

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



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CG-MMC Policy Letter
No. 02-20
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From: 
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COMDT (CG-MMC)

To: National Maritime Center

Subj: WAIVER OF FEES ASSOCIATED WITH MERCHANT MARINER CREDENTIAL
APPLICATIONS FOR ACTIVE DUTY MEMBERS OF THE UNIFORMED
SERVICES

Ref: (a) National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2020, Section 3511, P.L. 116-92
(b) 46 U.S.C. 2110(g)
(c) DHS Delegation 0170.1(92)
(d) Executive Order 13860 on "Supporting the Transition of Active Duty Service
Members and Military Veterans into the Merchant Marine" signed March 4, 2019

1. PURPOSE. This policy letter provides guidance for the waiver of fees associated with an application for merchant mariner credentials for active duty members of the uniformed services.
2. ACTION. The Coast Guard will use this policy to evaluate whether the fees associated with an application for merchant mariner credentials may be waived.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. None.
4. BACKGROUND.
 - a. Section 3511(c)(1) of reference (a) directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to waive credentialing application fees for members of the uniformed services if a waiver is authorized and appropriate. Fee waivers are authorized by reference (b) when determined to be in the public interest. This action is delegated to the Coast Guard via reference (c).
 - b. Reference (d) notes the importance of a vibrant merchant marine to our national security. It also states that there is a shortage of qualified merchant mariners. It further states that "[a]ttracting additional trained and credentialed mariners, particularly from active duty service members and military veterans, will support United States national security requirements and provide meaningful, well-paying jobs to United States veterans."
 - c. Based on the foregoing, the Coast Guard finds that the fee waiver is both authorized and appropriate in accordance with reference (a).

5. DISCUSSION.

a. General.

- 1) This policy applies to the fees described in 46 CFR 10.219, including all fees for evaluation of an application for a merchant mariner credential, the administration of an examination required for a credential, and for the issuance of a merchant mariner credential. The Coast Guard will waive unpaid fees for applicants who are able to demonstrate eligibility as described in this policy letter.
- 2) This policy does not apply to fees that were paid prior to the publication of this policy letter. Mariners who have previously paid fees will not receive a refund even if their application is still pending.
- 3) Qualified applicants with pending applications that have paid some, but not all of the fees associated with their application may have unpaid fees waived. For example, an applicant who paid the evaluation fee when their application was submitted and has yet to pay examination and issuance fees may have those fees waived, but will not receive a refund of the evaluation fee. Applicants with pending applications that have not paid all of the fees associated with their application will need to provide evidence of eligibility for a waiver of the unpaid fees to the Coast Guard.

b. Eligibility. Members of the uniformed services, including reservists and members of the National Guard, are eligible for a waiver of fees associated with their application for a merchant mariner credential if they are currently on active duty at the time of application, or are a current member of the reserve forces and were previously on active duty. Applicants will need to provide evidence of their active duty status with their application as described in paragraph 5.c below. Applicants who are unable to provide acceptable evidence of eligibility will not have their fees waived

- 1) *Armed forces* means the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, and Coast Guard. (10 U.S.C. 101(a)(4)). This includes midshipmen and cadets at the four military academies.
- 2) *Uniformed services* means the armed forces; the commissioned corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service (10 U.S.C. 101(a)(5)).
- 3) *Active duty* has the same meaning, as applicable, as *active duty* as defined by 33 U.S.C. 3002(b)(1) for members of the commissioned corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and *active duty* as defined by 10 U.S.C. 101(d)(1) for members of the military. Active duty members of the uniformed services includes members of the reserves and National Guard who are serving on Title 10 U.S.C. orders and Coast Guard reserve serving on active duty in accordance with 14 U.S.C. 3713. And, for purposes of this guidance, *active duty* also applies to active duty commissioned corps members of the Public Health Service, including members of the Ready Reserves on active duty in accordance with 42 U.S.C. 204.

- 4) Applicants that are not eligible to have fees waived include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - i) Civilian mariners employed on vessels of the U.S. Navy Military Sealift Command, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, or NOAA;
 - ii) Civilian employees or contractors of any of the uniformed services; and
 - iii) Midshipmen at the United States Merchant Marine Academy and cadets at a state maritime academy administered under 46 CFR Part 310.
 - c. Documentation. In order to demonstrate eligibility for the waiver of fees discussed in this policy letter, applicants should provide with their application documents showing the applicant is a current member of the uniformed services and meets the active duty requirement contained in paragraph 5.b of this policy letter. Acceptable documents include:
 - 1) Active duty orders citing Titles 10 or 14 of the United States Code; or
 - 2) A letter from their command or personnel office on official letterhead that states the applicant is a current member of the uniformed services and indicating the dates the member served on active duty.
 - d. Appeals. Applicants who have been determined by the National Maritime Center (NMC) to be ineligible for a waiver of fees may appeal the determination as described in 46 CFR 1.03-40. The first step in this process is to request that the NMC reconsider the decision on eligibility for a waiver of fees. This request should be made within 30 days of the decision that a fee waiver will not be granted (46 CFR 1.03-15).
 - e. Effective Date. This policy letter is effective immediately.
6. DISTRIBUTION. No paper distribution will be made of this policy letter. An electronic version will be located at https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Prevention-Policy-CG-5P/National-Maritime-Center-NMC/policy_regulations/.
 7. DISCLAIMER. This guidance is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is 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 in consideration of references (a)-(c).
 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.