

Maritime Training Provider Best Practices

Based on observations and questions received during the course and program approval processes, as well as the course oversight process, the National Maritime Center (NMC) offers the following:

Please direct all Course and Program-related communication to NMCourses@uscg.mil

Please direct all requests for both new and alternate sites, outside of a course submission, to NMCSiteApprovals@uscg.mil.

Please direct all Course Oversight-related communication to ComplianceAudits@uscg.mil.

We welcome and encourage you to send feedback and improvement suggestions regarding this document to NMCCourses@uscg.mil.

Date Added	Cover Letter
6/11/25	Clearly state the requirements the course is requested to satisfy.
6/11/25	Clearly state all course delivery and assessment methods requested.
Date Added	Alternate Delivery
7/18/25	Depending on the material and methods requested, Training Providers should expect class sizes to be limited when using live virtual instruction. We have observed instructors struggling to monitor and engage the same number of students in a virtual environment, as compared to in a classroom setting. Training Providers should review NVIC 03-14 enclosure (5), for discussion of instructor training for live delivery in the virtual environment. (From the bulletin Mariner Training Provider Course Delivery Methods .)
Date Added	Computer-based Training
7/18/25	Where Computer-based Training requires printing documentation that is used to authorize a student to complete examinations or assessments, it should differ significantly from the course completion certificate. There are recent examples where the student submitted that documentation as part of a credential application. This has the potential to initiate a fraud investigation, which will impact both the school and the mariner.

Date Added	Computer-based Training (continued)
7/18/25	When requesting remote instruction and/or examination, provide detailed plans to address hardware and software used, remote evaluation, student identity management and participation, testing integrity, material and reference availability, examination and/or assessment scheduling, instructional delivery process, schedule variations, student/instructor ratio(s), contingency plans for equipment/IT failures, etc. (From the bulletin Mariner Training Provider Course Delivery Methods.)
6/11/25	For Computer-based Training, include a non-expiring username, password, and a link to access the course for each Computer-based Training course submittal, whether an original or renewal.
6/11/25	Providers requesting Computer-based Training should also review NVIC 03-14 (Encl 5) for discussion regarding course navigation, interactivity, progress checks, etc.
6/11/25	Curriculum development and submission requirements for Computer-based Training are the same as for live instruction.
Date Added	Instructors
7/18/25	When requesting instructor approval, review and provide documentation of meeting the Coast Guard standards outlined in NVIC 03-14 . Many of the standards list “experience as” vice holding a credential endorsement—one of the more frequent issues observed is the Master 100 and 200 GRT courses. The Coast Guard standard is “experience” as a Master on vessels of at least 25 or 100 GRT respectively. Holding a Master 100 or 200 or even 500 GRT endorsement does not document experience as master. Where applicable, pay particular attention to modes of propulsion. For additional clarification, review the requirements to obtain a credential endorsement in 46 CFR parts 11,12 and/or 13.
7/18/25	Per 46 CFR 10.402/7, instructors are both school- and course-/program-dependent. Where an instructor was previously approved for a different course or for the same course at a different school, the training provider must submit original documentation meeting the regulatory and Coast Guard standards for approval.
7/18/25	If a training provider believes a proposed instructor’s experience is equivalent to or exceeds the Coast Guard standard, provide specific reasoning/justification along with documentation of the experience believed to meet or exceed the Coast Guard standard.

Date Added	Instructors (continued)
7/18/25	Submission of instructor résumés or curriculum vitae with extraneous information only slows the evaluation and approval process. This delays your request and other requests awaiting evaluation. Work with potential instructors to include only information relevant to the request.
7/18/25	Submit only those instructors the training provider believes will be used to instruct the course during the validity period of the course/program approval. The NMC frequently receives requests for 30 or more instructors and has received submittals for instructors who are deceased. This only slows the evaluation and approval process, which will delay your request, as well as other requests awaiting evaluation.
7/18/25	For course/program renewal requests, submit a list of those currently approved instructors who should be retained for the next approval and full documentation for any new instructors to be added. Please remove any previously approved instructors who are no longer instructing.
7/18/25	Depending on their experience, instructors may be approved to instruct portions of a curriculum.
7/18/25	It is the training provider's responsibility to ensure instructors deliver the curriculum as approved. The NMC has witnessed instructors modifying curriculum without approval, failing to not properly complete assessments, not following evaluation plans, etc. When asked, they often state they were unaware of their requirements. This speaks to a lack of communication/oversight between the training provider and instructor(s). At a minimum, this will result in an audit non-conformity. Several cases have required administrative actions against credential holders and/or suspension or withdrawal of course/program approvals.
Date Added	Facilities and Equipment
8/7/25	A complete site list is required for course submissions. If a site is not requested, it will not be added/renewed for that course
8/7/25	Identify the approved course(s) to be given at the requested location and the number of students being requested.
8/7/25	Include a description of the proposed space to include photographs of multiple views of both the interior and exterior space, a detailed pdf floor plan layout including table size(s), chair set-up and room measurements.
8/7/25	For military site requests, photos and a pdf layout are not required. However, the dimensions of the requested space and tables to be used are required.

Date Added	Facilities and Equipment (continued)
8/7/25	Proposed spaces are required to have a minimum of 24 square feet per student in the classroom setting.
8/7/25	Provide practical site details for pools, as well as fire fields and equipment details.
Date Added	Course Outline
6/11/25	All topics and sub-topics covered in the outline should also be covered in the Detailed Teaching Syllabus, Lesson Plan, and Instructor Notes.
Date Added	Course Schedule
6/11/25	Schedules, regardless of format, should contain the items in 46 CFR 10.402 and describe the days and times of curriculum delivery.
6/11/25	Submission of multiple alternate schedules is encouraged as needed.
6/11/25	Training days should not exceed 8 contact hours, including delivery of multiple courses on any given day.
6/11/25	Minor, “one-time” schedule deviations for weather, facilities, class size, etc., should be documented in the course convening record.
6/11/25	Repeated, consistent schedule deviations should be documented in a modification request and/or the record of change, depending on the significance.
6/11/25	The duration of instruction should be consistent throughout the curriculum.
Date Added	Detailed Teaching Syllabus
6/11/25	Learning objectives describe actions the student should be able to do after training when aboard a vessel. Unless strictly knowledge-based, this should not be to “discuss”, “describe”, “understand”, “explain”, or similar.
Date Added	Lesson Plan
6/11/25	A Main Element Learning Objective is the primary purpose or goal of a lesson, based on the topic/sub-topics within the lesson. Where the Detailed Teaching Syllabus requires no further breakdown, this may be the same as the Detailed Teaching Syllabus; however, when splitting a Detailed Teaching Syllabus topic into multiple lesson plans, it should reflect the objective of the specific lesson.

Date Added	Lesson Plan (continued)
6/11/25	Training outcomes are the specific knowledge and practical skills that students gain and display during the course, to demonstrate completion of the associated learning objective(s).
6/11/25	Training outcomes are the building block used within the course to achieve the learning objective(s) and should not repeat the Detailed Teaching Syllabus learning objective(s).
Date Added	Instructor Notes
6/11/25	Providers are accountable to ensure instructors follow the approved curriculum. Instructor Notes are key to ensuring instructors meet the training provider's expectations for course delivery.
6/11/25	If including Instructor Notes in the Lesson Plan, ensure all elements from both 46 CFR 10.402(b)(5) & (6) are included.
Date Added	Evaluations
7/18/25	Administering unapproved examinations, or examinations from previous approvals is not permitted. Making significant changes to or substituting a new examination without approval is not permitted. Minor corrections to an examination, such as re-wording a question, or correcting a confusing answer, must be documented in the record of change for the course/program (46 CFR 10.403). All other changes to examinations must be submitted to NMCCourses@uscg.mil for approval, prior to implementation. (From the bulletin Training Provider Audit Updates .)
7/18/25	If question banks are used to generate examinations, the methodology to ensure comprehensive topical coverage and to prevent duplicating questions must be addressed. (From the bulletin Mariner Training Provider Updates .)
7/18/25	Examinations should not contain questions regarding material not covered in the course. Examinations should be free of any questions that were used/exposed in the training content. (From the bulletin Mariner Training Provider Updates .)
6/11/25	Assessments of competency are not training. Instructors should not be coaching students. If an assessment is interrupted for remedial training or safety concerns, it should be repeated in accordance with the approved Evaluation Plan. Each student must successfully demonstrate the performance standards for each task. Review the Assessors Manual for Conducting Mariner Assessments included in NVIC 19-14 .

Date Added	Evaluations (continued)
6/11/25	If final written examinations, consisting of multiple modules, require multiple days to complete, they should be administered on consecutive days within the same business week. A defined maximum time frame for completion of retesting, if allowed, should be stated.
6/11/25	Provide in the submittal, all final examinations, quizzes, practice questions, exercises, end of lesson/chapter questions, etc., contained in the course to allow for evaluation.
6/11/25	Written examinations should be protected from compromise. It is not appropriate to allow students to use/have smartphones or any other similar electronic device(s) during written examinations.
6/11/25	Reference material available for use in written examinations should be described in the Evaluation Plan. Review the Coast Guard Examination Room Materials for guidance.
6/11/25	Courses delivered remotely or through Computer-based Training should state the length of time given to schedule/complete final written examinations and/or assessments. Given that examinations and assessments are completed following instruction for in-person training, this should be a reasonable time frame, i.e., within 30 days of completion.
Date Added	Course Certificates
7/18/25	Completion dates must reflect the actual date each student completed the course requirements. Where multiple courses are delivered in 1 week, do not date all certificates on Friday. When including the approval language on the certificate, it must be verbatim from the final course/program approval letter. (From the bulletin Training Provider Audit Updates .)
6/11/25	Training providers who issue electronic course completion certificates to students should do so in PDF Flat File format. This removes the layered content you can't see on screen, such as fillable fields. This will mitigate the potential for modification of the certificate and help prevent document corruption. Providing the certificate in this format will aid the student in submitting the document with their credential application. If unfamiliar with how to flatten a PDF file, we recommend an internet search for instructions.
Date Added	Commonly Observed Audit Issues
9/16/2025	Instructors conducting assessments need to ensure and record completion of all performance standards associated with each task. If the task has a time limit, the assessment should be timed. Tasks are to be individually assessed.

Date Added	Commonly Observed Audit Issues (continued)
7/18/25	The Course Oversight and Audit team has observed the integration of simulated fire into Basic Fire Fighting (BFF) course for assessment of competence. The Coast Guard has not approved simulation to replace the requirement for extinguishing live fire as part of the final assessment of competence (NVIC o8-14). (From the bulletin Training Provider Audit Updates .)
7/18/25	For Personal Survival Techniques (PST), the Course Oversight and Audit team has observed the in-water righting of a life raft assessment conducted in an improper manner by having the overturned raft held at the side of a pool, instructors assisting students in the water, and/or only having a portion of the students conduct the task. All students must be individually assessed for competence, without assistance. (From the bulletin Training Provider Audit Updates .)
7/18/25	The Course Oversight and Audit team has observed the integration of courses without prior approval from the Mariner Training and Assessment Division. Prior approval is required in all instances, to include combining a full course with revalidation and refresher courses. It may be possible to combine assessment activities for Basic Fire Fighting and Personal Survival Techniques/Personal Survival Craft; the course curriculum must be delivered as approved (46 CFR Part 10, Subpart D). All requests for modifications must be submitted to NMCCourses@uscg.mil for approval, prior to implementation. (From the bulletin Training Provider Audit Updates .)
Date Added	Renewal Requests
6/11/25	Review the entire curriculum and references to ensure all content is updated to the current regulations, policies, and industry standards.
6/11/25	Review the entire curriculum to ensure it is free from contradictions. For example, having lesson duration differences between the course schedule, Detailed Teaching Syllabus and Lesson Plan.
Date Added	Extension Requests
6/11/25	All extension requests should be sent to NMCCourses@uscg.mil . Include Course or Additional Info extension in the subject line and the Application Tracking Identification Number (ATID) in the body of the e-mail.
6/11/25	Requests for extension of course expiration(s) and Additional Info responses are separate, individual transactions and should be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the expiration/due date.

Date Added	Extension Requests (continued)
6/11/25	Extension requests are considered on a case-by-case basis. Timely submissions of renewal requests and comprehensive responses to Additional Info requests will not be the only determining factor for extension decisions. Larger programmatic discussions will be entertained at any time. For example, a request to shift upcoming expiration dates to spread the workload out.
6/11/25	Providers are responsible for ensuring enrolled students successfully complete all the course requirements prior to the course expiration date. All renewal requests need to be submitted at least 90 days prior to expiration. The increase in Computer-based Training has highlighted this issue. This will generally not be considered a valid reason for granting a course extension after the fact.
Date Added	Communication
6/11/25	When communicating with the NMC regarding an active course/program request, be sure to include the ATID in your correspondence.
Date Added	Additional Resources
6/11/25	The National Maritime Center Course Approval Submittal Guide provides additional clarity regarding course submissions.