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NMC Policy Letter 1-2000

March 15, 2000

From: Commanding Officer, National Maritime Center

To: Distribution

Subj: SEA SERVICE CREDIT IN THE GULF OF MEXICO

Ref: (a) Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations (46 CFR) 10.103 (*Definition of terms*)
(b) 46 CFR 7.105 (*Boundary Line from Marquesas Keys, FL to Rio Grande, TX*)
(c) Title 46 United States Code (46 U.S.C.) 2101(3) (*General definitions*)
(d) 33 U.S.C. 151(b) (*High seas and inland waters demarcation lines, applicability of other statutes; limitation; positions*)
(e) 33 CFR 2.05-10 (*Territorial Sea Baseline definition*)

1. This policy letter provides guidance to Regional Exam Centers when evaluating applications for sea service credit where service is claimed for operation within the territorial seas and contiguous zone of the Gulf of Mexico.
2. Licensed officers on board U.S. flag vessels must demonstrate sea service experience in order to qualify for various grades of licenses. Such service must take place on certain routes (Inland Waters, Rivers, Near coastal, Oceans, Great Lakes, etc.) before a license is endorsed to authorize future service in the same or higher grade. Reference (a) defines these routes, and expressly defines the term "Oceans" in relation to the specific Boundary Lines set forth in reference (b). Additional information on Boundary Lines is provided in references (c) and (d).
3. For the Gulf of Mexico, the Boundary Line corresponds to the 12 mile line which marks the seaward limits of the contiguous zone. This is much further offshore than the Boundary Line on either the Atlantic or Pacific coasts. When evaluated for a raise in grade or an increase in scope, mariners sailing within 12 miles of the U.S. Gulf Coast are penalized, with respect to establishing sea service on Oceans waters, in comparison to many mariners serving on vessels operating in other geographic areas.
4. For the purposes of crediting sea service in the Gulf of Mexico for the issuance of merchant marine licenses and Merchant Mariner's Documents, the waters between the Territorial Sea Baseline defined in reference (e) and the Boundary Line, are considered Oceans. For all other purposes, the Boundary Line published in reference (b) applies.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Donald J. Kerlin".

DONALD J. KERLIN
Acting

Dist: All District Commanders (m)
All COs MSOs
All RECs

Commandant (G-MSO)
All Activity Commanders