

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

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD,

Complainant,

vs.

ISAAC TARLTON,

Respondent.

Docket Number 2024-0251
Enforcement Activity No. 7888634

DEFAULT ORDER

Issued: October 24, 2024

By Administrative Law Judge: Honorable Timothy G. Stueve

Appearances:

**LTJG Katherine E. Villasenor
USCG Sector Maryland-National Capital Region**

For the Coast Guard

Isaac Tarlton, pro se

For Respondent

Background

On May 6, 2024, the Coast Guard filed a Complaint against Isaac Tarlton (Respondent) alleging Misconduct due to a violation of the Norwegian Cruise Line’s Drug and Alcohol policy. Respondent had a BAC greater than 0.04 while onboard a company vessel on March 22, 2024. The Return of Service for Complaint filed by the Coast Guard¹ 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 the residence on May 7, 2024 (Attachment A).

On September 10, 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 residing at the residence on September 24, 2024 (Attachment B)². The Chief Administrative Law Judge assigned the matter to me on October 7, 2024.

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 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 “T. TARLTON” signed for the document.

² The Fedex Proof of Service attached to the Return of Service for the Motion for Default Order indicates that there was no signature for the delivery of 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 due to a BAC greater than 0.04 while onboard a company vessel, the Complaint alleges on March 22, 2024, Respondent violated the Norwegian Cruise Line’s Drug and Alcohol policy pursuant to 46 C.F.R. § 5.27. See 46 U.S.C. § 7703(1)(B).

The factual allegations in the pleadings are legally sufficient to find the violation of Norwegian Cruise Line’s Drug and Alcohol policy as Misconduct **PROVED**. Id.

The undersigned finds the facts alleged in the Complaint sufficient to warrant the suggested sanction of **3 MONTHS OUTRIGHT SUSPENSION**. See 46 C.F.R. § 5.569.

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 OUTRIGHT FOR 3 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 Maryland-National Capital Region, 2401 Hawkins Point Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21226. 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.



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

Done and dated October 24, 2024, at
Alameda, California