

## Frequently Asked Questions: Safety and Suitability Evaluation

### 1. Will a Driving Under the Influence (DUI) conviction prevent the issuance of a credential?

Convictions involving dangerous drugs or alcohol while driving are discussed in [46 Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\) 10.213](#). There may be an assessment period, during which the Coast Guard will not process your application. This assessment period varies and is based on the conviction(s) and the time period of the conviction(s).

### 2. Will a felony or misdemeanor conviction prevent issuance of a credential?

Criminal Convictions are discussed in [46 CFR 10.211\(g\)](#). There may be an assessment period, during which the Coast Guard will not process your application. This assessment period varies and is based on the conviction(s) and the time period of the conviction(s).

### 3. Is further documentation needed if there are criminal convictions or driving convictions?

A statement must be included with the application describing the convictions, the state in which the conviction(s) occurred, approximate date(s), and the outcome(s). This statement must be signed and dated. Once this information has been provided to the National Maritime Center (NMC), it need not be disclosed on subsequent applications. However, there must be a signed and dated statement advising the NMC that no new convictions have occurred since the last application. If new convictions have occurred, then only those convictions must be disclosed. See [sample conviction statement](#).

### 4. What is an assessment period?

The assessment period is the time frame during which the Coast Guard will not process your application for a credential. The Coast Guard will use [46 CFR Table 10.211 \(g\)](#) and [46 CFR 10.213](#) to evaluate applicants who have a criminal and/or driving convictions. The stated assessment periods will not commence until an applicant is no longer incarcerated and may include periods of probation or parole.

## 5. Will a positive drug test prevent credential renewal? Will it cause loss of current credential?

Per [46 CFR 16.201\(c\)](#), positive drug test results will be reported to your local [Coast Guard Sector Senior Investigating Officer \(SIO\)](#). If a currently held merchant mariner credential (MMC) has expired, the applicant will be required to prove suitability and may result in an assessment period, after which he or she will have to reapply.

## 6. What is an Awaiting Information letter?

Receiving an Awaiting Information (AI) letter from the Safety and Suitability Evaluation (SSE) branch means that the evaluation of the application has ceased until the requested information is received at the NMC. The letter will state what is required. If there are questions regarding this letter, please contact the Customer Service Center (CSC) at 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

## 7. What documentation must be submitted if a mariner is ready to renew his or her credential and has gone through Administrative Clemency?

Administrative Clemency is a process handled by your local [Sector's SIO](#). The final decision rests with the Commandant, U. S. Coast Guard's Administrative Clemency Review Board (ACRB). If the Board grants Administrative Clemency, they will advise what information is needed and will forward your application to us for processing. Please contact the CSC at 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662) to complete the application process.

## 8. What documentation is needed to show "proof of suitability"?

Provide a letter to the Coast Guard indicating a desire to "prove suitability." In this letter explain the convictions and include the following:

- Provide proof of successfully completing a rehabilitation program. If a program was not attended or completed, explain why.
- Were Narcotics or Alcoholics Anonymous meetings attended? If so, provide a letter from the sponsor. The letter should include the sponsor's first name and a contact phone number. If meetings were not attended, then explain why.

- Three letters attesting to the applicant’s sobriety, reliability, and suitability to be a merchant mariner. These letters should be from someone who knows the applicant’s history of offenses well, attests to the change or changes the applicant has made to rehabilitate themselves from the offenses, and how long the person has demonstrated recovery from the offenses. They should be not be from family members.
- An explanation of the mariner’s current work status. If employed, have the employer write a letter stating the length of employment and, if possible, attesting to the sobriety and suitability of the applicant to be a merchant mariner.
- If applicable, describe the terms of probation. If probation is completed applicants should provide proof of this. If probation is still ongoing, applicants should send a letter from the Probation Officer reflecting the mariner’s compliance with the probation terms. Also, if possible, have the Officer attest to the applicant’s suitability to be a merchant mariner.
- Regulations addressing “proof of suitability” are found at [46 CFR 10.211 \(l\)](#). Applicants should include anything that helps the case.

**9. Will a charge of a crime (not convicted yet) affect an application that has been submitted for evaluation? If the applicant is a current credential holder, will the MMC need to be surrendered?**

Contact the Safety and Suitability branch via the CSC at 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662) to discuss any recent charges. The local Coast Guard Sector SIO will advise action needed for a current MMC.

**10. Why is additional ID required, such as a passport?**

Proof of citizenship may be required if the NMC does not receive the proper documentation from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).