



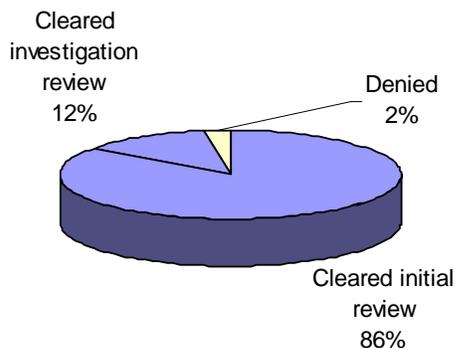
December 19, 2007

## Evaluations of Mariner Credential Applications

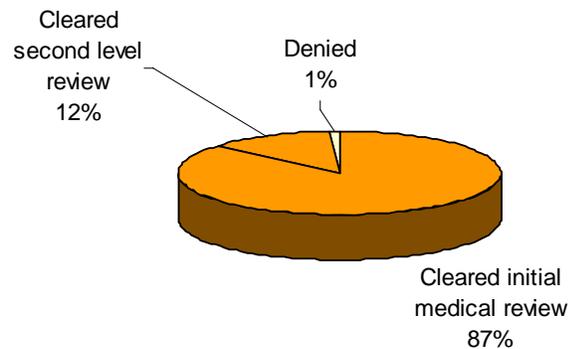
In May 2007, the Coast Guard began centralizing the Mariner Licensing and Documentation program. This effort shifted many of the functions traditionally performed at 17 Regional Examination Centers (RECs) throughout the nation to the National Maritime Center located in West Virginia. The goal of this effort is to improve customer service, decrease processing time and improve the consistency of Coast Guard products and services.

One of the key functions shifted to the National Maritime Center is the evaluation of credential applications. Evaluations are conducted in three areas to ensure that the mariner is qualified including, professional experience and knowledge, medical competency, and security background checks. Evaluators review information in the application to determine if the mariner should be issued a credential. In most instances, the evaluations are approved and credentials are issued. In a few instances mariners denied a credential due to either security or medical issues.

Mariner Licensing and Documentation  
Security Evaluation Results -  
98% of all security evaluations approved



Mariner Licensing and Documentation  
Medical Evaluation Results -  
99% of all medical evaluations approved



Among all the mariners submitting an application, approximately 98% "clear" their security background check. Of those denied, most are due to convictions involving drug use or driving-under-the-influence convictions. Others issues include severe crimes. In all cases, mariners are provided with the details of why the issuance of their credential was denied and specific instructions on how to request reconsideration or appeal the Coast Guard's decision to deny their credential.

Analysis of the medical evaluation data shows that 99% of mariners do not have disqualifying medical conditions. However, many mariners do have significant medical conditions that require

amplifying information for use in conducting further medical evaluations. In all cases, the mariner can apply for a waiver in an effort to continue to operate. As long as the safe operation of the vessel is not compromised, the Coast Guard usually grants the waiver. Of those denied a credential for medical reasons, most are due to severe medical conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, or due to certain medications that affect the safe operation of a vessel. Mariners denied for medical issues are also offered the option to renew for continuity in order to retain their professional qualifications until such time as the medical issue may be resolved.

As we continue to centralize operations, we will strive to ensure consistency in the manner in which we conduct the evaluations of credential applications. We thank you for challenging us to improve; we ask for your patience as we do.

Sincerely,

David C. Stalfort  
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard