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NMC Policy Ltr No. 11-98
July 30, 1998

From: Commanding Officer, National Maritime Center
To: Distribution

Subj: MEDICAL STANDARDS FOR ENTRY LEVEL RATINGS

Ref: (a) Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Section 12.02-17
(b) Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular 2-98

1. Reference (a) requires that an applicant for entry level ratings valid for service on a seagoing vessel of 200 or more gross register tons (domestic tonnage) (GRT) "provide a document issued by a qualified medical practitioner attesting the applicant's medical fitness to perform the functions for which the document is issued." This policy letter provides guidance for acceptance of such documents. Reference (b) sets forth the medical fitness standards for an applicant for entry level ratings. These standards apply to all applicants for original issuance or renewal of any entry level rating.
2. An applicant for entry level ratings who will be employed only on non-seagoing vessels, i.e., vessels that do not go beyond the Boundary Line as defined in 46 CFR Part 7, is not required to provide medical certification. If such an applicant otherwise qualifies for issue of a merchant mariner's document (MMD), the MMD shall be endorsed with a limitation valid for service only on Great Lakes and Inland waters. A typical endorsement would read "Ordinary seaman, wiper, steward's department (GL & Inland waters only)."
3. An applicant for entry level ratings who will be employed on seagoing vessels over 200 GRT shall provide a medical report document that meets the following requirements and attests to his or her medical qualifications:
 - a. The medical report document may consist of form CG-719K, but its use is not required. If this form is used, only the portions of the form identifying the applicant must be completed. If letterhead stationary is used for the report, the applicant must be positively identified in the report by name, social security number, height, weight, color of hair and eyes, and any distinguishing characteristics;
 - b. The following shall be typed or written on either the form CG-719K or the letter: "The applicant has the strength, agility, and flexibility to perform the activities stated in paragraph 4 of Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular No. 2-98;"
 - c. The report of medical qualifications, form CG-719K or letter report, shall be signed by a licensed physician, licensed physician's assistant, or a licensed nurse practitioner; and,

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- d. An ordinary seaman who applies for a form issued in accordance with the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) endorsed as a rating forming part of a navigational watch must provide evidence that he/she meets the vision, color vision, and hearing requirements for a deck officer as set forth in reference (b). A wiper who applies for an STCW form endorsed as a rating forming part of an engineering watch must provide evidence that he/she meets the vision, color vision, and hearing requirements for an engineer officer as set forth in reference (b).
4. An applicant for entry level ratings to serve on seagoing vessels of 200 or more gross tons who does not meet the standards listed in reference (b) may be issued an MMD with appropriate limitations.
5. An applicant for entry level ratings for service on seagoing vessels of less than 200 GRT is not required to present a document attesting to his or her medical qualifications. This applicant should be advised of the employment limitations of such an endorsement. If he or she still does not want to provide a document of medical qualification, the endorsement on the MMD would read "Ordinary seaman, wiper, steward's department. May not serve on seagoing vessels of 200 or more GRT."

W. C. BENNETT
By direction

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