



# UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

## MARINE SAFETY ADVISORY

### Inspections and Compliance Directorate

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Safety Advisory 01-17

### **Coast Guard Certificate of Documentation Services** **Be Aware of Third Party Service Providers**

The U.S. Coast Guard's National Vessel Documentation Center (NVDC), located in Falling Waters, West Virginia, is the only entity authorized to issue Certificates of Documentation (CODs), Form CG-1270, valid for a period of one year from date of issuance. This document is required for vessels engaged in Commercial trade and is optional for vessels five net tons and over engaged in recreational use/activities.

The NVDC is aware that there are commercial entities that offer to manage the certification/renewal process on behalf of vessel owners for a fee. **The Coast Guard does not endorse any of these companies, and the companies do not operate on behalf of the Coast Guard in any way.** Any fees charged beyond the \$26 renewal fee, to include other fees found in title 46 CFR 67.550, or other agreements offered by such companies are in no way associated with the NVDC certification process. In addition, these companies are not authorized to issue any form of documentation, including travel letters and/or permits that authorize operation of ANY vessel.

Persons interested in conducting business directly with NVDC should visit the official Coast Guard website at: <http://www.uscg.mil/nvdc/>. NOTE: The only legitimate Coast Guard website offering documentation uses a ".mil" domain name. Web domains using ".us," ".com," ".org" are not authorized.

The screenshot shows the official website for the National Vessel Documentation Center (NVDC). The header includes the United States Coast Guard logo and the text "United States Coast Guard U.S. Department of Homeland Security". Navigation links include "Contact Us", "Frequently Asked Questions", and a search bar. The main navigation menu lists: USCG Home, Overview, Our Organization, Our Missions, Doing Business, and Join Us. The left sidebar contains a list of links: NVDC Home, News, Determination Letters, Investigation Reports, Paperwork Status Inquiry, Case Processing Dates, Instructions and Forms, FAQ, Fee Schedule, Order Products Online (with sub-links for Renewal, Late Renewals, Abstracts of Title, and Certified Copy of COD), and Other Links. The main content area features a large photograph of the NVDC building and a "Mission Statement" section. The mission statement text reads: "The National Vessel Documentation Center facilitates maritime commerce and the availability of financing while protecting economic privileges of United States citizens through the enforcement of regulations, and provides a register of vessels available in time of war or emergency to defend and protect the United States of America." At the bottom of the page, it says "Thank you for visiting the NVDC."

Screen shot taken from the Coast Guard's NVDC website

To obtain official forms, visit the USCG NVDC website or contact NVDC at (800) 799-8362 or (304) 271-2400. Phone hours are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday; phones are not manned on Thursdays. Application packages and documents eligible for filing (in .pdf format) can be e-mailed to [nvdc.pdf.filing@uscg.mil](mailto:nvdc.pdf.filing@uscg.mil) or faxed to (304) 271-2405. COD Renewal requests (Form CG-1280) are accepted via [vdc-pf-nvdc renewals@uscg.mil](mailto:vdc-pf-nvdc renewals@uscg.mil) with credit card payment of \$26.00 via Form CG-7042.

The following products may be ordered online: Renewals (Form CG-1280), Late Renewals (Form CG-1280), Abstract of Title (Form CG-7043) and Certified Copy of COD (Form CG-7043) requests. From the main page, follow the "Order Products Online" link. The Fee Schedule can be found here: <http://www.uscg.mil/nvdc/instr/fee%20sch.pdf>

Users are encouraged to register to receive notices and updates via e-mail by utilizing NVDC's email subscription service. From the main page, follow the "Subscribe to NVDC Information" link. Please report any issues to the NVDC Webmaster. Customer complaints regarding false service providers can be made through the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) website at <http://www.ftc.gov/>.

This Safety Advisory is provided for informational purposes only and does not relieve any domestic or international safety, operational or material requirement. Developed by the Coast Guard's National Vessel Documentation Center and distributed by the Office of Investigations and Casualty Analysis, Washington DC. Questions may be sent to [nvdc.w.webmaster@uscg.mil](mailto:nvdc.w.webmaster@uscg.mil).