

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

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD	)	
Complainant	)	
	)	Docket Number: 2026-0030
vs.	)	
	)	MISLE Activity ID: 8277965
MICHAEL BOLDEN	)	
Respondent.	)	

DEFAULT ORDER

Issued: March 26, 2026

By Administrative Law Judge: Honorable Timothy G. Stueve

Appearances:

For the Coast Guard

Jason Bartholomew
Sector Detroit

Jessica Ward
Sector Detroit

For Respondent

Michael Bolden, *Pro Se*

Background

On January 21, 2026, the Coast Guard filed a Complaint against Michael Bolden (Respondent). 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 at the individual's residence on January 23, 2026 (Attachment A)¹.

On February 23, 2026, 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 states the Motion was delivered to Respondent's residence by Federal Express and signed for by a person of suitable age and discretion at the individual's residence on February 26, 2026 (Attachment B)². The Acting Chief Administrative Law Judge assigned the matter to me on March 24, 2026.

Discussion

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).

¹ The Coast Guard's Return of Service for the Complaint indicates that a person of suitable age and discretion residing at the residence signed for receipt of the document from the Express Courier; the FedEx proof of service attached to the Return of Service for the Complaint shows that "B. Bolden" signed for the document.

² The FedEx Proof of Service attached to the Return of Service for the Motion for Default Order indicates that "B. Bolton" signed for the document.

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, I find 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).

As to the charge of Misconduct, the Complaint alleges on November 25, 2025 Respondent, while acting under the authority of his Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC), violated Grand River Navigation’s Employee Handbook, 2nd addition, effective September 1, 2025, onboard the SAM LAUD, by being under the influence of alcohol, with a blood alcohol level (BAC) greater than 0.04%. In aggravation, Respondent’s misconduct, and violation of company policy deprived the vessel a member of the crew. See 46 U.S.C. § 7703(1)(B).

The factual allegations in the pleadings are legally sufficient to find the charge of Misconduct **PROVED**. Id.

I find the facts alleged in the Complaint sufficient to warrant the suggested sanction of a **3 (THREE) MONTH OUTRIGHT SUSPENSION**. 46 U.S.C. § 7703(1)(B).

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 suspended for a **3 (THREE) MONTH OUTRIGHT SUSPENSION**.

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: Jason Bartholomew Sector Detroit, 110 Mount Elliott Street, Detroit, MI 48207. 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 this 26th day of March 2026, at
Alameda, California



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