



Marine Safety Information Bulletin

Commandant
U.S. Coast Guard
Commercial Regulations & Standards Directorate
2703 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE, STOP 7501
Washington, DC 20593-7501

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COVID-19 – Mariner Credentials

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Extension of Merchant Mariner Credential Endorsements and Medical Certificates

This MSIB provides guidance concerning mariner credentials and medical certificates and the action being taken by the Coast Guard due to the novel coronavirus and the disease it causes (COVID-19). We are doing this in keeping with national guidance to meet the challenge of this disease and in response to a number of questions and concerns raised by the maritime industry and mariners.

The Coast Guard has also been consulting with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and other administrations to ensure alignment with respect to the extension of endorsements issued in accordance with the Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended (STCW). We are taking a pragmatic approach consistent with the IMO Secretary General's circular Letter No.4204/Add.5 dated 17 March, 2020.

To mitigate the impact to the seafarers and the industry caused by the novel coronavirus disease COVID-19, the Coast Guard is taking the following actions:

- **Regional Exam Centers and Monitoring Units.** Regional Examination Centers and Monitoring Units will be closed until further notice effective immediately. Mariners may cancel or reschedule any REC appointment by contacting NMC's Customer Service Center at 1-888-IASKNMC, by emailing IASKNMC@uscg.mil, or through the NMC online chat system. This includes appointments for application submission, payment of fees associated with an application, or appointments for examinations.
- **National Endorsements:** Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMC) and Medical Certificates (National Endorsements only) that expired between March 1, 2020 and July 31, 2020 are extended until 31 October 2020. Mariners who are actively working on expired credentials that meet the expiration criteria must carry the expired credential with a copy of this notice.
- **STCW Endorsements:** MMCs with STCW endorsements that expired between March 1, 2020 and July 31, 2020 are extended until 31 October 2020. Mariners who are actively working on expired credentials that meet the expiration criteria must carry the expired credential with a copy of this notice.
- **STCW Medical Certificates:** STCW Medical Certificates that expired between March 1, 2020 and July 31, 2020 are extended until 31 October 2020. Mariners who are actively working on expired medical certificate that meet the expiration criteria must carry the expired certificate with a copy of this notice.

- Additional administrative measures: The following items that expire in between March 1, 2020 and July 31, 2020 are extended until October 31, 2020: Additional Information (AI) letters, Qualified Assessor (QA) letters, Designated Examiner (DE) letters, Proctor approval letters, Approval to Test (ATT) letters, and mariner training course completion certificates.
- Pilot Annual Physical examinations. 46 USC 7101(e)(3) requires that pilots undergo an annual physical examination each year while holding a credential. The Coast Guard does not intend to enforce this requirement given the current national emergency and the lack of medical care. This measure ONLY relaxes the requirement for an annual physical and not the actual medical standards.
- Course and Program Approvals. Course and program approvals that expire between January 1, 2020 and July 31, 2020 are extended for six months from their current expiration date. This MISB serves as formal notification of the extension. The National Maritime Center (NMC) will not issue new course approval letters or certificates. NMC will update internal records to ensure the acceptance of course completion certificates issued during the extension and that the website reflects appropriate information.

The National Maritime Center (NMC) will be issuing additional guidance on these extensions and other administrative measures and will be posted on its website: <https://www.uscg.mil/nmc/>. If you have questions, visit the NMC website, or contact the NMC Customer Service Center by using the NMC online chat system, by e-mailing IASKNMC@uscg.mil, or by calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

Richard V. Timme, RDML, U.S. Coast Guard, Assistant Commandant for Prevention Policy sends.