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NMC Guidance Document 01-07

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

Subj: ADMINISTRATION OF EXAMINATIONS FOR CERTAIN DECK AND ENGINE  
LICENSES

Ref: (a) NMC Policy Letter 02-02  
(b) Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations (46 CFR), Section 10.205(i)  
(c) International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and  
Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended in 1995 (STCW Convention) and  
1997, and Seafarer's Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Code (STCW Code)  
(Collectively referred to as "STCW")

1. PURPOSE.

This document provides guidance to the Regional Examination Centers about the examinations administered for certain deck and engine licenses. While the guidance contained in this document may assist the industry, the public, the Coast Guard, and other Federal and State regulators in applying statutory and regulatory requirements, it is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements: nor is it by itself a rule. Thus it is not intended to, nor does it impose legally-binding requirements on any party, including the Coast Guard, other Federal agencies, the States, or the regulated community.

2. ACTION.

Commanding Officers of units with RECs shall be governed by the contents of this guidance document for the administration of merchant marine examinations. Commanding officers of units with marine safety responsibilities should bring this guidance document to the attention of the maritime industry with interests in marine personnel issues and to institutions that offer U. S. Coast Guard approved training. This guidance document 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.

The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended (STCW) require that candidates for deck officer licenses and engineering officer licenses qualify for a certificate at the "operational level" and

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and engineering officer licenses qualify for a certificate at the “operational level” and “management level.” On February 1, 2002, the former scheme of licensing examinations as part of the mariner qualifying process was changed to reflect the implementation of STCW. This change affected the following licenses:

DECK

- a) Third Mate Any Gross Registered Tons Oceans & Near Coastal
- b) Second Mate Any Gross Registered Tons Oceans & Near Coastal
- c) Chief Mate Any Gross Registered Tons Oceans & Near Coastal
- d) Master Any Gross Registered Tons Oceans & Near Coastal
- e) Mate Not More Than 500/1600 Gross Registered Tons Oceans & Near Coastal
- f) Master Not More Than 500/1600 Gross Registered Tons Oceans & Near Coastal
- g) Mate Offshore Supply Vessels Oceans & Near Coastal
- h) Chief Mate Offshore Supply Vessels Oceans & Near Coastal
- i) Master Offshore Supply Vessels Oceans & Near Coastal

ENGINE

- a) Third Assistant Engineer Unlimited
- b) Second Assistant Engineer Unlimited
- c) First Assistant Engineer Unlimited
- d) Chief Engineer Unlimited

In addition to the changes to the exam format, after February 1, 2002, a Third Mate Any Gross Tons, Chief Mate Any Gross Tons, Third Assistant Engineer Unlimited, and First Assistant Engineer Unlimited could, by completing the revised examinations, upgrade to the next license level without further examination. He or she need only acquire the required sea service. For example, a mariner who obtained a Third Mate Any Gross Tons license by completing the new examination will not be required to test when he or she upgrades to Second Mate Any Gross Tons.

4. DISCUSSION.

a. Reference (a) established a deadline of January 31, 2007, for mariners who had tested for their Third Mate Any Gross Tons, Chief Mate Any Gross Tons, Third Assistant Engineer Unlimited, and First Assistant Engineer Unlimited before February 1, 2002, to upgrade their licenses by testing under the old examination scheme. That deadline is now extended indefinitely. It is expected that upon completion of the current STCW rulemaking, a new deadline will be established.

b. Mariners raising the grade of these licenses will be required to test again if they tested for their current license before February 1, 2002, but will do so under the “old”

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examination scheme. For example, a mariner who obtained their Chief Mate license prior to February 1, 2002, will be required to complete the "old" license examination for Master, they will not be given the "new" combined exam for Chief Mate and Master.

c. All other provisions of National Maritime Center Policy Letter 02-02 remain in effect.



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