



Commanding Officer
United States Coast Guard
National Maritime Center

4200 Wilson Blvd. Suite 510
Arlington, VA 22203-1804
Staff Symbol: NMC-4
Phone: (703) 235-0018
FAX: (703) 235-1062

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From: Commanding Officer, National Maritime Center
To: Distribution

Subj: APPROVAL OF SURVIVAL CRAFT AND LIFEBOAT TRAINING COURSES

1. Regulation VI/2 of the Annex to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended (STCW), and Section A-VI/2 of the Seafarers' Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Code, set forth the minimum requirements for issuance of certificates of proficiency in survival craft. Candidates must:
 - a. be 18 years old;
 - b. have either 12 months of approved sea service on vessels of over 500 Gross Registered Tons (GRT); or have attended an approved training program and have approved seagoing service of not less than six months on vessels of over 500 Gross Registered Tons (GRT); and,
 - c. meet the *standards of competence* listed in section A-VI/2, paragraphs 1 through 4 of the STCW Code by successfully completing a written and practical demonstration (including performing the assessments required).
2. All seafarers beginning training or sea service on or after August 1, 1998, and seeking an original lifeboatman endorsement for service beyond the boundary line, must receive approved training in proficiency in survival craft and demonstrate competency in accordance with Table A-VI/2. Section A-VI/2, paragraph 4 of the STCW Code requires seafarers to provide evidence of achieving the required standard of competence within the five-year period prior to the date of a U.S. license or Merchant Mariner's document on which an STCW certificate is issued.
3. Schools wishing to receive Coast Guard approval for courses constructed to satisfy the requirements of the STCW Code Section A-VI/2 and Tables A-VI/2 for certification as proficient in survival craft should follow the recommendations of the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Model Course 1.23 as to course content. This IMO Model Course is thirty hours long
4. Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), 12.10-3 sets out the general requirements for U.S. certification as a lifeboatman. One of the ways to qualify for the certificate as lifeboatman is to successfully complete a training course approved by the National Maritime Center (NMC). The course must include at least thirty hours of actual lifeboat training.
5. A course of thirty hours in length which includes the topics listed in IMO Model Course 1.23 will satisfy both the U.S. and international training requirements for the issuance of a certificate as proficient in survival craft and the U.S. endorsement as lifeboatman. It will not be necessary to repeat the Use of Survival Equipment (3 hours) or First Aid (.75 hours) if these topics and their related competencies were successfully demonstrated in the previous five years. Where a school or training organization asserts subject matter included in the IMO model course is inappropriate for a class of vessels, they shall explain why the subject should not be included in the course.

6. Reductions in course length below 30 hours will not be permitted. Non-essential or duplicated topics may be deleted from proposed courses and the time saved allocated to other subjects.
7. Students in a course to satisfy either U.S. or international training requirements for survival craft must exercise and be qualified through practical demonstration on actual lifeboats. The use of models for qualifying through practical demonstration will no longer be permitted in an approved course.
8. Individuals wishing to conduct assessments of the practical demonstrations required by section A-VI/2 paragraphs 1 through 4 of the STCW Code must be Coast Guard approved Designated Examiners (DE). The Coast Guard will not approve individuals otherwise qualified to be DEs under the guidance Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular No. 6-97 unless they include in their request, the performance measures and standards necessary to judge the practical demonstrations of skills and ability. Performance measures are the actions a candidate takes in proper sequence to perform a required task. Performance standards are the times allotted to complete tasks, accuracy, or some other benchmark used to judge the successful completion of the task.
9. Anyone having questions may contact Mr. John Bobb of my staff at (703) 235-8457.

W. C. BENNETT

By direction

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