



16721
NMC Policy Letter 6-00
October 16, 2000

From: Commanding Officer, USCG National Maritime Center
To: Distribution

Subj: CLARIFICATION OF NAVIGATION AND VESSEL INSPECTION CIRCULAR (NVIC) 7-00
ON THE APPLICATION OF STCW ON VESSELS LESS THAN 200 GRT.

1. Maritime industry has recently raised an issue requiring clarification of NVIC 7-00. In addition, I have noted other areas which I believe require better explanation within the NVIC. Acknowledging that we have the most complex maritime industry in the world and an associated licensing and documentation structure, it is not inconceivable that we might have perhaps inadequately addressed all of the practical requirements of implementing STCW in the field. The NMC is working with Commandant (G-MSO) to develop a comprehensive change to NVIC 7-00. However, because that process may take some time to complete, I wanted to provide immediate clarification of at least the one issue raised by industry to eliminate undue concern regarding intent and impact of the NVIC. The principle purpose of the NVIC was to guide the OCMI's and industry in applying the appropriate standards for a U.S. licensed mariner to operate on international voyages.

2. The following clarifying information should be considered when interpreting the NVIC:

a. The NVIC provides general principles to be applied to mariners on vessels less than 200 GRT, both for domestic and foreign voyages/operations.

b. The intent of paragraph 6.e.(1) is to ensure that mariners routinely operating on foreign voyages hold the license and STCW endorsement appropriate to the voyage. A U.S. near-coastal license is valid for international voyages as long as the mariner holds the appropriate STCW endorsement, and under the condition that such voyage is also considered near-coastal as defined by the affected foreign port state(s) and the U.S. mariner qualification standards are acceptable to the port state(s). However, the NVIC also intended to reinforce the U.S. philosophy, coincidentally expressed in STCW Section B-1/3.3, that ships engaged on near-coastal voyages were never expected to extend such voyages world-wide, under the excuse that they remained within the limits of designated near-coastal waters. Rather, our near-coastal licenses are intended to be valid for voyages to nearby neighboring countries, and for regular operation within the near-coastal waters of a distant country's jurisdiction as acceptable to that country.

c. Likewise, paragraph 6.e.(3)(b) provides the OCMI guidance on the appropriate criteria to consider before issuing an STCW endorsement to a mariner who only occasionally operates on foreign voyages. The intent is to ensure the mariner is qualified for the intended route and service. The paragraph's reference to an Oceans license endorsement was not intended to be prescriptive. OCMI's should determine if an Oceans or Near-coastal license is appropriate for the intended voyage.

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M. S. BOOTHE

Dist: All District Commanders (m)
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