

U.S. Department
of Transportation

**United States
Coast Guard**



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16721
NMC Policy Ltr No. 2-99

From: Commanding Officer, National Maritime Center
To: Distribution

Subj: QUALIFICATION FOR ISSUANCE OF GLOBAL MARITIME DISTRESS AND
SAFETY SYSTEM (GMDSS) ENDORSEMENTS

Ref: (a) 46 CFR 15.1103
(b) STCW Section B-IV/2 Para. 45
(c) 46 CFR 12.25-45
(d) 46 CFR 10.205(n)
(e) 46 CFR 10.603

1. This policy letter provides guidance on qualification for, and issuance of, GMDSS endorsements to International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended, (STCW) certificates for licensed mariners and radio officers.
2. By February 1, 1999, the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) requirement for GMDSS equipment will be mandatory for U.S. cargo ships of at least 300 gross register tons or more; all passenger ships carrying more than 12 passengers, regardless of size, on international voyages; and passenger vessels of 100 gross tons and upward in domestic services when outside the boundary line as defined in 46 CFR Part 7. 47 CFR 80.1073 requires that at least two crewmembers hold an FCC issued GMDSS Radio Operator's License. One of the operators must be designated by the vessel's master as assigned to communicate during a distress situation. An STCW certificate endorsement as GMDSS operator is not required until February 1, 2002.
3. Effective January 31, 1999, seagoing vessels voluntarily relying on the at-sea maintenance provision of the GMDSS must have onboard a trained person designated to perform at-sea maintenance of GMDSS installations in accordance with reference (a). This individual must hold the FCC GMDSS Radio Maintainer's License, Merchant Mariner's Document (MMD) and STCW certificate appropriately endorsed.
4. After January 31, 2002, all navigational watch officers, including the master of the vessel must hold an STCW-95 certificate endorsed as operator in the GMDSS system onboard vessels required to be GMDSS compliant in accordance with reference (a). In addition, any shipboard personnel with assigned duties in the operation of the GMDSS must have the appropriate STCW certificate endorsements.

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5. The requirements for qualifying for the STCW-95 endorsement for GMDSS radio operator and/or maintainer are defined in reference (b) through (e). Enclosure (1) provides amplifying guidance and equivalencies for demonstrating competencies required by reference (b). STCW certificates will be issued and endorsed in accordance with Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular (NVIC) No. 8-97. Sample forms are provided with this policy letter, see enclosures (2), (3), and (4).
6. The Coast Guard will continue to issue and renew existing radio officer licenses to qualified individuals for the foreseeable future.

W. C. BENNETT
By direction

Encl: (1) GMDSS qualification requirements
(2) Sample STCW-95 endorsement
(3) Sample STCW-95 endorsement
(4) Sample STCW-95 endorsement

Copy: All District Commanders (m)
Commandant (G-MSO)
All COs MSOs
All Activity Commanders
All RECs

Enclosure (1) to NMC Policy Letter 2-99

The following tables describe the methods of qualifying for an STCW 1995 endorsement as GMDSS radio operator and/or maintainer.

To qualify for an STCW-95 endorsement as GMDSS radio operator

If you are a CG licensed radio officer who:	You may;	or, you may;	or, you may;
Received an FCC GMDSS operator's license prior to 01Aug98:	<p>Show one year service as a radio officer while holding CG radio officer license; and,</p> <p>Pass GMDSS written exam administered by designated examiner with 75% passing grade.</p>	<p>Have complete a 35-hour course GMDSS training course prior to 01Aug98;</p> <p>Pass a GMDSS written examination, given by designated examiner with at least a 75% passing grade; and,</p> <p>Present evidence of assessment by a designated examiner for competencies contained in Table B-IV/2 of the STCW Code.</p>	<p>Be employed as a GMDSS instructor with at least 140 contact hours within the five years prior to making application; and,</p> <p>Pass a GMDSS written examination, given by a designated examiner, with at least a 75% passing grade.</p>
Received an FCC GMDSS operator's license <u>on</u> or <u>after</u> 01Aug98:	Successfully complete a 70-hour CG approved training course.		

If you are a licensed or unlicensed deck or engine department mariner who:	You may;	or, you may;
Received an FCC GMDSS operator's license <u>prior</u> to 01Aug98:	<p>Have completed 35-hour GMDSS training course prior to 01Aug98;</p> <p>Pass a GMDSS written examination, given by designated examiner with at least a 75% passing grade; and,</p> <p>Present evidence of assessment by a designated examiner for the competencies contained in Table B-IV/2 of the STCW Code.</p>	Successfully complete a 70-hour CG approved training course.
Received an FCC GMDSS operator's license <u>on</u> or <u>after</u> 01Aug98:	Successfully complete a 70-hour CG approved training course.	

To qualify for an STCW-95 endorsement as GMDSS radio maintainer

<p>All licensed and unlicensed deck and engine department and radio officers who hold an FCC GMDSS maintainer license. You may,</p>	<p>Or, you may;</p>
<p>Provide certificate of completion from a course specializing in the maintenance and repair of radio electronics within five years prior to making application.</p> <p>The supporting documentation or certificate must establish that the scope and content of training outlined in section B-IV/2 of the STCW code for maintenance of GMDSS installations.</p> <p>If the certificate of course completion is greater than five years old, the applicant must show proof of at least one year of experience in the maintenance and repair of radio electronics within five years prior to making application. <i>(Acceptable experience includes military, shipboard, shoreside and other jobs related to the maintenance and repair of radio electronics)</i></p>	<p>Successfully complete a CG approved training course.</p>