

Frequently Asked Questions: Mid-Atlantic Maritime Academy

1. What has happened to Mid-Atlantic Maritime Academy (MAMA)? Will the Coast Guard take action against them?

MAMA has ceased to operate as a school. The school was sold to Maritime Institute, which is an independent entity and unaffiliated with the management at MAMA. In addition, two former employees of MAMA were indicted and are defendants in a federal criminal case in connection with the VA fraud that occurred as a result of course truncation.

2. Can Suspension & Revocation (S&R) action be taken against mariners who attended truncated courses?

S&R cannot be taken against mariners whose courses were truncated, as there is no regulation aimed at mariners requiring them to be aware of the length for which courses were approved. While the mariners were likely aware that their courses did not meet approval timeframes, it was incumbent on the school and not the mariners to ensure that the courses met approval criteria.

3. There is a mariner who attended truncated courses and who is believed to be unsafe or lack competence. Can this mariner be required to retrain instead of submitting an affidavit?

The National Maritime Center performed a MISLE data pull and matched available Marine Casualty (MC) Information against the MMC Reference Numbers of mariners who attended truncated courses. No increased risk to the marine environment due to truncation was noticed. Notwithstanding this data, all mariners who took truncated courses will be entered into a MISLE case. In the event a future MC can be linked to the truncated training, this can be taken into consideration when pursuing remedial action (to include retraining) for mariner(s) determined to be at fault.

In the meantime, only mariners whose employers can attest to the mariners' competence will be able to submit an affidavit in lieu of retesting or retraining. Employers should use their best judgment when deciding whether to provide a certification attesting to mariner competence. If a marine employer believes that a mariner in their employ is incompetent or poses a risk to the marine environment due to a lack of skill(s) covered in the truncated courses, the marine employer should not provide a certification. A mariner whose marine employer does not

provide a certification will have the option to retest or retrain. If a mariner is unable to pass an end of course test, complete retraining will be required.

4. Will all mariners be required to provide an affidavit and employer certification? What if the mariner does not submit an affidavit with employer certification?

Mariners who fail to submit an affidavit will have the option to retest or retake impacted courses to retain related endorsements. Mariners who fail to do so within an approved time will have any endorsement(s) associated with truncated course(s) invalidated.

5. Are marine employers required to sign off on a mariner's competence?

There is no requirement to sign off on a mariner's competence. The marine employer should have someone with the knowledge to judge the mariner's competence/skillset(s) associated with truncated courses decide whether to provide a marine employer certification.

6. A marine employer has a mariner with endorsements or courses that are not required for their position (e.g., the mariner is operating on a domestic vessel, but some or all of the mariner's impacted endorsements/truncated courses are STCW related). Can the marine employer still sign off on the mariner's competence?

So long as the marine employer believes that they can accurately judge the mariner's competence/skillset(s) associated with the impacted endorsement(s) the marine employer may certify.

7. If a mariner is in between jobs, what should that mariner do?

The mariner can still submit an affidavit and can obtain a certification as to their competence from their most recent marine employer. If the mariner cannot obtain a certification, the mariner can retest or retake the impacted courses to retain credit.

8. If a mariner took truncated courses at MAMA, but has not used those courses to obtain an endorsement, can the mariner still submit those courses to obtain an endorsement?

The mariner can retest or retake the impacted training if the course certificate is not currently expired. Expiration timeframes can be found in NVIC 03-14, Ch 1. Generally, courses used for domestic endorsements will be good for 1 year from the date of course completion and courses used for STCW endorsements will be good for 5 years from the date of course completion. Mariners with questions about the validity of their certificates should call the NMC contact

center at 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662) to confirm. Course certificates for truncated courses submitted to the NMC, but not used to obtain endorsement(s) will be removed from mariner(s) records and will not be accepted past initial expiration.

9. Should marine employers avoid hiring mariners who attended truncated courses?

At present, there is no known negative impact to maritime safety because of truncation. Marine employers should independently assess mariners' skills and abilities and should make employment decisions based on their own assessment.

10. How can a retest at Maritime Institute be arranged?

Maritime Institute should be contacted directly by the mariners to arrange for retesting. They have agreed to retest the mariners at no cost; however, travel will not be reimbursed.

11. Who can a mariner or marine employer reach out to with additional questions about what they need to do?

Mariners and marine employers with questions about truncation should contact the NMC Compliance Investigations Branch at (304) 433-3466 or via e-mail at MCFTF@uscg.mil.