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CG-543 Policy Letter
No. 11-07 JUN 17 2011

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "E. P. Christensen", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

From: CAPT E. P. CHRISTENSEN
COMDT (CG-543)

To: National Maritime Center

Subj: QUALIFICATION VIA "THE HAWSEPIPE" FOR STCW ENDORSEMENTS AS
OFFICER IN CHARGE OF A NAVIGATIONAL WATCH ON SHIPS OF 200
GRT/500 GT OR MORE

Ref: (a) International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping
for Seafarers, 1978, as amended (STCW) and its adopted Code (STCW Code)
(b) 46 CFR 11.903(c)
(c) Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular (NVIC) 08-02, *Guidelines for Assessing
Merchant Mariners Through Demonstration of Proficiency as Officers in Charge of a
Navigational Watch on Ships of 500 Gross Tonnage or More as Measured Under the
International Tonnage Convention (ITC)*.

1. Purpose. Establish and provide national guidance in the appropriate qualifications for STCW endorsements as officer in charge of a navigational watch on ships of 200 GRT / 500 GT or more (OICNW) under section A-II/1 of reference (a). This guidance applies only to applicants who are qualifying for OICNW through what is referred to as "the hawsepipe" — qualifying for an officer endorsement (license) through in-service experience rather than completing a comprehensive, Coast Guard approved program such as that offered at a maritime academy.
2. Directives Affected. This policy letter cancels National Maritime Center (NMC) policy letters 01-02 and 16-02.
3. Discussion.
 - a. APPLICABILITY. This guidance applies to candidates for STCW endorsement as OICNW who hold or are also applying for the following officer endorsements and are not participating in a Coast Guard approved training program:

- (1) Second mate ocean/near coastal any gross tons;
- (2) Third mate ocean/near coastal any gross tons;
- (3) Mate ocean/near coastal 500 to 1600 gross register tons (GRT); and
- (4) Mate (OSV).

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b. ASSESSMENT OF COMPETENCE.

(1) As specified in reference (b), candidates for an OICNW endorsement must meet the standards of competence identified in Section A-II/1 of the STCW Code.

(2) The standards of competency and required knowledge, understanding, and proficiency (KUP) in Table A-II/1 of the STCW Code are either practical or knowledge-based. A practical KUP requires that the candidate demonstrate his/her proficiency, e.g., *ability to determine the ship's position by use of electronic navigational aids*. A knowledge-based KUP requires the candidate to have a prescribed level of knowledge and understanding, e.g., *thorough knowledge of the content, application, and intent of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea*.

(3) Knowledge-based competencies and KUPs may be assessed by completing the Coast Guard administered examination for the associated officer endorsement and/or by completion of relevant Coast Guard approved training. Additional information on the Coast Guard examinations is provided in paragraph d, below.

(4) Model guidelines for assessment of the practical KUPs for OICNW are contained in reference (c), NVIC 08-02. Enclosure (1) of this policy letter provides these same model assessments in a format suitable for documenting an individual mariner's completion of the assessments. Enclosure (2) is a summary listing of the assessments that can be used as a checklist to review the candidate's progress to ensure every practical demonstration has been performed.

(5) Except as noted below, the assessments in Enclosures (1) and (2) are substantially unchanged from those specified in NVIC 08-02, and the numbering scheme used in cancelled NMC policy letters 01-02 and 16-02 is unchanged. Mariners may continue to use the "Control Sheets" in the cancelled NMC policy letters to document their completion of assessments.

(6) The assessments in Enclosure (1) and (2) differ from those in NVIC 08-02 as we have made minor editorial changes and omitted the assessment of ability to determine position by use of Loran-C (assessment OICNW-1-4C) as this system is no longer in use. We have also changed the transmission speed for visual signaling (flashing light) in assessment OICNW-4-1A from 6 wpm to 4 wpm.

(7) Completion of the assessments of competency in NVIC 08-02 and this policy letter will be accepted as evidence that the candidate has met the requisite standard of competence for all practical competencies and KUPs. Mariners or organizations wishing to use alternative methods to assess that the standards of competence in Section A-II/1 of the STCW Code have been met may do so but must obtain approval for the alternative methods from the National Maritime Center prior to use.

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(8) The assessments of competency in NVIC 08-02 and this policy letter may be conducted in-service aboard a seagoing vessel by a mariner who is serving on the vessel upon which the assessments are completed. The STCW Code requires that a person conducting in-service assessments of competence of a seafarer meet the qualification requirements of Section A-I/6.¹ The Coast Guard will consider individuals who meet one of the following criteria as having satisfied Section A-I/6:

- i. Hold an STCW endorsement at the management level (STCW Regulation II/2 – master or chief mate) valid for service on seagoing vessels of at least 200 GRT/500 GT;
- ii. Hold an STCW endorsement as OICNW and have at least one year of experience as OICNW on seagoing vessels of at least 200 GRT/500 GT;
- iii. Is serving on a seagoing military vessel of at least 200 GRT/500 GT and is either the Commanding Officer or Executive Officer or is authorized to conduct similar assessments for the U.S. Navy or U.S. Coast Guard Personnel Qualification Standard (PQS) for underway officer of the deck (OOD).

(9) Prior to conducting assessments, the assessor should read enclosure (3), *Assessor's Manual for Conducting Mariner Assessments*. By signing for a successful performance of an assessment, the assessor attests that he/she has read and applied the guidance contained in this document.

(10) By signing any of the assessments of competence, the assessor attests that he/she has witnessed the candidate perform the described task under the described conditions and in the manner specified.

c. TRAINING.

(1) To qualify for an endorsement as OICNW, completion of certain training is required by regulations in 46 CFR Part 11, as follows:

- Basic Safety Training (BST) [46 CFR 11.202(b)];
- Radar Observer [46 CFR 11.480];
- Advanced Fire Fighting [46 CFR 11.205(d)];
- Bridge Team Work (a.k.a. Bridge Resource Management) [46 CFR 11.202(c)];
- Automatic Radar Plotting Aids (ARPA). If this course is not completed, the STCW endorsement will limit service to vessels that are not equipped with ARPA [46 CFR 11.202(c)];

¹ As incorporated by reference in 46 CFR 11.102(b).

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- Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS). If this course is completed, the STCW endorsement will note that it is valid for service in the GMDSS [46 CFR 11.202(d)].

(2) In addition to these required courses, relevant Coast Guard approved training may be used to satisfy portions of the assessment requirements discussed above. The NMC may approve courses to satisfy specific assessments or specific competencies and/or specific knowledge, understanding and proficiency in Section A-II/1 of the STCW Code. Some examples of NMC approvals include:

Any applicant who has successfully completed your 40-hour Basic Meteorology course will be considered to have completed the equivalent of OICNW-1-7A; OICNW-1-7B; and OICNW-1-7C from the National Assessment Guidelines for Table A-II/1 of the STCW Code. Applicants who have successfully completed your course need not present completed “Assessment Sheets” for these assessments when applying for an STCW endorsement.

or

Any applicant who has successfully completed your 40-hour Basic Shiphandling course will be considered to have successfully demonstrated the competency *Maneuver the Ship* of Table A-II/1 of the STCW Code. Applicants who have successfully completed your course need not present completed “Assessment Sheets” for assessments OICNW-5-1A; OICNW-5-1B; and OICNW-5-1C from the National Assessment Guidelines for Table A-II/1 of the STCW Code when applying for an STCW endorsement.

d. EXAMINATION.

(1) As noted above, mariners may demonstrate that they have achieved the required competence for knowledge-based KUPs by completion of relevant Coast Guard examination modules. Examination modules for specific officer endorsements are identified in the *NMC Guide for Administration of Merchant Marine Examinations*. The general composition of the examinations is:

MODULE	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS		PASSING SCORE
	OCEANS	N/C	
Rules of the Road	50	50	90%
Deck General	70	70	70%
Navigation General	70	70	70%
Deck Safety and Environmental Protection	70	70	70%
Navigation Problems: Chart Plot	15	15	87%
Navigation Problems: Near Coastal	10	10	90%
Navigation Problems: Oceans	15	--	80%

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(2) Mariners who were not examined for any the endorsements listed in paragraph 3.a., above, or who were examined for mate ocean/near coastal 500 to 1600 gross register tons (GRT) or mate (OSV) prior to February 1, 2002, must complete the examinations described above or complete an approved alternative to demonstrate that they have achieved the required standard of competence for knowledge-based KUPs.

e. INCREASE IN SCOPE OR RAISE OF GRADE.

(1) Increase in Scope. Mariners holding an STCW endorsement limited to near coastal waters corresponding to any of the officer endorsements identified in paragraph 3.a., above, must meet the following examination and assessment requirements for an increase in scope from near coastal waters to oceans per 46 CFR 11.401(d):

- i. Pass the following Coast Guard examination modules or a course approved to substitute for these modules:

MODULE	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS	PASSING SCORE
Navigation General	20	70%
Navigation Problems: Oceans	15	80%

- ii. Complete the following assessments in Enclosure (1) related to celestial navigation:

- OICNW-1-1A
- OICNW-1-1B
- OICNW-1-1C
- OICNW-1-1D
- OICNW-1-1E
- OICNW-1-1F

(2) Raise of Grade.

- i. Mariners who hold or who have previously completed practical assessments of competency for an STCW 95 endorsement as OICNW corresponding to any of the officer endorsements identified in paragraph 3.a. do not require further training, examination, or assessment. Mariners who hold an endorsement as OICNW that is restricted to near coastal domestic voyages and/or to a specific trade (e.g. offshore supply vessels) have not fully demonstrated competence in all areas required by STCW A-II/1 and must demonstrate competence in all areas not completed for their restricted OICNW endorsement per 46 CFR 11.903(c).
- ii. Mariners who have not previously completed practical assessments of competency for an STCW endorsement as OICNW corresponding to any of the

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officer endorsements identified in paragraph 3.a must meet the following:

- A. Complete the training and assessment requirements specified in paragraphs b and c, above.
- B. Mariners who tested for officer endorsements as Mate ocean/near coastal 500 to 1600 gross register tons (GRT) and/or Mate (OSV) on or after February 1, 2002, do not require further examination.
- C. Mariners who tested for the officer endorsements as Mate ocean/near coastal 500 to 1600 gross register tons (GRT) and/or Mate (OSV) before February 1, 2002, must complete the examinations described in paragraph d. above, or complete an approved alternative to demonstrate that they have achieved the required standard of competence for knowledge-based KUPs.
- D. Mariners who hold an STCW endorsement corresponding to an officer endorsement as Third Mate oceans issued before February 1, 2002, must complete the following to qualify for an STCW endorsement corresponding to an officer endorsement as Second Mate oceans:
 - Assessments OICNW-1-1C and OICNW-1-1F related to celestial navigation using bodies other than the sun; and;
 - Pass the *Navigation Problems: Near Coastal* and *Navigation Problems: Oceans* examination modules described in paragraph d, above.

4. Action.

- a. The NMC shall be guided by the information in this policy letter.
- b. Commanding Officers of units with marine safety responsibilities should bring this policy letter to the attention of the maritime industry and the appropriate state boating law administrators in their area of responsibility.
- c. This policy is posted along with other CG-543 policy letters on the Coast Guard's Homeport internet website at <http://homeport.uscg.mil> by selecting the following links: Library > Policy > Policy Letters > Inspection.

5. Disclaimer.

This guidance is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is it itself a regulation. It is not intended to nor does it impose legally-binding requirements on any party. It represents the Coast Guard's current thinking on this topic. You can use an alternative approach if the approach satisfies the requirements of the applicable statutes and regulations.

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If you want to discuss an alternative approach (you are not required to do so), you may contact Mr. Luke Harden of the Mariner Credentialing Program Policy Division (CG-5434) at (202) 372-1206 who is responsible for implementing this guidance.

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Enclosures: (1) OICNW Assessment Sheets
(2) OICNW Assessment Summary
(3) Assessor's Manual for Conducting Mariner Assessments

Copy: All Area/District (p) offices
All Sectors/ Activities and MSU's