



April 14, 2009

Importance of Using the Mariner Reference Number

To protect the personal information of mariners, on October 6, 2006 the Coast Guard removed the mariner's social security number from all the credentials issued after this date and replaced it with a "mariner reference number" generated by the Merchant Mariner Licensing and Documentation (MMLD) system. While the social security number is still collected on a credential application, it is not printed on the credential and it is not used internally by the Coast Guard when processing the application.

When a mariner applies for an original credential for the first time, they will receive a mariner reference number and an application identification number. The mariner reference number is unique to the mariner and will not change during subsequent credential transactions. Mariners wishing to check the status of their application on-line via the Coast Guard's Homeport portal (<http://homeport.uscg.mil>) will need to use their mariner reference number and the application ID number.

With the increased risk associated with using identity theft all mariners and marine employers are highly encouraged to please use mariner reference numbers when communicating with the Coast Guard regarding merchant mariner credentials.

Sincerely,

D. C. STALFORT
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard
Commanding Officer