U.S. Department of Homeland Security

United States Coast Guard

Commanding Officer
United States Coast Guard
National Maritime Center

100 Forbes Drive
Martinsburg, WV 25404
Phn: (304) 433-3400
Fax: (304) 433-3409
E-mail: iasknmc@uscg.mil

February 12, 2009

Important information for Mariners about the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) and the April 15th, 2009 Deadline

The implementation of the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) has been phased in over the last several years. This bulletin provides some important information for mariners, particularly those that are new to the maritime industry. The April 15, 2009 deadline is fast approaching and mariners are reminded of the requirements in Title 46 of the Code of Federal Regulations:

- If you hold a merchant mariner credential you are required to obtain a TWIC by April 15, 2009.

- If you do not currently hold a merchant mariner credential but plan to in the future, you will be required to hold a valid TWIC in order to hold a valid Merchant Mariner Credential on or after April 15, 2009.

- The new hire provision of the TWIC regulations only apply to access to a regulated facility. It does not change the requirement for all mariners holding a Coast Guard issued merchant mariner credential to hold a valid TWIC by April 15, 2009.

Many in the maritime community are also aware that there is a proposed regulation that consolidates the current merchant mariner credentials and modifies the application process for merchant mariners. The proposed regulation requires that the Coast Guard use data from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) in order to determine if a mariner applicant holds a valid TWIC.   If the final regulations adopt the provisions included in the Notice of Proposed Rule Making mariners will need to be identified as a 'Merchant Mariner' in the TWIC system. It is important to remember the following information.

- **Identify yourself as a 'Merchant Mariner"** To avoid delays in processing your future Merchant Mariner Credential Applications (whether originals, upgrades, renewals or endorsements) it is critical that you identify yourself as a merchant mariner by selecting *'Merchant Mariner'* as your occupation when you apply for your TWIC.

- **TWIC Enrollment** In March 2009 TSA will be adding a radio button to their TWIC kiosks that will enable you to simply check the 'Merchant Mariner' box indicating that you are currently, or are contemplating becoming a merchant mariner any time in the next 5 years.

- **TSA Help Desk** For mariners that have already received their TWIC and did not "self identify" Merchant Mariner as their occupation the Coast Guard is working with TSA to automatically change your occupation field. The Coast Guard anticipates that this will cover the vast majority of mariners. However, there may be instances that there will not be matching data for every mariner due to variances in the data contained in either

system, such as variations in a mariner's name between the TWIC application and the merchant mariner credential application. Therefore, TSA is establishing a help desk for mariners to contact to change their occupation field. This should only impact a small percentage of mariners and only when applying for their next Coast Guard issued credential.. At that point, if the Coast Guard does not have matching data from TSA regarding a valid TWIC mariners will be asked to call the TSA help desk.

- **Accurate Data on the TWIC and Merchant Mariner Credential Applications**
  Mariners will need to ensure that the biographical information that they supply to TSA during the TWIC application process is the same information included on the Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Application. This will be important as the Coast Guard will be comparing data from TSA to determine if mariners hold a valid TWIC.

To begin the application process for a TWIC, visit TSA's website at:

http://www.tsa.gov/what_we_do/layers/twic/index.shtm

Sincerely,

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