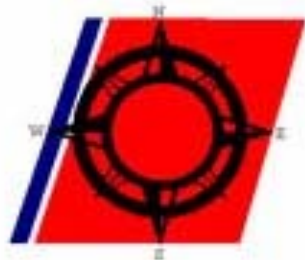




# ***REC Transition Guide: Navigating Change***

**U.S. COAST GUARD**



# National Maritime Center



Homeland  
Security

# Our Mission:

Issue merchant mariner credentials to fully qualified mariners in the most effective and efficient manner possible.

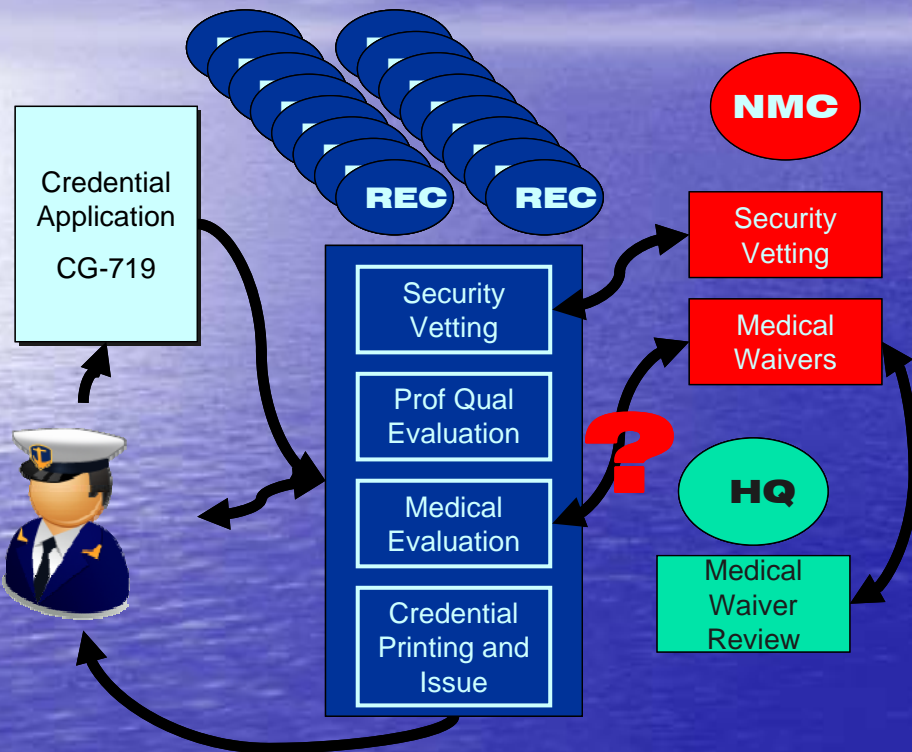




# *We Value*

- **the mariner, respect their experience**
- **the mariner's time, get it right the first time**
- **the mariner's suggestions for improvement**
- **the mariner's personal information**
- **the mariner's career, find a way to say "yes"**

# Prior to Centralization



**1. THE PROCESS:** For years, mariners completed their credential application by hand and sent it to one of the 17 Regional Examination centers around the country.

The RECs would then begin an evaluation of the application, which includes security vetting, professional qualification, and a medical evaluation.

New security vetting procedures were established requiring the NMC to conduct and communicate the results to the security vetting to each REC.

Each REC would review the mariner's physical and make a decision whether a medical waiver was necessary, using guidance in the regulations, the Marine Safety Manual, and NVIC 2-98.

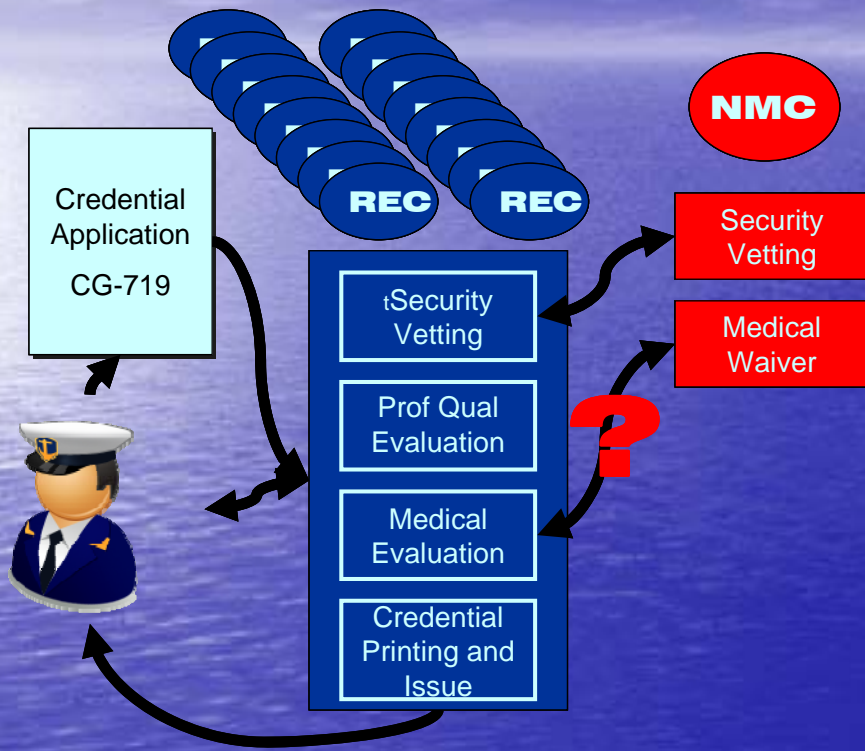
Once the NMC received the waiver request, the NMC would forward this to USCG headquarters where doctors would review the mariners physical. This situation resulted in excessive cycle time to obtain a waiver.

Once the entire evaluation process was completed, if the mariner was found fully qualified, a credential was printed and issued to the mariner by the REC.

**2. THE ISSUES:** Over the years as workload increased at the REC due to regulatory changes and an increase in the number of mariners applying for credentials, processing times increased. In an effort to reduce backlog, many RECs began reducing the hours they were open to the public. Many also stopped answering telephone calls from mariners. This led to a decline in customer service. Further, regulations and policies, which were issued by USCG Headquarters and the NMC respectively, were subject to varying interpretation among the 17 REC and complaints about lack of consistency began to increase.



# Start of Centralization



**PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS:**  
Eliminated USCG Headquarters medical review.  
Established Medical Branch at NMC.

In response to complaints about processing time, poor customer service, and inconsistencies among the RECs, the Coast Guard began a project to restructure the NMC and to centralize the Mariner Licensing and Documentation program. The first phase of this project was to establish a medical staff at the NMC to improve the medical waiver process in Dec 2006.

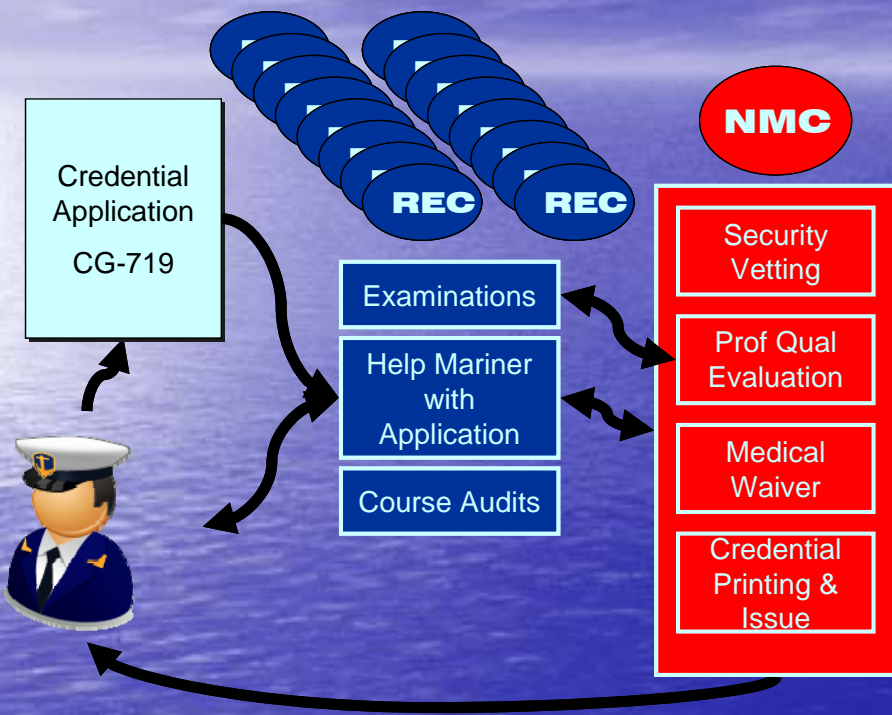
During this first phase of the project, Mariners would still submit their application to the RECs, which would still conduct the evaluation, including an initial review of the mariner's physical exam.

The RECs would still work with the mariner to obtain missing information from their application and the RECs would still request a security vetting by the NMC.

However, if the RECs determined that a medical waiver was needed, this request would be sent to the newly established medical staff at the NMC for processing. This medical staff, which consisted of a physician and medically-qualified staff, would evaluate the physical and determine if a waiver was appropriate. This improved the medical evaluation process by eliminating a step in the credentialing process, thus reducing the time to obtain a waiver.

Once the entire evaluation process was completed by the RECs, if the mariner was found fully qualified, a credential was printed and issued to the mariner.

# Fully Centralized



## PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS:

RECs transition to storefront operations

NMC conducts all evaluations

Fully centralized by Dec 31, 2008.

Under centralized operations, the mariner will still submit their application to one of the 17 RECs. The RECs function will transition to a storefront operations where the staffs will help the mariner ensure their application is ready for evaluation.

Once ready, the RECs will send the application to the NMC for evaluation. The NMC will conduct an entire evaluation, including security, professional qualification, and medical. If an exam is needed, the NMC will notify the Mariner that they are ready to test. The REC will administer the exam to the mariner. Once the application is found to be fully qualified, the credential will be printed and issued by the NMC.

The mariner will benefit from fully centralized operations.

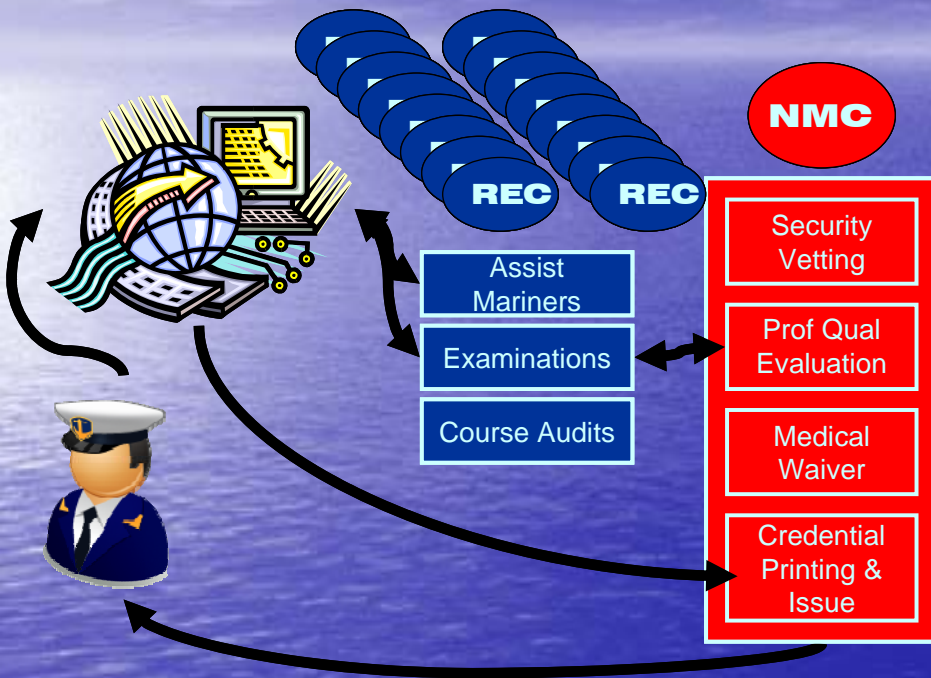
Improve consistency - the evaluations will be conducted at the NMC by a fully trained staff. It is easier to monitor consistency with a single office as opposed to 17 different offices.

Reduced processing time - with the evaluation being conducted at the NMC, it will be easier to monitor and adjust the processes to eliminate bottlenecks and improve efficiency. When evaluations were conducted at 17 different RECs, improving the evaluation process nationwide was difficult.

Improved customer service - by removing the evaluation function the REC staffs will be able to focus more attention on the mariner, helping them ensure their applications are ready to evaluate.



# Electronic Processing



## PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS:

Electronic application submission

Electronic Exams

Electronic work flow Paperless processes

THE VISION: One day a mariner will be able to upgrade or renew their credential on demand from any location in the world, much like you can access your bank account and withdraw cash from an ATM, or pay your taxes on line.

In the future, mariners will log into an electronic application and submit information needed to issue, upgrade, or renew their credential. This data will be instantly transmitted to an electronic work flow system at the NMC where it will be processed. The NMC will be receiving data instead of a paper file making capable parallel processing through security, medical and professional qualification evaluations.

The RECs will be available to assist mariners with the electronic application submission. In fact, remote kiosks might even be available at REC for mariners to use.

Further, mariners could take advantage of new capabilities and could take exams on line, with the assistance of proctoring at the RECs, or other locations.

RECs will be able to spend more time conducting course audits, thereby improving the quality of this important aspect of the MLD program.

Once the evaluation is completed, a new Merchant Mariner Credential would be printed and sent to the mariner.

# Goals

IMPROVE  
CUSTOMER SERVICE



REDUCE  
PROCESSING TIME



IMPROVE PRODUCT  
QUALITY



The goal of the restructuring and centralization effort is to improve customer service, decrease credential processing time, and improve the consistency of our products.



# Current Progress



## Improve Customer Service



### Challenges

- Contacting REC
- Application status check
- User fee payment
- Communicating requirements to mariners

### Solutions

- Centralization
- 1-888-IASKNMC Help Desk
- [IASKNMC@uscg.mil](mailto:IASKNMC@uscg.mil)
- Online application status check
- Pay.Gov
- Sea Service Calculator
- Outreach
  - HQ Program Manager (CG-5434)
  - [www.homeport.uscg.mil](http://www.homeport.uscg.mil)
  - List Servers

# Current Progress



## Reduce Processing Time



### Challenges

- Inconsistent evaluation and production procedures
- Paper-based system
- Incomplete applications

### Solutions

- Establishment of NMC-1, Operations and Oversight Division
- Coast Guard's Mission Management System (MMS)
- Electronic applications
- Electronic record-keeping
- Ready-to-be-evaluated checklist



# Current Progress



## Improving Product Quality



### Challenges

- Consistency
- Accuracy
- Accountability
- Receiving constructive feedback from customers

### Solutions

- Standardized work instructions/forms/checklists
- Centralized on-going training
- REC Scorecards
- Dedicated quality assurance team
- Customer surveys
- NMC assuming operational and administrative control of REC's

# Two Part REC-NMC Partnership

REC

ENSURE APPLICATIONS ARE  
READY FOR EVALUATION



Mariner  
Advocate

PART 1

NMC

EVALUATE  
APPLICATIONS  
& PRODUCE  
CREDENTIALS

Section	Question	Answer	Grade	Score	Total
Section I - Personal Data	1. Name (Last, First, Middle)				
	2. Date of Birth				
	3. Sex				
	4. Height				
Section II - Education	1. School				
	2. Degree				
	3. Date of Graduation				
	4. School Address				
Section III - Experience	1. Position				
	2. Date of Start				
	3. Date of End				
	4. Employer Address				



IN

OUT

Production Facility

PART 2



## REC Before



User Fee Collection



ID Verification



Finger Printing



Professional  
Qualifications  
Evaluation



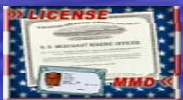
Medical  
Evaluation



Course Auditing



Test Administration



Credential Issuance

## REC Now



User Fee Collection



ID Verification



Finger Printing



Ready for  
Evaluation  
Applications



Course Auditing



Test Administration



*Face-to-Face  
Customer  
Service*

## REC Future



*Nationwide Model  
of Great Customer  
Service*



Fully Electronic  
Application Process



Self-serve Application  
Kiosks at every REC

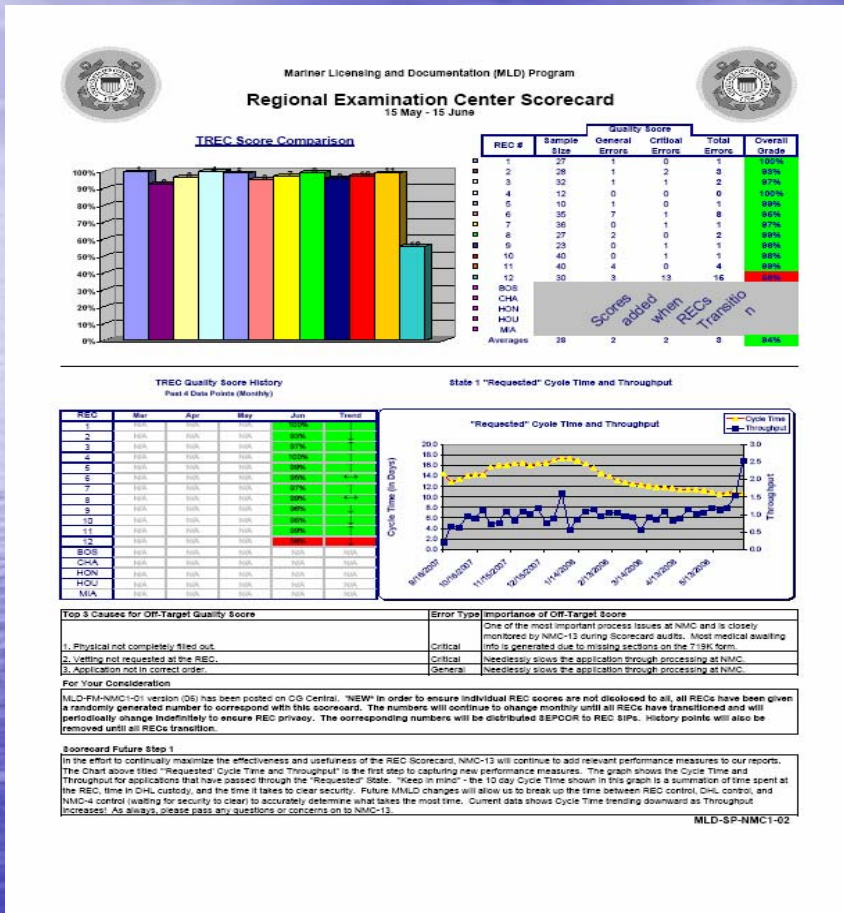


Course Auditing



Electronic  
Test Administration

# REC Feedback



Summary of application quality when submitted to NMC

•Identifies shortcomings in application submission

•Identifies REC training needs

Trends, cycle-time, and application deficiency details

The overall goal is to reduce the processing time of applications by ensuring only applications that are ready to be evaluated are sent to NMC. The ready to evaluate checklist captures concerns early in the process to enable speedy corrections.



## Q & A

### Transition Guidelines

**Q. Will NMC provide a transition checklist to help guide the RECs during the centralization effort?**

A. We have developed a comprehensive REC “Transition Book” that contains the specific activities that need to be taken by the REC/NMC staffs. This “project plan”, if you will, covers topics ranging from broad process changes to detailed personnel management issues such as civilian time card management.

**Q. Will NMC provide an organizational manual? All the “unit overhead” requirements for the REC are currently covered by Sector.**

A. This is covered in the REC Transition Book. Much of the administrative tasks will be handled by the NMC; such as personnel evaluations, time cards, standard operating procedures, government vehicles, training. etc. However, it might be better for the Sectors to retain some functions such as the Sector’s “military training” or “urinalysis” for the military members at the REC’s.

## Q & A

### Applications

**Q: Will REC's need to do a preliminary evaluation before an application is sent to West Virginia?**

A: REC's are required to conduct a cursory review to ensure the applications are ready for evaluation.

**Q: With evaluations being conducted in West Virginia, will the REC's have the expertise available to answer mariner requests?**

A: Yes, the REC's will be staffed to answer basic application questions. Questions regarding a specific application will be referred to the Mariner Information Help Desk at 1-888-IASKNMC.

**Q. How will NMC process unique applications such as limited local licenses and pilotage?**

A. OCMI's will still need to develop local requirements and determine pilotage requirements. However, given these requirements, the actual evaluation will be conducted at NMC with the assistance of the REC.



## Q & A

### Mariner Records

**Q: What will happen to the mariner records currently housed at the RECs?**

A: Legacy records of active mariners will be forwarded to NMC when the mariner makes a new application at an REC. In the interest of moving away from paper and reducing our inventory of paper service records at the RECs, legacy records of inactive mariners will be transferred to the nearest Federal Records Center for permanent storage.

### Transportation Worker's Identification Card (TWIC)

**Q: How will TWIC change the processes that are currently being established?**

A: The full impact of TWIC is unknown, however, with the implementation of TWIC, RECs will no longer handle the security aspect of the vetting process. All personal security information will be routed through TSA, and mariners will be fingerprinted at one of the 110 TWIC enrollment centers. This means there will be fewer REC visits. Without the need to come into RECs for security and ID verification, it is expected that the number of mariner visits will decrease significantly. None of the safety and security standards presently in place will be changed as part of this process.

### Appeals

**Q: What is the transition policy for appeals?**

A: In accordance with Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations, 1.03-15(g)(3) Coast Guard Headquarters (CG-5434) will process all appeals involving suspension or withdrawal of course approvals, and all marine personnel issues that are appealed from the National Maritime Center or from an OCMI through a District Commander.

## Q & A

### Performance Measurements

**Q: What transition performance metrics will the RECs use? How will the REC know how things are going at the REC level?**

**A:** We have a set of performance measures that will be used for all the RECs which we'll adjust to make sure they are driving the right performance. Current measures will include: (1) customer service/satisfaction, (2) cycle time to check "ready for evaluation", (3) quality of "ready for evaluation" check, and (4) inventory level of applications waiting for information found missing during ready for evaluation check. These measures should drive improvements to customer service, processing time, and product quality. Additionally, we'll have internal readiness measures including staffing, training, and workplace climate.

**Q: How will REC performance measures compare to NMC performance measures?**

**A:** Our measurement systems are already closely aligned. Currently the NMC is measuring four distinct areas: (1) throughput, (2) cycle time, (3) inventory level of work in process, and (4) operating costs. Additionally, we look at credentials issued and customer satisfaction.





# National Maritime Center

## Organizational Functions

July 07, 2008

*Our Mission is to issue  
credentials to fully  
qualified mariners in the  
most effective and efficient  
manner possible.*

**Commanding Officer**  
Captain David C. Stalfort

**Deputy Director**  
Mr. Brian K. Eisentrout

**Mariner Credentialing Program  
Policy Division (CG-5434)**  
Captain David Kranking

- Policy and standards
- Program requirements
- Final action on appeals
- STCW oversight
- Performance Oversight
- Public outreach

**Operations &  
Oversight Division  
NMC-1**  
CDR Craig S.  
Swirbliss

- Coordinate REC ops
- Coordinate Training
- Implement policies, standards and procedures
- Long-range planning
- Process Improvement
- Assist with Mission Management System (MMS)

**Mariner Training &  
Assessment Division  
NMC-2**  
Mr. James D. Cavo

- Approve training
- Approve courses
- Develop training standards
- Develop exam questions
- Maintain exam results
- Develop technical explanation exam questions
- Maintain/update exam guides
- Evaluate exam protests
- Conduct audit of courses / documentation
- Evaluate course completion rates
- Verify courses conducted

**Program Support  
Division  
NMC-3**  
Mr. David C.  
Prohaska

- Personnel Management
- Administrative Management
- Budget Development
- Contract Management
- Procurement
- Supplies (NMC & RECs)
- Facility Maintenance
- Property Maintenance
- Information Tech Support

**Mariner Information  
Division  
NMC-4**  
Mr. Jeffrey R. Brandt

- Credential Application Quality Assurance
- NDR / FBI Data Entry
- Mariner Record Imaging
- Mariner Information Support
- Mariner Records Keeping
- Merchant Mariner Credential develop & production
- MMLD program management

**Mariner Evaluation  
Division  
NMC-5**  
Ms. Tina M. Bassett

- Medical evaluations
- Medical waivers
- Military sea service evaluations
- Professional qualification evaluations
- Safety and security screening
- Safety and security investigations
- Referrals for S&R action appropriate
- Assessment/denial determinations
- Respond to public inquiries and status checks
- Pay.Gov assistance
- Mariner Information Help Desk