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NMC-4 Policy Ltr No. 1-98
January 9, 1998

From: Director, National Maritime Center
To: Distribution

Subj: APPROVAL OF COURSES OFFERED OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

Ref: (a) Title 46 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 10, Subpart C
(b) U.S.C.G. Marine Safety Manual, Volume III, Chapter 7, Section 7.O

1. The U. S. Coast Guard has received a number of inquiries concerning Coast Guard approval of courses offered by U.S. and foreign training institutions at sites outside the U.S. In addition, U.S. training institutions which offer Coast Guard approved courses have requested approval for training sites outside the U.S.
2. The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, as amended in 1995, requires that the signatory administrations approve or accept training courses and programs within their jurisdiction. Under the authority of reference (a), the Coast Guard's National Maritime Center (NMC) is responsible for approval and oversight of courses. To carry out this responsibility, personnel from the NMC, or the Regional Examination Centers, must make a preliminary visit to approve the training site and periodically revisit the site to ensure compliance by the course offeror with the terms and conditions of their approval. The Coast Guard currently lacks the resources and authority to conduct these visits outside of the United States.
3. Conducting courses that have been approved in accordance with the standards of one administration within the jurisdiction of another administration could easily lead to confusion regarding the applicable requirements. If each administration meets their course approval/acceptance responsibilities, there will be no need for any one administration to approve courses conducted outside that state's jurisdiction. The goals of the STCW will be best achieved by avoiding the difficulties inherent in concurrent approvals.
4. Pursuant to reference (b), the U.S. Coast Guard will not approve any course taught outside the territory of the United States, either by schools or institutions incorporated in a foreign country or by U.S. owned/operated schools or institutions. A U.S. owned or operated training institution desiring to offer training outside the United States, must obtain the approval of that country's administration.

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5. This policy does not apply to courses or programs approved or accepted by the Coast Guard where a portion of the course or program is taught aboard U.S. Flag vessels. Courses and other training with ship board components approved or accepted by the Coast Guard may be conducted aboard U.S. Flag vessels wherever the vessel is operated.

W. C. BENNETT

By direction

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