous drug, as described by 46 U.S.C. § 7704(b).

Upon finding the Respondent in default, I must now issue a decision against him. 33 C.F.R. § 20.310(d). In reviewing the record, I find the facts deemed admitted sufficient to establish Respondent is a user of a dangerous drug, as outlined in 46 U.S.C. § 7704(b), 46 C.F.R. § 16.201(b), Appeal Decision 2556 (LINTON) (1994), Appeal Decision 2603 (HACKSTAFF)

(1998), and Appeal Decision 2704 (FRANKS) (2014). Accordingly, I find Respondent is a user of a dangerous drug.

SANCTION

Having found Respondent in default and all the allegations in the Complaint proved, I must now determine the appropriate sanction. 33 C.F.R. § 20.902(a)(2). While it is within the sole discretion of the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) to determine the appropriate sanction at the conclusion of a case. Appeal Decision 2362 (ARNOLD) (1984). A proved allegation that a mariner is a user of a dangerous drug carries a mandatory sanction of revocation of their MMC, unless they can prove cure. 46 U.S.C. § 7704(b). The Coast Guard proved Respondent is a user of a dangerous drug, thus the only sanction to levy is revocation.

WHEREFORE,

ORDER

Upon consideration of the record, I find Respondent in **DEFAULT**.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, in accordance with 33 C.F.R. § 20.310, I find 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 **REVOKED**.

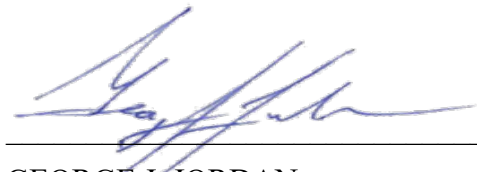
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, Respondent shall immediately deliver all Coast Guard issued credentials, license, certificates, or documents, including MMC [REDACTED], by mail, courier service, or in person to: CWO Michael Rose, U.S. Coast Guard Sector Virginia, 200 Granby Street, Suite 700, Norfolk, VA 23510. 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 21202-4022.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, within three (3) years or less, Respondent may file a motion to reopen this matter and seek modification of the order of revocation upon a showing that the order of revocation is no longer valid, and the issuance of a new license, certificate, or document is compatible with the requirement of good discipline and safety at sea. See generally 33 C.F.R. § 20.904.

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 A).

Done and dated, July 8, 2025,
Seattle, Washington

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "George J. Jordan", is written over a horizontal line.

GEORGE J. JORDAN
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE