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NMC Policy Letter 07-03  
**JUL 22 2003**

From: Commanding Officer, U.S. Coast Guard National Maritime Center  
To: Distribution

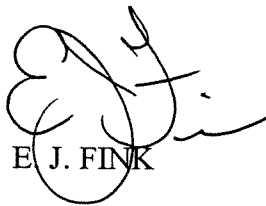
Subj: REQUIREMENTS FOR FINGERPRINTING AND A SAFETY AND SECURITY  
CHECK WHEN ISSUING A MERCHANT MARINER'S DOCUMENT (MMD) WITH  
A NEW EXPIRATION DATE

Ref: (a) Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 12

1. PURPOSE. This policy letter clarifies reference (a) by providing guidance to the Regional Examination Centers (RECs) classifying the types of transactions involving issuance of an MMD and establishing which types require that the applicant be fingerprinted, that a safety and security check be conducted, and that a new expiration date be placed on the MMD.
2. ACTION. Commanding officers of units with a Regional Examination Center should be guided by this letter in processing applications for MMDs. This policy letter will be distributed by electronic means only. It is available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.uscg.mil/STCW/m-policy.htm>.
3. BACKGROUND.
  - a. Reference (a) contains the regulations for issuing MMDs and includes requirements for an applicant to qualify for numerous deck, engine, steward's department, and miscellaneous ratings. The regulations are silent as to whether a transaction should be considered to be an upgrade of an existing qualification or a new endorsement or guidance as to the requirements for review of an applicant's character.
  - b. The Merchant Mariner Licensing and Documentation System (MMLD) has several choices to indicate the type of transaction. This policy letter unifies the types of MMD transactions with the appropriate entry to be placed in MMLD.
4. DISCUSSION.
  - a. An original MMD is the first MMD issued to an applicant. While most original MMDs will include only entry level ratings (ordinary seaman, wiper, and/or steward's department), there are other special ratings, such as student observer, cadet (deck), cadet (engine), apprentice engineer, or apprentice mate, that may be included on an original MMD. An original MMD with a qualified rating may also be issued in special circumstances such as one to a former military member who meets the standards for issuance.

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- b. An endorsement is the addition of an authorization to be employed in either a department of a vessel's organization or in a work area where currently the mariner does not have authorization for employment. Applicants for an endorsement should be issued an MMD with the same expiration date as the MMD to which the endorsement is added.
- c. An upgrade recognizes enhanced skills and provides the bearer with greater employability within either a general shipboard organization or work area where the mariner already holds authorization for employment. Applicants for an upgrade should be issued an MMD with a new expiration date of five years from the date of issuance.
- d. Enclosure (1) contains a table indicating whether a transaction should be treated as an original issue, renewal, upgrade or endorsement. When entering a transaction into MMLD, select the appropriate type of transaction from enclosure (1). The table also indicates whether or not a new expiration date should be placed on the MMD.
- e. For U. S. Citizens, when an applicant applies for an MMD with a new expiration date or anytime an old style card is replaced with a new style card, the applicant shall be fingerprinted and a safety and security check shall be conducted if more than two years have elapsed since the last safety and security check. The two years should be measured starting at the date of the last safety and security check to the date the application for the new MMD is received at the REC. If less than two years have elapsed since the last safety and security check was completed, fingerprinting and an additional safety and security check are not required.
- f. Aliens admitted to the U. S. for permanent residence shall be fingerprinted and a safety and security check conducted at every transaction.



E. J. FINK

Encl: Table of MMD transactions

Distribution: Commandant (G-MSO)  
Area Commanders (Am)  
All District Commanders (m)  
All COs, MSOs  
All Activity Commanders  
All RECs

TABLE OF MMD TRANSACTIONS

CURRENT MMD	APPLYING FOR	MMD TRANSACTION TYPE	NEW 5-YEAR EXPIRATION DATE?
None	Any rating	Original	Yes
Any	Renewal	Renewal	Yes
Any	Renewal - continuity only	Renewal - continuity only	Yes
Any	Duplicate	Duplicate	No
Any	Temporary	Temporary	Per regulations
Ordinary seaman	Able seaman (any grade)	Upgrade	Yes
Wiper	Any QMED endorsement		
Any rating except tankerman	Tankerman		
Able Seaman	Any unlicensed rating in the deck department		
QMED	Any unlicensed rating in the engine department		
Any entry level or qualified rating except able seaman (AB)	Lifeboatman		
Any entry level or qualified rating	GMDSS Maintainer		
Any entry level or qualified rating	Person in charge of medical care		
Any entry level or qualified rating	Medical first aid provider		
AB-special with a trade restriction	AB-special, -limited, or -unlimited		
AB-special	AB-limited or -unlimited		
AB-limited	AB-unlimited		
Tankerman-assistant	Tankerman-engineer or -PIC		
Tankerman-engineer	Tankerman-PIC or -assistant		
Tankerman-PIC, -engineer, or -assistant with either a (DL) or (LG) qualification	The same tankerman rating with the other cargo qualification		
Qualified member of the engine department (QMED)	Additional QMED rating(s) or QMED - any rating		
		Endorsement	No