



July 21, 2008

REC Houston to Transition to NMC

Commencing August 5, the Regional Examination Center (REC) located in Houston, Texas, will begin its transition to become a field unit of the National Maritime Center (NMC), located in Martinsburg, West Virginia. REC Houston will start operating as a storefront operation where the staff will help the mariner ensure their application is ready for evaluation. Mariners will still need to verify their identity, get fingerprinted and take their tests at the REC. Once ready, the REC will send the application to the NMC for evaluation. The NMC will conduct an entire evaluation, including security, professional qualification and medical. Once the applicant is found to be fully qualified, the credential will be printed and issued by the NMC.

REC Houston will be joining 15 other RECs, who have already transitioned: REC Anchorage, AK; REC Baltimore, MD; REC Juneau, AK; REC New Orleans, LA; REC Toledo, OH; REC St. Louis, MO; REC Memphis, TN; REC Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA; REC Seattle, WA; REC San Francisco, CA; REC New York, NY; REC Portland, OR; REC Charleston, SC; REC Honolulu, HI; and REC Miami, FL. By the end of this calendar year, all 17 RECs nationwide will have transitioned to NMC field units.

The future role of the transitioned RECs will be primarily that of a mariner advocate. As the "face" of the Coast Guard to the mariner, it is essential that they help the mariner complete the application and ensure it is ready to be evaluated before forwarding the application to the NMC for evaluation.

The goal of the restructuring and centralization effort is to improve customer service, decrease credential processing time, and improve the consistency of our products. In the future, it is envisioned that credentials will be issued faster and the level of customer service will exceed the mariner's expectations.

If you have specific questions regarding the transition process, please contact your local REC or see the "REC Transition Guide" on our web site at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/nmc>.

For more information on other improvements we're making to Mariner Licensing and Documentation, go to our web site at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/nmc> or to <http://homeport.uscg.mil> and select Merchant Mariners under the list of Missions.

We thank you for your patience as we continue to centralize operations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "D. Stalfort".

David C. Stalfort
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard