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CG-MMC Policy Letter
No. 01-25

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From: C. B. Mauro
Acting COMDT (CG-MMC)

To: National Maritime Center

Subj: PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATION FOR MARINERS RAISING THE GRADE OF OFFICER
ENDORSEMENTS FROM MASTER LESS THAN 500 OR 1,600 GROSS REGISTERED
TONS TO THIRD MATE OF UNLIMITED TONNAGE

1. PURPOSE. This policy allows mariners holding national officer endorsements as Master of Ocean or Near-Coastal Self-Propelled Vessels of Less Than 500 or 1,600 Gross Registered Tons (GRT) (Master 500/1600 GRT) to qualify for an endorsement as Third Mate of Ocean or Near-Coastal Self-Propelled Vessels of Unlimited Tonnage (Third Mate) without examination. The Coast Guard is publishing this policy in alignment with Administration priorities to ease burden on industry and provide ways to streamline mariner career progression.
2. ACTION. The Coast Guard will use this policy when evaluating applications for a national officer endorsement as Third Mate from mariners holding a national endorsement as Master 500/1600 GRT.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. [*Deck and Engineering Guide for the Administration of Merchant Marine Examinations*](#).
4. BACKGROUND.
 - a. As specified in [46 CFR 11.903\(a\)\(2\)](#), mariners holding an endorsement as Master 500/1600 GRT must pass a professional examination to qualify for an endorsement as Third Mate.
 - b. The required examination subjects for deck officer endorsements are specified in [46 CFR 11.910](#). The Third Mate examination includes some subjects that are not required on the examination for Master 500/1600. Accordingly, mariners holding an endorsement as Master 500/1600 GRT are required to complete an examination when seeking an endorsement for Third Mate.



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- c. However, the examination subjects for Mate of Ocean or Near-Coastal Self-Propelled Vessels of Less Than 500 or 1,600 Gross Registered Tons (Mate 500/1600 GRT) and for Third Mate are the same. Mariners holding an endorsement for Mate 500/1600 GRT do not have to complete an examination when seeking an endorsement for Third Mate.

5. DISCUSSION.

- a. The Coast Guard will allow mariners holding an endorsement for Master 500/1600 GRT Near Coastal or Oceans to qualify for Third Mate for the same route without further examination.
 - b. This policy change will lessen the burden on mariners without jeopardizing marine safety. While there are some differences in the subjects required for Master 500/1600 GRT and for Third Mate, mariners holding an endorsement as Master 500/1600 GRT will have been tested on similar or superior subjects in connection with their current or previously held endorsements. For example, the examination for Third Mate Oceans includes determining a vessel's latitude by meridian transit of the sun, while the examination for Master 500/1600 GRT Oceans includes determining the vessel's latitude by meridian transit of any celestial body.
 - c. Mariners who hold Master 500/1600 GRT Near-Coastal who are applying for Third Mate Oceans will be required to take the examination for an increase in scope of Master 500/1600 GRT from Near Coastal to Oceans. As is specified in the [*Deck and Engineering Guide for the Administration of Merchant Marine Examinations*](#), the required examination modules for an increase in scope from Near-Coastal to Oceans are *Q124 - Navigation General: Oceans* (70 questions / 70% minimum passing score) and *Q127 - Navigation Problems: Oceans* (15 questions / 80% minimum passing score).
 - d. Mariners who hold an endorsement as Master 500/1600 GRT and have been approved to test for Third Mate for the same route will not be required to complete the Third Mate examination. the National Maritime Center will issue the new endorsement with no action required from the applicant. Mariners who are approved for an increase in scope from Near Coastal to Oceans will have a revised approved to test letter issued with no action required from the applicant.
 - e. This policy will become effective immediately.
6. DISCLAIMER. This guidance is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is it itself a regulation. It is not intended to, nor does it impose legally binding requirements on any party. This guidance represents the Coast Guard's current thinking on this topic and may assist industry, mariners, the general public, and the Coast Guard, as well as other Federal and State regulators, in applying statutory and regulatory requirements. Alternative approaches for fulfilling this policy may be acceptable if the approach satisfies the requirements of the applicable statutes and regulations.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS.

- a. The development of this guidance and the general policies contained within it have been thoroughly reviewed by the originating office in conjunction with the Office of Standards Evaluation and Development, Commandant (CG-REG). Pursuant to Department of Homeland Security Directive 023-01, Rev.1, associated implementing instructions, and Environmental Planning COMDTINST 5090.1 (series), which guide the Coast Guard in complying with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321-4370f), we have determined that this action is categorically excluded (CE) from further environmental analysis under paragraphs #A3, #L5 and #L56 in Appendix A, of Table 1 of DHS Directive Instruction Manual 023-01, Rev. 1. Our rationale for selecting these CEs is as follows. “Promulgation of rules, issuance of rulings or interpretations, and the development and publication of policies ... and other guidance ... that implement, without substantive change, statutory or regulatory requirements” or “...that interpret or amend and existing regulation without changing its environmental effect “ are covered under DHS CE #A3. Promulgation of this policy and its associated guidance implements, without substantive change, the applicable Commandant Instruction or other federal agency regulations, procedures, manuals, and other guidance documents. Accordingly, Coast Guard CE #L5 applies. In addition, the policy letter includes elements that pertain to training, qualifying, licensing and disciplining maritime personnel. These latter aspects of the policy letter and its associated guidance are covered under Coast Guard CE #L56.
- b. This guidance will not have any of the following: significant cumulative impacts on the human environment; substantial controversy or substantial change to existing environmental conditions; or inconsistencies with any Federal, State, or local laws or administrative determinations relating to the environment. All future specific actions resulting from the general policies in this guidance must be individually evaluated for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), DHS and Coast Guard NEPA policy, and compliance with all other environmental mandates.

8. REQUEST FOR CHANGES. All requests for changes and questions regarding implementation of this policy and/or requests for changes should be directed to the Office of Merchant Mariner Credentialing (CG-MMC), at (202) 372-2357 or MMCPolicy@uscg.mil.

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