

STCW Frequently Asked Questions: National – Officer – Deck

- 1. Master of ocean or near-coastal self-propelled vessels of less than 1,600 GRT. I am having some trouble understanding the changes that are being proposed to the service requirements for master 1,600 GRT (11.412). According to my reading of the new regulations it appears that they allow for upgrade from 1,600 GRT mate to 1,600 GRT master with only one year of sea time as long as the year was on vessels over 100 GT and you held either a 1,600 GRT mate oceans or a 1,600 GRT mate of towing. Is my interpretation correct?**

Yes, a mariner holding an endorsement as mate of self-propelled vessels of less than 1,600 GRT or as master or mate/pilot of towing vessels and who has 12 months' service as master or mate on seagoing vessels over 100 GRT may upgrade to master of self-propelled vessels of less than 1,600 GRT.

- 2. (**ADDED 07/07/14**) Master, 500 GRT endorsements: Does an applicant for the national master 500 GRT/1,600 GT (ITC) near-coastal endorsement have to qualify as an able seaman?**

No. Consistent with page 77851 of the preamble to the final rule, applicants for this national endorsement are no longer required to qualify as an able seaman.

- 3. (**ADDED 07/07/14**) Signaling (flashing light): Are mariners upgrading to national endorsements of unlimited tonnage required to complete flashing light? This requirement is not in 46 CFR 11.401 (h) in the final rule. When will mariners need to complete signaling?**

Mariners seeking national deck officer endorsements do not need to complete a signaling course. However, mariners should be aware that there may be questions concerning visual signaling on national endorsement examinations.

Mariners qualifying for a national endorsement under the grandfathering provisions do not need to meet the requirements of the old 46 CFR 11.401(h).

4. **(**ADDED 07/07/14**) First class pilots: What are the requirements for pilots regarding the new STCW regulations for tracking and compliance as it applies to the new regulations?**

If a pilot holds or wishes to apply for STCW endorsements, he or she is subject to the same requirements as other mariners to obtain and maintain those endorsements.

5. **(**ADDED 07/07/14**) First class pilots: What will I be required to do to keep my documents current if I am serving as pilot and I hold a master (unlimited) endorsement?**

The general renewal requirements for MMCs are found in 46 CFR 10.227. The renewal requirements for an STCW endorsement as master of vessels of 3,000 GT (ITC) or more are found in 46 CFR 11.305 (b). The requirements for maintaining current knowledge of waters to be navigated by a pilot may be found in 46 CFR 11.713.

6. **(**ADDED 07/07/14**) For the sea service required in 46 CFR 11.404 (a)(1) for a national endorsement as master (unlimited), does the required service as chief mate have to be on vessels of a specific tonnage, and, must the service be obtained while holding an endorsement as chief mate of unlimited tonnage?**

All applicants for a national endorsement as master (unlimited) must have either: 1 year of service as chief mate on ocean self-propelled vessels; or 1 year of service on vessels of unlimited tonnage while holding a license or MMC endorsement as chief mate of ocean self-propelled vessels. At least 6 months of this service must be as chief mate, and the remainder may be as second mate, third mate, or officer in charge of a navigational watch accepted on a one-for-two basis (12 months as officer in charge of a navigational watch equals 6 months of creditable service).

7. **(**ADDED 07/07/14**) Third Mate Unlimited: If a mariner has a national endorsement as master for service on vessels of less than 1,600 GRT, is it possible for him or her to obtain an endorsement as third mate for service on vessels of unlimited tonnage?**

Yes, per 46 CFR 11.407, you may qualify for the endorsement however, if at least half of your service is not on vessels of more than 1,600 GRT your endorsement will receive a tonnage limitation per 46 CFR 11.402(b).

8. (ADDED 07/07/14**) Radar Observer: Will radar observer completion date become part of the MMC or will we have to carry a course completion certificate?**

No, the STCW Final Rule did not change how the radar observer endorsement appears on the MMC. Removing the date occurred in an earlier rulemaking to reduce the burden for mariners by eliminating the need to have the endorsement re-issued each time the radar endorsement was renewed. Mariners with a radar endorsement should continue to carry the current course completion certificate or have it readily available.

9. (ADDED 07/07/14**) Will mariners with the new endorsement of Chief Engineer (limited) be qualified to sail on international voyages, even if they were previously limited to near-coastal voyages?**

Chief Engineer (limited) is not an STCW endorsement, but a national endorsement (see 46 CFR 11.518). In order to sail internationally on vessels subject to the STCW, a mariner holding a national endorsement as chief engineer (limited) would first need to obtain an STCW endorsement. The requirements for an STCW endorsement as chief engineer are in 46 CFR 11.325 (for 4,000 HP or more) or 46 CFR 11.331 (for 1,000 HP or more and less than 4,000 HP). However, if you held your national chief engineer endorsement before 24 March 2014 or began the service or training for your STCW endorsement before that date, you may qualify for the STCW endorsement under the old rules until 31 December 2016.

10. (ADDED 07/07/14**) Master unlimited: I currently hold an endorsement as master OSV 6,000 GT (ITC) and have been working under the authority of that license as a master for several years on vessels over 3,000 GT (ITC). I received an endorsement as third mate unlimited last year. Under the final rule, would I be able to by-pass the chief mate unlimited examination and take the examination for master unlimited?**

No, in order to be qualified for the national endorsement as master unlimited, you must meet the professional requirements in 46 CFR 11.404 and be approved to test for that endorsement. For a quick reference on the structure of the national deck officer endorsements and the crossover between those endorsements, refer to 46 CFR Figure 11.403.

11. (ADDED 07/07/14**) I am going from a national chief engineer (limited oceans) endorsement to a second assistant engineer (unlimited) endorsement which is not a management position. Why do I have to take another examination for an endorsement with less responsibility? Why can't those who took the examination for chief engineer (limited oceans) be grandfathered to a national endorsement as second assistant or third assistant engineer, even if it would require us to obtain more sea service time if we want to obtain a management endorsement?**

You must take an examination, because it is a requirement of the regulations. Under 46 CFR 11.514(c) which was in effect before 24 March 2014, a mariner may qualify for a second assistant engineer endorsement based on his or her chief engineer (limited oceans) service. That regulation requires the completion of an examination to qualify for the sought after endorsement. Under 46 CFR 11.512(a)(2), that went into effect on March 24, 2014, he or she may qualify for first assistant engineer based on chief engineer (limited) service and completion of an appropriate examination. 46 CFR 11.903 requires an examination for both options.

12. (ADDED 05/27/15**) What endorsements must a master/mate of towing vessels with oceans or near coastal route endorsements hold to be authorized to operate towing vessels of less than 300 GRT?**

A deck officer working on towing vessels of 200-300 GRT operating beyond the boundary line (on near coastal or oceans waters) must hold a national officer endorsement as master or mate of towing vessels (or master or mate of vessels greater than 200 GRT with a completed TOAR) and an STCW endorsement as master/mate authorizing service on vessels greater than 500 GT and authorizing service on the waters upon which they are serving. All officers serving on the towing vessel must hold an appropriate national and STCW endorsement authorizing service on the vessel (tonnage) and waters (oceans or near coastal waters).