

U.S. Department
of Transportation

United States
Coast Guard



Commanding Officer
United States Coast Guard
National Maritime Center

4200 Wilson Blvd. Suite 630
Arlington, VA 22203-1804
Staff Symbol: NMC-4C
Phone: (202) 493-1022
FAX: (202) 493-1062

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NMC Policy Letter 13-02
July 17, 2002

From: Commanding Officer, USCG National Maritime Center
To: Distribution

Subj: ENDORSEMENTS ON A MERCHANT MARINERS DOCUMENT (MMD) ISSUED TO A
LICENSED OFFICER

Ref: (a) Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations, 10.401
(b) Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations, 12.02-11

1. PURPOSE. This policy letter provides guidance to the Regional Examination Centers about the proper endorsements to be placed on the MMDs issued to licensed officers.

2. ACTION.

- a. Commanding officers of units with a Regional Examination Center (REC) shall be guided by the information in this policy letter.
- b. Commanding officers of units with marine safety responsibilities should bring this policy letter to the attention of the maritime industry and to institutions within their area of responsibility that offer U. S. Coast Guard approved training.
- c. 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>.

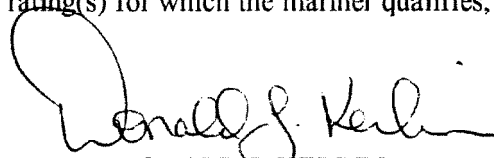
3. BACKGROUND.

- a. Reference (a) requires that an applicant for a master's or a mate's license with a tonnage limit above 200 gross register tons (GRT) or a license for 200 GRT or less with an ocean route must qualify as an able seaman. Qualification as an able seaman-unlimited or able seaman-limited is required for unlimited licenses. For other licenses, the mariner may qualify as an able seaman-unlimited, able seaman-limited, able seaman-special, or able seaman-special (offshore supply vessels).
- b. Reference (b) contains the regulatory requirements for the endorsements that should be placed on the MMD issued to a licensed deck officer. It states that the MMD should be endorsed as "Any unlicensed rating in the deck department, except able seaman." If the mariner qualifies as an able seaman, the endorsement should read "Any unlicensed rating in the deck department including able seaman." The regulation is silent as to the nature of the able seaman's qualification.
- c. For engineer officers, reference (b) states that the MMD issued to an engineer eligible to serve on an inspected vessel of over 2,000 horsepower shall be endorsed as "Any unlicensed rating in the engine department."

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4. DISCUSSION.

- a. To qualify as a licensed deck officer, a mariner must complete a prescribed amount of sea service, certain training, and certain assessments of practical skills. The requirements for qualification as a deck officer may not provide all of the experience required by the regulations to qualify as an able seaman - unlimited. A review of the requirements for the licenses listed below shows that the overall experience, testing, and assessment are such as to warrant an endorsement of "Any unlicensed rating in the deck department, including able seaman." That endorsement should be issued to a deck officer who holds a(an):
- (1) Unlimited license valid for service on ocean or near coastal waters;
 - (2) Master's license valid for service on vessels of not more than 1,600 GRT upon ocean or near coastal waters;
 - (3) MMD already endorsed as able seaman-unlimited; or any deck license and is qualified as able seaman-unlimited or able seaman-limited; or an
 - (4) MMD already endorsed as able seaman-limited and the license is valid for service on ocean or near coastal waters on vessels of more than 200 gross register tons.
- b. For all other deck licenses, do not use the endorsement "Any unlicensed rating in the deck department, including able seaman." For those officers, the endorsement should be "able seaman - X " and indicate the actual able seaman's endorsement for which the mariner qualifies. If the deck officer does not qualify for an able seaman's endorsement to an MMD, the MMD should be endorsed as "Any unlicensed rating in the deck department, excluding able seaman."
- c. If the deck officer only qualifies for an able seaman's endorsement limited to service on vessels not equipped with lifeboats, that limitation shall also be added to the MMD's endorsement.
- d. For all engineering licenses, use the guidance in reference (b) to determine the appropriate endorsements. If the engineer is not eligible for the endorsement "Any unlicensed rating in the engine department" the actual rating(s) for which the mariner qualifies, if any, should be entered.



DONALD J. KERLIN
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