

The Captain's Corner

As you know, the Mariner Licensing and Documentation program is facing tough challenges. Mariners are complaining about lengthy delays in receiving their credentials, poor customer service, and inconsistencies regarding policy. One of the main reasons mariners are experiencing delays is the fact that the RECs and the NMC spend a large amount of time obtaining information missing from the mariner's application submission. Many mariners submit applications that are not complete – not ready for the evaluation to begin.

To help reduce the percentage of incomplete applications from entering the evaluation stage of our process, we're implementing a new procedure that shall be used at all RECs. Details on the new procedure were sent to each REC last week and were discussed at the Thursday REC conference call. This information was also sent to each of the Sector Commanders and Prevention Department Chiefs.

Consistent application of this new procedure is essential. Therefore, I ask your assistance in ensuring that the entire REC staff is aware of the new directive and that they begin implementing this new procedure immediately. As the NMC begins to receive "ready for evaluation" applications from the RECs, the inventory of active applications will be reduced because we won't be spending time waiting for missing information. This will result in faster processing of credentials.

NMC-1 will continue to discuss the use of this procedure at future conference calls to answer any questions or provide clarification. REC staff can also contact LCDR Mike Washburn at (304) 724-9546 or CDR Craig Swirbliss at (304) 724-9560.

The Wave Archive

There were technical difficulties with the link to The Wave Archive last week. We are working with the webmaster to remedy these issues as soon as possible. *CLN*

Reposting NMC-1 Position

The NMC-1 Supervisory Program Analyst GS 13/14 position, originally posted with a closing date of August 10th, is scheduled to be *re-posted* this week. CG-121 advertised the position with an incorrect series number, which indicates the area of specialty. Because of this administrative change, all those who originally applied should have received an email indicating the need to reapply under the new announcement. Again, previous applications will not be considered so **please be sure to reapply!**

Staffing Updates

NMC-1 Supervisory Program Analyst
GS 13/14

This position is scheduled to be RE-POSTED effective this week.

NMC-5 Legal Instruments Examiner (PQE)
GS 8/9, Closing: August 15th

NMC-5 Legal Instruments Examiner (PQE)
GS 8, Closing: August 23rd

See USA Jobs <http://www.usajobs.gov/>
Search: Homeland Security, US Coast Guard

NMC staffing 58 % of full strength

Questions on restructuring and implementation may be sent to
Christina.L.Nohre@uscg.mil.

**We encourage questions from all
NMC/REC Employees!**

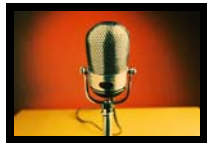
Building Updates

This week's building update comes direct to you from GSA. "Work continues with framing interior walls on the 3rd floor and mounting interior stairs near the main entrance. Preparations for exterior lighting throughout the site are in progress and the framing for the covered parking area is also underway." If you would like to see previous GSA updates on the R&C project, please visit: <http://www.gsa-projects.com/ProjectDetails.aspx?id=14>



Mariner Checklist Accuracy

We've heard many concerns that posted mariner checklists contain inaccurate or outdated information, which is causing much frustration at the counter. In response, Mission Management System (MMS) has begun reviewing and correcting inconsistencies. These checklists are in final review and are expected to be approved and released by the end of August. Industry websites also try to post information to assist the mariner; unfortunately, we have no way of automatically updating these external sites when new information is posted. If a mariner has accessed inaccurate information (from NMC/Coast Guard/Industry/etc.), please note where it came from so we can follow-up and avoid future misunderstandings. Again, many thanks to all who reported these errors!



COMMENTS FROM THE RECS

Trust Building Steps

"Many people in the RECs are either

- a) losing their jobs, or
- b) competing for an REC job, going to NMC for a job or to another employer.

I can see their reluctance to jump in "feet first". Management says there is no retribution, etc. for their feedback but that trust has to be earned from management. Perhaps taking small steps is the way to go, having direct exchange on what are the big problems RECs and the NMC are having in our day to day battles to service the customer. Not so much as, how do we "fix" things, but asking ourselves "what ails us"? Then, we can move forward from there. We have to remember, NMC WV is a "new" creation and the field is still trying to absorb that it is really happening."

"Find a good book that focuses on corporate change and how the organization (the USCG) faces this change in a dynamic work environment such as ours. Then purchase the book for everyone, have them read it, and then apply the prescription to our ailments. This might make people more inclined to share their ideas/feelings and get the ball rolling. Brainstorming. . . I am not saying he has the cure all. I am just saying it seemed to be beneficial, and a big part of his philosophy is developing and maintaining "trust" between management and workers, and I would say we have a less than an ideal level of trust in our organizational structures (REC/NMC)."

Small Group Strengths

"It might be better to select a small handful of SIPs (from time to time) to assist with specific processes/projects and hold separate conference calls for that specific purpose. You could use different SIPs at different times so all may contribute. NMC adds new personnel each week/month who have very little or no REC experience, yet very experienced managers in the field remain untapped, for the most part."

Transition Plan

NMC-1 is developing a comprehensive transition guide to help facilitate smooth, coordinated REC transitions. Using REC Baltimore as a prototype, NMC-1 will capture lessons learned and create a process of continuous improvement to be implemented throughout the 2 year cycle of consolidation. The standard transition guide is scheduled for release to all RECs in mid-September. Your feedback and comments are needed so please send them to Commander Swirbliss at Craig.S.Swirbliss@uscg.mil.

Process Improvement

Recently the NMC-1 Quality Assurance (QA) team analyzed workflow within the NMC-5 Professional Qualifications Evaluation Branch (PQEB) to identify bottlenecks. Through the combination of analyzing MMLD data, physically tracking applications, and interviewing evaluators, QA and the PQEB Branch Chief identified the following major process changes:

1. Wait until the application clears security – Applications were sent to the PQEB before they had cleared the Safety and Security Branch (SSEB). Since applications must clear SSEB before they are submitted for PQEB government review, this process led to applications being evaluated in the PQEB and “stacking up” on evaluator’s desks before they could be processed through to the Government reviewers.
2. Application assignment process – Applications were queued in a common area which made it difficult to manage workflow through the system. Now applications are assigned daily at rates which can be adjusted based on throughput. Additionally, time is allotted for the evaluators to work “awaiting information” applications.
3. Eliminate several levels of review – Applications were initially evaluated, forwarded to a Lead Evaluator for review, forwarded to a government reviewer for further review, forwarded to the Branch Chief for final review, and printed for issuance. New process includes: Applications are initially evaluated, forwarded to the Government reviewer, and then printed for issuance. The Branch Chief continues to audit a sample of the credentials mailed out. Each credential is now reviewed twice with a chance of an audit before being issued. This significant reduction in number of reviews significantly improved the overall cycle time for each credential and contributed to an overall increase in throughput.

Additionally, we’ve implemented several other smaller process changes that should streamline workflow and shorten the cycle time. Although it is too early to determine the long term effectiveness of these process changes, we have already seen some benefits. Now, when applications are received by PQEB evaluators, they can fully concentrate on the professional qualifications evaluation and quickly forward the application to the Government reviewer. The number of applications in process (WIP) at NMC has been reduced significantly. In the month since we initiated the above mentioned process changes, WIP was reduced by 222 applications (13.6% improvement) while MMD WIP was reduced by 365 applications (19.1% improvement).

CDR Craig Swirbliss, NMC-1 Division Chief

Standard Process Terminology:

Throughput – Number of applications that pass through the evaluation process in a given period of time.

Workflow – Steps that an application takes through the evaluation process.

Work in Process (WIP) – Any application initiated in MMLD that has not been completed (credential(s) issued or denied).