

at the STCW Diplomatic Conference in Manila, Philippines, and the amendments entered into force for all ratifying countries on January 1, 2012, with a final effective date of January 1, 2017. Specifically, the 2010 amendments to the STCW Convention and Code require that seafarers:

- 1) have the physical capability to fulfill the requirements of their duties and the basic training as required by Section A-VI/1;
- 2) demonstrate adequate hearing and speech to communicate effectively and detect any audible alarms;
- 3) have no medical condition, disorder or impairment that will prevent the effective and safe conduct of the seafarer's routine and emergency duties;
- 4) are not suffering from any medical condition likely to be aggravated by service at sea or to render the seafarer unfit for service or to endanger the health and safety of other personnel on board; and
- 5) are not taking medication that has side effects that will impair judgment, balance or the ability to effectively and safely perform routine and emergency duties on board.

The amendments further dictate that Medical certificates will remain valid for a maximum period of two years unless the seafarer is under the age of 18, in which case the maximum period of validity shall be one year.

- b. The Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) entered into force on August 20, 2013. The MLC requires mariners serving on vessels to have a valid medical certificate. As of the effective date of this NVIC, the United States has not ratified the MLC. Until such time that the United States ratifies the MLC, the Coast Guard cannot mandate enforcement of its requirements for U.S. mariners. However, Article V, Paragraph 7, of the MLC contains a "no more favorable treatment clause" that requires ratifying governments to impose Convention requirements on all vessels—even those from a non-ratifying government—when calling on their ports. As a result, U.S. vessels visiting foreign ports that cannot demonstrate compliance with the MLC may be at risk of port state control actions, including detention, when operating in the port of a ratifying nation. The MLC does provide that medical certificates meeting STCW requirements also satisfy the MLC requirement.
- c. Until January 24, 2014, United States mariner medical certification is embedded in the Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC) and separate certificates are not issued, holding an MMC evidences that the mariner is medically qualified to hold an MMC. In reference (a), the Coast Guard promulgated the requirement for the issuance of separate medical certificates to all mariners.
- d. Medical certificates issued under reference (a), implementing the 2010 STCW amendments, meet the requirements of MLC Regulation 1.2 and, in accordance with standard A1.2.3 of the MLC, "shall be accepted by the competent authority, for the purpose of Regulation 1.2." In the event a vessel is not subject to STCW but is subject to MLC and is calling on a port in a country that has ratified the MLC, the Coast Guard will

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issue a medical certificate to qualified crewmembers upon proper application under reference (a).

5. DISCUSSION.

a. Coast Guard Procedures:

- 1) 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. Medical certificates will be issued in accordance with reference (a) and this NVIC. Enclosure (2) contains sample medical certificates. Once issued, a valid medical certificate must be carried when serving under the authority of a MMC. 46 CFR 15.401(d).
- 2) The Coast Guard will proactively issue medical certificates to all mariners currently holding valid STCW endorsements without further application in order to minimize foreign port state control actions against United States vessels, reduce administrative burden on mariners and the Coast Guard, and to facilitate international commerce. The Coast Guard will issue the medical certificate to mariners following the process in enclosure (3).
- 3) The Coast Guard will continue to enforce the medical standards in accordance with reference (a) and as clarified in *Medical and Physical Evaluation Guidelines for Merchant Mariner Credentials*, NVIC 04-08, COMDTPUB 16700.4. Waivers, restrictions and limitations will be applied in accordance with enclosure (4) to this NVIC.
- 4) The issuance of the medical certificate will not change the expiration date of the mariner's MMC unless the applicant applies for renewal of the MMC under 46 CFR 10.227.
- 5) No fees will be charged for medical certificates.

b. Mariner Procedures:

- 1) A mariner may not serve under the authority of their STCW endorsement without holding a valid medical certificate. 46 CFR 15.401(c)(1).
- 2) As noted above, the Coast Guard will issue medical certificates to each mariner holding a valid STCW endorsement as of the date of this NVIC without further application.
 - i) Mariners who currently hold an STCW endorsement and have changed their contact information since their last credentialing transaction should ensure that the Coast Guard has their current mailing address on file for them. Mariners may accomplish this by filling out the "Mariner Personal Contact Information Validation Form" located at http://wwwdev.uscg.mil/nmc/csc/colorbox/mariner_validation_form.asp or by contacting the National Maritime Center's (NMC) Customer Service Center at IAskNMC@uscg.mil or 1-888-IASKNMC (1-888-427-5662).

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- ii) Expiration dates of the medical certificates issued under this paragraph will generally be adjusted based on the expiration of the mariner's current MMC.
 - 3) Mariners who wish to extend the expiration date of their MMC must meet the application requirements found in 46 CFR 10.227.
 - 4) Mariners should remain cognizant of the expiration dates on their medical certificates and the applicability of the dates to their current employment.
 - i) Mariners should monitor the NMC website for information on processing time.
 - ii) Mariners with medical conditions should submit their applications early to allow adequate processing time.
 - iii) Once issued, mariners are required to carry a valid medical certificate in order to sail under the authority of their MMC. 46 CFR 15.401(d).
 - c. Company and Vessel Operator Procedures: In order to avoid foreign port state control actions and comply with 46 CFR 15.401, companies and vessel operators should:
 - 1) Ensure that all seafarers employed by the company or operator carry a valid medical certificate when operating under the authority of their MMC; or when engaged on a vessel calling on a port in a country ratifying the MLC.
 - 2) Inform themselves and the mariners employed by them of the requirements of STCW Regulation I/9 and Section A-I/9 of the STCW Code. Advise employed mariners to ensure that the NMC has a current mailing address on file.
 - 3) Determine whether employed mariners have a valid medical certificate in accordance with 46 CFR 15.401(c). During the implementation period, not all mariners will have a medical certificate as implementation of the medical certificate provisions will be transitioned in accordance with the following:
 - i) Mariners should have a valid medical certificate if they hold an STCW endorsement regardless of when issued or a national endorsement issued after January 24, 2014.
 - ii) Mariners holding only a national endorsement issued before January 24, 2014 have their medical certification embedded in their MMC and a separate medical certificate is not required. Upon the first credential transaction requiring a medical review after January 24, 2014, mariners with national endorsements will be issued a medical certificate and it must be carried with their MMC.
 - d. Designated Medical Examiner (DME) Program. Provisions in reference (a) allow for the use of designated medical examiners in the future.
6. **DISCLAIMER.** This guidance is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is it itself a regulation. It is not intended to, nor does it, impose legally binding requirements on any party. It represents the Coast Guard's current thinking on this topic and is issued for guidance purposes to outline methods of best practice for compliance with applicable law.

You can use an alternative approach if the approach satisfies the requirements of the applicable statutes and regulations. If you wish to discuss alternative approaches, you may contact the Coast Guard's Mariner Credentialing Program Policy Division (CG-CVC-4), which is responsible for implementing this guidance. Contact information is provided in paragraph 10 of this NVIC.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS.

a. The development of this NVIC and the general policies contained within it have been thoroughly reviewed by the originating office, and are categorically excluded (CE) under current USCG CE # 33 from further environmental analysis, in accordance with Section 2.B.2. and Figure 2-1 of the National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures and Policy for Considering Environmental Impacts, COMDTINST M16475.1 (series). Because this NVIC implements, without substantive change, the applicable Commandant Instruction or other federal agency regulations, procedures, manuals, and other guidance documents, Coast Guard categorical exclusion #33 is appropriate.

b. This NVIC will not have any of the following: significant cumulative impacts on the human environment; substantial controversy or substantial change to existing environmental conditions; or inconsistencies with any Federal, State, or local laws or administrative determinations relating to the environment. All future specific actions resulting from the general policies in this NVIC must be individually evaluated for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), DHS and Coast Guard NEPA policy, and compliance with all other environmental mandates.

8. PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, an information collection that does not display a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. This Circular describes collection of information, which is covered by OMB control number 1625-0079.

9. FORMS/REPORTS. None.

10. COMMENTS/QUESTIONS. Comments or questions regarding this NVIC should be directed to the Mariner Credentialing Program Policy Division (CG-CVC-4) at MMCPolicy@uscg.mil or (202) 372-2357.



J. A. SERVIDIO
Rear Admiral, U. S. Coast Guard
Assistant Commandant for Prevention Policy

Enclosures: (1) Guidance for Issuance of Medical Certificates
(2) Sample Medical Certificate
(3) Transition Procedures for Mariners Holding Current STCW Endorsements
(4) Guidance on Waivers, Limitations, and Restrictions

GUIDANCE FOR ISSUANCE OF MEDICAL CERTIFICATES

1. THE MEDICAL CERTIFICATE.
 - a. The medical certificate is a certificate issued by the Coast Guard under 46 CFR Part 10, Subpart C that serves as proof that the mariner meets the medical and physical standards for merchant mariners.
 - b. To qualify for a medical certificate, a mariner must provide evidence of meeting the medical and physical standards on a form CG-719-K or CG-719-K/E, as appropriate. The Coast Guard retains final authority for determining whether a mariner is medically and physically qualified. See 46 CFR 10.302(a).
2. CONTENTS OF THE MEDICAL CERTIFICATE. The medical certificate will include the following:
 - a. Authorizing authority and the requirements under which the document is issued;
 - b. Name (Last, first, middle);
 - c. Date of birth (day/month/year);
 - d. Gender (Male/Female);
 - e. Nationality;
 - f. Date of examination (day/month/year);
 - g. Hearing meets the standards in section A-I/9 (Y/N);
 - h. Visual acuity meets standards in section A-I/9 (Y/N);
 - i. Color vision meets standards in section A-I/9 (Y/N);
 - j. Fit for look-out duties (Y/N);
 - k. Unaided Hearing Satisfactory (Y/N);
 - l. No limitations or restrictions on fitness (Y/N). If "N", specify limitations or restrictions;
 - m. Is the mariner free from any medical condition likely to be aggravated by service at sea or to render the seafarer unfit for such service or to endanger the health of other persons on board? (Y/N);
 - n. Expiration dates of certificate;
 - o. Identification checked at examination (Y/N)

- p. Official stamp (including name) of the issuing authority;
- q. Signature of the authorized person; and
- r. Mariner's signature confirming that the mariner has been informed of the content of the certificate and of the right to a review in accordance with 46 CFR 1.03-40. The medical certificate is not valid until signed by the mariner.

3. MEDICAL CERTIFICATE KEY TERMS.

- a. Date of Examination. 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 719K or 719 K/E; nor will it necessarily coincide with the issuance date of the medical certificate.

- 1) A mariner seeking an original MMC may be medically approved on a particular date while the MMC may not be issued until up to a year later because of testing requirements.
- 2) The date of examination establishes the anniversary date for the medical waiver. A mariner may have to provide additional information regarding his or her condition before the issuance date for his or her MMC depending upon the conditions set in the waiver. For example:

A mariner's date of examination is February 4, 2014, and is issued a waiver with a one-year reporting requirement. The mariner meets all professional qualifications and is approved to test for their endorsement approximately two weeks later. The mariner uses the full one-year approved-to-test period and passes all professional examinations. The mariner's waiver reporting requirement is due February 4, 2015 even though the mariner's MMC may not have been issued.

- b. Date of Expiration. Because of differing legal requirements, each medical certificate will carry three expiration dates. One will be the expiration date for STCW (see 46 CFR 10.301(b)(1)), a second expiration date will be for the national endorsement (see 46 CFR 10.301(b)(3)), and the third will be for First Class Pilotage under 46 CFR 15.812 (see 46 CFR 10.301(b)(2)).

4. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS. See 46 CFR 10.301.

- a. Once the Coast Guard determines a merchant mariner meets the medical and physical evaluation standards, the Coast Guard will issue a medical certificate. The medical certificate will be valid for various periods of time based upon the applicable expiration date. Except as otherwise noted, medical certificates will be valid for the following periods of time:
 - 1) The expiration date applicable to a mariner holding an STCW endorsement that authorizes service onboard vessels to which STCW applies will be for up to 2 years

- unless the mariner is under the age of 18, in which case the maximum period of validity will be 1 year. [46 CFR 10.301(b)(1)]
- 2) The expiration date applicable to a mariner who holds an endorsement as a first-class pilot will be a maximum period of 2 years. 46 CFR 10.301(b)(2). Although First Class Pilots continue to be subject to the annual physical examination requirements of 46 CFR 11.709(b), a new medical certificate will only be issued every two years.
 - 3) The expiration date applicable to all other mariners will be for a maximum period of 5 years. [46 CFR 10.301(b)(3)]
 - 4) Mariners seeking additional MMC endorsements who hold a current medical certificate are not required to submit a new physical examination if their existing medical certification meets all of the requirements for the endorsement sought. [46 CFR 10.301(b)(4)]
- b. Mariners receiving a waiver of certain medical conditions may receive a time-limited certificate. Those certificates will expire in either one or two years depending on the condition. Applicants must comply with the terms of their waiver letter in order to renew their certificate. [46 CFR 10.303(c)]

SAMPLE MEDICAL CERTIFICATES

ENTRY LEVEL CERTIFICATE:

First Page:

United States Coast Guard Medical Certificate Seafarer Name: MERCHANTMARINER, KIMBERLY S Gender: Nationality: US DOB: 16-APR-1966 Entry Level-O/S, Wiper, Steward's Dept. - Expiration Date: 17-DEC-2018		
 JEFFREY P. NOVOTNY, CAPT, USCG OFFICER IN CHARGE, MARINE INSPECTION		
SAMPLE		
SEAFARER SIG NATURE		
CN 00051847	v DO NOT DETACH v	Ref Num: 3530363

Second Page:

^ DO NOT DETACH ^		
* Date of Examination:	17-DEC-2013	
* Identification Checked at Examination:	Y	
* No Limitations/Restrictions: Y		
SAMPLE		
CN 00051847	CG-4610A (Rev. 05/12)	Ref Num: 3530363

Enclosure (2) to NVIC 01-14

OFFICER ENDORSEMENT, QUALIFIED RATING ENDORSEMENT, AND STCW ENDORSEMENT
MEDICAL CERTIFICATE:

Front Page:

United States Coast Guard Medical Certificate Seafarer Name: MERCHANTMARINER, KIMBERLY S Gender: Nationality: US DOB: 16-APR-1966 STCW Exp Date: 17-DEC-2015 National Exp Date: 17-DEC-2018 Pilot Exp Date: 17-DEC-2015		
 JEFFREY P. NOVOTNY, CAPT, USCG OFFICER IN CHARGE, MARINE INSPECTION		
SAMPLE		
SEAFARER SIGNATURE		
CN 00051849	v DO NOT DETACH v	Ref Num: 3530363

Second Page:

^ DO NOT DETACH ^		
* Mariner is free from any medical condition likely to be aggravated by service at sea or to render the seafarer unfit for such service or to endanger the health of other persons on board.		
* Date of Examination:	17-DEC-2013	
* Last Color Vision Test Date:	--	
* Hearing IAW STCW A-I/9:	Y	
* Visual Acuity IAW STCW A-I/9:	Y	
* Color Vision IAW STCW A-I/9:	Y	
* Fit for Look-out duties:	Y	
* Unaided Hearing Satisfactory:	Y	
* Identification Checked at Examination:	Y	
* No Limitations/Restrictions: Y	SAMPLE	
CN 00051849	CG-4610A (Rev. 05/12)	Ref Num: 3530363

**INITIAL TRANSITION PROCEDURES FOR MARINERS HOLDING
CURRENT STCW ENDORSEMENTS**

1. Currently, in excess of 50,000 mariners hold STCW endorsements authorizing service on vessels that are subject to STCW or which may call on ports in countries that have ratified the MLC. The Coast Guard will, without further application, issue medical certificates to mariners who are currently qualified. These mariners have demonstrated medical qualification during the evaluation process for their current credential.
2. The NMC will mail a medical certificate to each mariner with a current STCW endorsement at the mailing address the Coast Guard has on record for the mariner. Mariners who currently hold an STCW endorsement and who have changed their contact information since their last credentialing transaction should ensure that the Coast Guard has their current mailing address on file. Mariners may temporarily accomplish this by filling out the “Mariner Personal Contact Information Validation Form” at http://wwwdev.uscg.mil/nmc/csc/colorbox/mariner_validation_form.asp. Mariners may also accomplish this by contacting the NMC Customer Service Center at IAskNMC@uscg.mil or 1-888-IASKNMC (1-888-427-5662).
3. Each mariner with an existing medical waiver will be issued a medical certificate provided the mariner is compliant with the terms of the waiver. If a mariner has not complied with annual reporting requirements or other conditions, the Coast Guard will not issue the medical certificate.
4. Because the Coast Guard expects to issue a large number of medical certificates in the first year after publication of the regulations in reference (a), the expiration dates on these medical certificates will vary depending upon when the mariner’s MMC expires. This will prevent a recurring backlog of medical certificate applications from developing.
5. 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 the mariner’s current credential. The year of expiration will be adjusted to the maximum allowable for that purpose (STCW/national endorsement/FCP).
 - a. Example 1: A mariner holds an MMC with STCW and First Class Pilot (FCP) endorsements, that expires on August 30, 2017. The Coast Guard will issue the medical certificate in January of 2014 with the physical exam date being set as August 30, 2012. The mariner’s medical certificate will expire August 30th with the year of expiration dependent upon whether it is for STCW, first class pilot, or national endorsement. The year of expiration would be STCW-2014/National Endorsement-2017/FCP-2014.
 - b. Example 2: A mariner holds an MMC, with FCP and STCW endorsements that expires on December 30, 2015. The Coast Guard will issue the medical certificate in February 2014, with the physical exam date being set as December 30, 2013.

Enclosure (3) to NVIC 01-14

The mariner's medical certificate will expire December 30th with the year of expiration dependent upon whether it is for STCW, first class pilot, or national endorsement. The year of expiration would be STCW-2015/ National Endorsement-2015/FCP-2015. Although the expiration dates for all three purposes align in this case, those dates will not coincide in all cases.

6. If you are a current holder of a valid STCW endorsement and you do not receive your medical certificate by March 31, 2014, contact the NMC at IAskNMC@uscg.mil or 1 888-I-ASK-NMC (1-888-427-5662). If you have questions about this policy, contact the Coast Guard at STCWAsk@USCG.mil. Mariner credentialing information is also available on the Internet at <http://www.uscg.mil/nmc> or <http://homeport.uscg.mil>.

GUIDANCE ON WAIVERS, LIMITATIONS, AND RESTRICTIONS

1. Medical Waivers.

- a. The Coast Guard may grant a waiver if an applicant does not possess the vision, hearing, or general physical condition necessary; and extenuating circumstances warrant special consideration. 46 CFR 10.303(a).
- b. An applicant may submit to the Coast Guard additional correspondence, records, and reports in support of a waiver. In this regard, recommendations from agencies of the Federal Government operating government vessels, as well as owners and operators of private vessels, made on behalf of their employees, will be given full consideration. 46 CFR 10.303(a)
- c. In general, the Coast Guard will not approve medical waivers when an applicant does not meet the applicable medical standards, unless objective medical evidence indicates that the condition is sufficiently controlled and the effects of medication pose no significant risk to maritime and public safety. The Coast Guard retains final administrative authority for the issuance of medical waivers. 46 CFR 10.303(b).
- d. The Coast Guard may grant medical waivers with specific conditions (restrictions or limitations) to which the applicant must adhere. This may include constraints such as more frequent monitoring of the mariner's medical conditions, submission of medical exams and /or tests at varying intervals to track the ongoing status of the medical condition, or operational limitations. 46 CFR 10.303(c)-(e).
- e. Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of a medical waiver, including any follow-up reporting requirements, restrictions, or operational limitation(s), may result in loss of medical certification. Additionally, appropriate administrative action, up to and including suspension or revocation of the mariner's credential(s) in accordance with 46 CFR Part 5, may result.
- f. The Coast Guard considers the terms "restriction" and "limitation" to be synonymous. The terms are used throughout Title 46 CFR, Chapter I, Subchapter B, without assigning a particular meaning or distinguishing between the terms. Both terms are considered constraints on the authority granted by a credential. The granting of a medical waiver is conditioned upon compliance with the limitation or restriction. Within Subpart C, it has been relatively common practice to use the term "operational limitation" on a constraint that limits the actual operating authority of a credential (e.g., daylight hours only) while "restriction" is used to describe a more general constraint such as the imposition of annual reporting requirements or specialized testing.

2. Operational Limitations.

- a. The Coast Guard may place an operational limitation on the mariner's medical certificate. 46 CFR 10.303(d).

- b. An operational limitation is a specific constraint placed upon the medical certificate that would reduce the mariner's ability to serve under the full authority of their credential. Some examples (but not an exhaustive list) of common operational limitations are:
- 1) Limitations requiring the use of corrective lenses for mariners with vision deficiencies. 46 CFR 10.305(c).
 - 2) Limitations requiring the use of hearing aids for mariners with hearing deficiencies. 46 CFR 10.306(d).
 - 3) Daylight operations only for deck department mariners unable to pass color vision standards in 46 CFR 10.305.
 - 4) No Watchkeeping: May be utilized for mariners with an inordinate risk of sudden incapacitation or impaired cognition as a result of a medical condition or medications used.
 - 5) No Lone Watchkeeping: May be used for those with possibly full physical and cognitive functioning, but where there is still an ongoing risk of transient physical or cognitive deficiencies
 - 6) No Bridge Watchkeeping: To be applied to those who fulfill the requirements for general shipboard service but not necessarily for the Bridge.
 - 7) Service in Deck/Engine/Steward Department only. Applied to mariners who meet the criteria for only one of the shipboard departments.

The Coast Guard may impose other duty limitations as appropriate depending on the mariner's specific medical condition and its impact on the mariner's ability to perform routine and emergency duties.

3. Restrictions.

a. Time Restricted Certificates.

- 1) Medical Certificates may receive time limitations that cause the certificate to expire earlier than the full certification period. The full certification period is 2 years for first class pilots, 2 years for STCW holders, and 5 years for a national certificate. The full certification period for mariners who are under 18 years of age and seeking an STCW endorsement, is one-year. 46 CFR 10.301(b)(1).
- 2) The time-restricted certificates will expire either one year or two years from the date of examination depending on the medical condition, condition status, and the need for periodic medical evaluations. This one or two year expiration date will apply to all medical certificate categories (i.e., STCW holders, national certificates, and First Class Pilots).

b. Geographical Restrictions.

- 1) Geographical restrictions may reduce the waters upon which a mariner may operate a vessel. These restrictions may include “Near Coastal Waters only”, “Inland Waters only,” or other appropriate route restrictions depending on the medical condition and condition status.
- 2) Other geographical restrictions, such as “25 NM from Harbor of Safe Refuge”, etc., may be applied as appropriate to the mariner’s medical condition and the need for surveillance and/or availability to obtain medical assistance.

c. Medical Restrictions.

- 1) Restrictions regarding impaired vision requiring the use of corrective lenses with a spare pair kept onboard at all times will continue to be applied in accordance with the vision standards outlined in Enclosure (5) in NVIC 04-08.
- 2) Restrictions regarding impaired hearing requiring the use of hearing aids with spare batteries kept onboard at all times will continue to be applied in accordance with hearing standards outlined in Enclosure (5) in NVIC 04-08.
- 3) For mariners with Obstructive Sleep Apnea requiring the use of positive airway pressure devices or oral/nasal appliances, a restriction specifying the following will be applied: “Special equipment required while sleeping.”
- 4) For mariners with conditions requiring medications to ensure safe functioning and any emergency needs, the following restriction will be applied: “Must carry self-administered medications.”
- 5) Other Medical Restrictions may be applied as appropriate depending on the mariner’s specific medical condition and its impact on the mariner’s ability to perform routine and emergency duties.