

## Raise of Grade vs. Endorsement (Increase in Scope)

Definitions, per [46 CFR 10.107 \(b\)](#):

- **Raise of Grade/Raise in Grade (RIG)** – *(Both terms are used interchangeably by the National Maritime Center [NMC])*

An increase in the level of authority or category of a license:

- Mate to Master
- Assistant Engineer (AE) to Chief Engineer (CE)
- Master 1600 to 3rd Mate
- Master 200 to Master 500
- CE Limited Oceans to 2nd AE.

*Note: A new MMC book with a 5-year expiration date is no longer issued for a RIG. A new book is issued only if the mariner requests renewal on his/her application and qualifies for renewal.*

- **Endorsement (Increase in Scope)** – A statement of a mariner's qualifications, which may include the categories of officer, staff officer, ratings, and/or STCW appearing on a merchant mariner credential. In other words, a provision added to a license or COR that alters its scope or application:
  - Tonnage limitation increase within a general tonnage category
  - Horsepower increase
  - Radar observer qualification
  - Pilot license route addition.

When is drug testing required for a Raise in Grade or Increase in Scope?

Per [46 CFR 10.231\(c\)\(6\)](#):

Applicants for the following endorsements must produce evidence of having passed a chemical test for dangerous drugs or of qualifying for an exemption from testing in §16.220 of this subchapter:

- (i) A drug test is required for ANY officer endorsement – this means Raise in Grade only, not Increase in Scope
- (ii) A drug test is required for the FIRST endorsement as able seaman, lifeboatman, qualified member of the engine department, or Tankerman – for example: having AB and adding Tankerman or holding QMED and adding AB.

When is a physical required for a Raise in Grade or Increase in Scope?

Per [46 CFR 10.231\(c\)\(8\)](#):

- Applicants who have not submitted evidence within the past 3 years that they have passed all applicable vision, hearing, medical, and/or physical exams required in §10.215 for the particular endorsement sought must submit proof, on a Coast Guard-approved form, that the applicant has passed those medical/physical tests and exams .
- For any RIG, a physical dated within 3 years is required and must have been reviewed by the Medical Department at the National Maritime Center.
- Examples of RIG – Mariner holds Master 200 NC and is applying for Master 500 NC; Mariner holds Apprentice Mate Steersman and is applying for Mate Pilot. These require a physical within 3 years and a drug test.
- Example of Increase in Scope – Mariner holds QMED/Oiler and applies for QMED/Watertender; Mariner holds Master 25 and applies for Master 100. These do not require a physical.

Click the following links for a chart to help determine when an application falls under a Raise in Grade or an Endorsement (Increase in Scope):

- Deck Officers Chart – found in the [MSM Figure 1-2, page 1-21](#)
- Engineering Officers Chart – found in the [MSM Index](#) under “Instructions” titled Officer Table
- Ratings Table – found in the [MSM Index](#) under “Instructions” titled Ratings Table