

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
REGARDING
NEW STCW POLICY LETTERS 12-06 and 12-07**

1. Q: What new endorsements are available because of these policy letters?

A: The new STCW endorsements are Able Seafarer – Deck (AS-D), Able Seafarer – Engine (AS-E), Vessel Personnel with Designated Security Duties (VPDSD), and Security Awareness (SA). And a mariner who has Tankerman-PIC (Barge) will now be eligible for an STCW endorsement consistent with the authority of the domestic endorsement. Also, verbiage of STCW Tankerman endorsements will be reworded to more closely align with STCW.

2. Q: Am I required to take Basic Safety Training (BST) to get the new endorsements?

A: BST is not required for an STCW endorsement for security awareness or VPDSD. For all other STCW endorsements, currently valid BST is required.

3. Q: I already have Vessel Security Officer (VSO). Do I need to get these endorsements added to my credential?

A: If you already hold VSO, you are qualified for VPDSD and SA. On your next credential transaction those endorsements will be added to your credential if you apply for them. You can submit an application now to have them added to your credential. If that is your only transaction on that application, there will be no charge and you will receive a single page endorsement to add to your credential.

4. Q: Who needs the new security endorsements, and when do they have to have them?

A: The 2010 amendments to the STCW require all mariners serving on a vessel to which the STCW applies to have endorsements for security awareness, and all persons assigned specific security duties to have the VPDSD endorsement. The 2010 STCW amendments entered into force on January 1, 2012. While the United States has yet to enact regulations requiring mariners to comply with the 2010 STCW amendments, they are in effect internationally and difficulties such as vessel detention may be encountered if mariners on foreign voyages to which STCW applies do not have the new endorsements.

5. Q: Do I have to take a course to get one of the new security endorsements?

A: Not necessarily. For VPDSD, mariners could take a course or provide documentation attesting to seagoing service with designated security duties OR performance of security functions equivalent to designated security duties for 6 months in the preceding 3 years. See policy letter 12-06 for more details.

6. Q: I recently took a course called Vessel Personnel with Specific Security Duties. Can I get the new endorsements because I took that course?

A: Yes, provided that the course was approved by Det Norske Veritas (DNV) under the voluntary program operated by Maritime Administration (MARAD). The course approvals for DNV and MARAD courses for VPSSD are valid. A mariner will be issued an endorsement for VPDSD and SA upon submission of an application and course completion certificate from a course that was approved under the MARAD program.

7. Q: I already have RFPNW. Am I qualified for an endorsement as AS-D?

A: Maybe. The AS-D is considered a higher endorsement than the RFPNW and by itself RFPNW will not qualify you for an AS-D endorsement. If you do not hold an endorsement as Able Seaman, you must show at least 12 months of service as RFPNW. If you hold an endorsement as Able Seaman-Unlimited or Able Seaman-Limited, you can qualify for AS-D without showing sea service. If you hold an endorsement as Able Seaman-Special, you must show evidence of at least 6 months of service and if you hold Able Seaman-OSV, Able Seaman-Sail or Able Seaman-Fishing industry, you must show evidence of at least 12 months of service. See policy letter 12-07 for more details.

8. Q: I already have RFPEW. Am I qualified for an endorsement as AS-E?

A: Maybe. The AS-E is considered a higher endorsement than the RFPEW and by itself RFPEW will not qualify you for an AS-E endorsement. If you do not hold an endorsement as QMED, you must show at least 12 months of service as RFPEW. If you hold a QMED endorsement as Engineman or Deck Engine Mechanic, you can qualify for AS-E without showing sea service. If you hold any other QMED endorsement you must show evidence of at least 6 months of service. See policy letter 12-07 for more details.

9. Q: Do I need to hold RFPNW to get an AS-D?

A: No.

10. Q: Do I need to hold RFPEW to get an AS-E?

A: No.

11. Q: I have an STCW endorsement as [*OICNW/OICEW/Chief Mate/Master/Chief Engineer/Second Engineering Officer*] and just submitted it for renewal. Will you automatically add the AS-D or AS-E endorsement or do I need to amend my application?

A: We will add the AS-D or AS-E endorsement without you having to amend your application. We will automatically review any applications currently in process (in any process state including Awaiting Information and Approved to Test) for qualification as AS-D or AS-E and add these endorsements if you are qualified to renew your existing endorsement.

12. Q: Will there be any limitations or restrictions placed on my credential as a result of these policy letters?

A: All limitations currently on your STCW endorsements will be retained, such as “Not valid for vessels equipped with ARPA.”, unless you meet the current requirement. The new policies also provide for a limitation with regard to Electronic Chart Display Information Systems (ECDIS). Effective immediately for any applications in process (in any process state including Awaiting Information and Approved to Test) for endorsements as chief mate, master, or OICNW will have a limitation added to their endorsement stating they are not qualified to work on a vessels equipped with ECDIS after December 31, 2016 unless they can show successful completion of a Coast Guard approved or accepted ECDIS course.

13. Q: I want to apply for an STCW endorsement for service on tank vessels. How will these policies affect me?

A: Within this policy, we have provided for mariners who hold an endorsement for Tankerman-PIC (Barge) to qualify for an STCW endorsement for tank vessel service. A mariner who holds or qualifies for an endorsement as Tankerman-PIC (Barge) will qualify for an STCW endorsement for advanced tanker operations with a limitation to vessels that are not self-propelled. There are no other changes to the qualification requirements for tank vessel endorsement resulting from these policies, however the wording of the endorsements have changed. All applications for STCW tank vessel endorsements in process will be issued with the new wording effective immediately.

14. Q: I currently have a domestic tankerman endorsement. Will I automatically receive an STCW tankerman endorsement when I apply?

A: Those applications in process will automatically be evaluated for STCW tank vessel endorsements and if you have a current, valid qualification in BST you will be issued the STCW tank vessel endorsement.

15. Q: Will the requirements for any of the endorsements discussed in these policy letters change when the STCW Final Rule is published?

A: Federal law prohibits the Coast Guard from discussing the contents of proposed rulemakings. The policy letters may be cancelled or revised upon publication of the STCW Final Rule. In the event the requirements will change, it is likely that reasonable notice and a transition period will be provided.