



March 16, 2009

Consolidated Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC)

The Coast Guard published a final rule today consolidating the credentials issued to merchant mariners into a single credential and reducing the burden on mariners by limiting the number of times they need to appear in person to provide fingerprints and proof of identity. This final rule, which will become effective on April 15, 2009, addresses the comments received from the public in response to the Supplemental Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. A copy of the final rule is available on the Federal Register's website ([MMC Final Rule](#)) or <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/> and quick search MMC.

Key Features of the MMC Regulations

- The regulation consolidates the credentials issued to merchant mariners into a single credential.
- The regulation also streamlines the application process for the MMC by removing the requirement that all mariners appear at one of 17 Regional Exam Centers, so long as they have already enrolled for a TWIC at one of 149 TWIC Enrollment Centers.
- The rule works in tandem with the joint Final Rule published by the Coast Guard and the Transportation Security Administration on January 25, 2007, entitled "Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) Implementation in the Maritime Sector; Hazardous Materials Endorsement for a Commercial Driver's License."

Under the previous regulations, the Coast Guard issued up to four credentials to a mariner: a Merchant Mariner's Document (MMD), a Merchant Mariner's License (License), a Certificate of Registry (COR), and an International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) Endorsement. Each credential served a separate purpose, thus creating the possibility that a mariner might need all four. The Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 added a requirement for all mariners to obtain a transportation security card, implemented by the Department of Homeland Security as the TWIC. Without a regulatory change, a mariner could have been required to obtain up to five credentials, and to appear in person for duplicative applications.

The Coast Guard is streamlining its mariner regulations and consolidating the four separate Coast Guard-issued credentialing documents into one Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC). In addition to reducing the number of credentials a mariner will need to hold, this rule also eliminates redundant burdens and government processes.

Over the next few weeks, the Coast Guard will be issuing a number of information bulletins, which will provide details on how the new regulations will be implemented and the changes mariners can expect to see in the credential application process and the actual credentials.

Sincerely,
David C. Stalfort
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard