

7 FAM 790 VESSEL DOCUMENTATION

*(CT:CON-113; 10-04-2005)
(Office of Origin: CA/OCS/PRI)*

7 FAM 791 U. S. VESSELS

(CT:CON-113; 10-04-2005)

- a. U. S. vessels are vessels registered by U.S. citizens under the U.S. flag.
- b. U.S. vessels may be registered (documented) either by the Federal Government (USCG) or by state registration systems.
- c. Small recreational vessels are more often registered by the states (depending on their size) while the USCG usually documents commercial vessels.

7 FAM 792 FOREIGN VESSELS

(CT:CON-113; 10-04-2005)

Foreign vessels are vessels documented under a foreign flag regardless of ownership. A vessel owned by U.S. citizens is a “foreign vessel” if it is registered under the laws of a foreign country.

7 FAM 793 USCG NATIONAL VESSEL DOCUMENTATION CENTER

(CT:CON-113; 10-04-2005)

- a. Vessel documentation is a national form of registration. Vessel documentation:
 - (1) Provides conclusive evidence of nationality for international purposes;
 - (2) Provides for unhindered commerce between the states; and
 - (3) Admits vessels to certain restricted trades, such as coastwise trade and the fisheries.
- b. To be registered by the U.S. Government, a vessel must measure at least five net tons and, with the exception of certain oil spill response vessels, must be wholly owned by a citizen of the United States.

- c. The USCG National Vessel Documentation Center (NVDC) has an excellent website that includes a “Frequently Asked Questions” segment covering most questions that may be asked of you. It also includes:
 - (1) Vessel documentation forms;
 - (2) Documentation instructions;
 - (3) Fees; and
 - (4) Addresses, FAX and telephone information
- d. Basic requirements for documentation of a vessel by the USCG includes documents that demonstrate:
 - (1) Ownership of the vessel;
 - (2) U.S. citizenship; and
 - (3) Eligibility for the endorsement sought.
- e. Every vessel documented by the USCG must have on board a Certificate of Documentation (CG-1270) as evidence of its documentation under the laws of the United States. Individuals must send applications to NVDC.

Vessel documentation regulations may be obtained from the USCG on-line or by telephone at 304-371-2400; 800-799-8362 or by FAX: 304-271-2405.

7 FAM 794 REGISTRATION OF U.S. VESSELS (MERCHANT AND PLEASURE)

(CT:CON-113; 10-04-2005)

- a. U.S. citizens living abroad should submit a completed **Form CG-1258 Application for Initial Issue, Exchange, or Replacement of Certificate of Documentation; Re-documentation** directly to NVDC for processing.
- b. The NVDC issues **Form CG-1330 Certificates of Ownership** that indicate the owner of the vessel and whether there are outstanding encumbrances of record. Owners retain these for legal and financial purposes (mortgages) and it is not necessary to have a Certificate of Ownership on board.
- c. The NVDC issues **Form CG-1270 Certificates of Documentation** as evidence of a vessel’s documentation under the laws of the United States. Every U.S. vessel must have a Certificate of Documentation on board.

7 FAM 795 LOCATING THE REGISTERED OWNER OF A MERCHANT OR PLEASURE VESSEL

(CT:CON-113; 10-04-2005)

- a. If the vessel is documented, the USCG can provide Form CG-1332 an Abstract of Title, which will show the chain of title and all encumbrances recorded.
- b. Contact the USCG at the NVDC Address, Fax and Phone Listing on the Internet for assistance.

7 FAM 796 CONVENTIONS

(CT:CON-113; 10-04-2005)

- a. There are a number of international conventions that apply to shipping. Some are discussed here. One important feature of many of these conventions is the concept of port state control. For example, the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) regulation I.19 allows a port state to come aboard foreign flag vessels in its waters and ensure the vessel is in compliance with the terms of the convention. A port state may even prevent/retain departure of a vessel until the vessel is in compliance. A port state taking any enforcement actions should contact the nearest U.S. consular office promptly when under an international convention.
- b. The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea of 1974 prescribes certain minimum standards, safety equipment, radio installation, and general procedures for the ships of the United States and other countries that are parties to the Convention.
- c. Under SOLAS, you may extend certain international certificates that expire before the vessel reaches a port in the U.S. for five months or less. (For example, SOLAS certificates may be extended to allow the ship to complete its return voyage to the port where it is registered or is to be surveyed.) However, before taking such actions it may be advisable to contact USCG Compliance and Inspection (headquarters Office of Compliance (202-267-2978)).
- d. Amend certificates by adding the following to each certificate:

Extended on (mm/dd/yyyy) at the Port of (name of port) for the purpose of allowing the S.S. (name of vessel) to complete its return voyage to the U.S. but not to exceed five months from (mm/dd/yyyy) date of expiration of certificate.

Signature of Consular Officer
Typed name of Consular Officer
Title of Consular Officer
Seal
Date

- e. You may request the authorities of a foreign government, party to the Convention, to issue a new certificate.
- f. You may request the local government authority (if party to the Safety Convention) to inspect the vessel for compliance if the master of a U.S. flag vessel requests a Cargo Ship Safety Radiotelegraphy, Radiotelephony, or Cargo Ship Safety Equipment Certificate be issued. See 46 CFR Part 91.
- g. Cargo Ship Safety Construction Certificates, Form CG- 841 U.S. Coast Guard Certificates of Inspection and the International Oil Pollution Prevention (IOPP) Certificates **may not be extended**.

7 FAM 797 THROUGH 799 UNASSIGNED