



U.S. Mariner License, Document, or Certificate of Registry Requirements

Merchant Mariner
Information
Center

STCW
Information and
Requirements

Guide to Renewing U.S. Merchant Mariner Documents (MMDs), Licenses, and Certificates of Registry (Cors) - The requirements for renewing a U.S. Merchant Mariner credential (MMD, License, or Certificate of Registry) are formally contained in Title 46 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 10 and 12. This guide summarizes the requirements and answers the most common questions on renewing your credential. Delays in processing your application due to incomplete information are easily avoided by following this guide closely. If you are viewing this guide on the Internet, click on a specific section or question below as a hyperlink to the information. To ensure that your application is complete and is reviewed as quickly as possible, use the interactive General Requirements listing as a checklist when you prepare your application package. NOTE: All paperwork to support your renewal must be original documents or certified copies.

If you plan to work on a seagoing vessel that goes beyond the boundary lines (as defined in Title 46 CFR Part 7), you may have to comply with the requirements of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping (STCW). For general information on the STCW Convention and Amendments, you may go to the Coast Guard's STCW web page at <http://www.uscg.mil/STCW>.

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General Information

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■ When do I have to renew my credential(s)?

All U.S. licenses, Merchant Mariner's Documents (MMDs), and Certificates of Registry (CORs) are valid for service for five years from the issue date and no longer. You renew your credential(s) up to 12 months prior to expiration.

■ What if I have more than one credential to renew?

You may renew all credentials at the same time as long as at least one of the credentials is within 12 months of expiring. In such situations, you are encouraged to renew all credentials together to get them in synch.

■ What is the grace period?

You may renew your credential during the Period of Grace (no more than 12 months beyond the five-year expiration date), but you can NOT operate under the authority of your credential during this Grace Period. Once your credential has expired, it is no longer valid and you can not work on it.

■ What if my credential has expired beyond the grace period?

If your credential has expired beyond the grace period, then you will have to meet the full requirements of the original credential, except recency of service. This also means you will have to take the full examination if required for the credential or attend a course approved by the CG specifically for this purpose.

■ What is a Continuity Renewal?

This option allows you to renew your credential without meeting any of the renewal requirements, except for completing an application and paying the user fees. If you choose to renew a credential for continuity purposes only, then you can NOT work under the authority of that credential. If your credential has expired beyond the one year grace period, then you are ineligible for the continuity renewal option.

■ When would renewal of my credential(s) not be granted

Your credential will not be renewed if it has been revoked or surrendered without probation. In addition, your credential will not be renewed if facts come to the attention of the Coast Guard that would render a renewal improper or you do not meet all of the requirements for renewal.

■ Where can I renew my U.S. mariner credential(s)?

You may apply for renewal at any of the 17 Coast Guard Regional Examination Centers (RECs). You must satisfy requirements for renewal including the completion of an application form and payment of user fees. All of these requirements are described in this guide. To see a list of RECs and their locations, [click here](#).

■ Can I renew my credential by mail?

You may renew by mail by submitting all of the required paperwork and fees to one of the RECs listed above. Please ensure that all supporting paperwork is original documents or certified copies.

■ What else is needed to renew my Merchant Mariner's Document (MMD) by mail?

If you are renewing your MMD by mail (MMD), you must include a Scanner Image Capture Form with your original signature entered within the "Mariner" signature block without going outside the borders. You can find this form on the Applications and Forms page by clicking here. You will also need to provide a recent passport size photograph in black and white or color with a light background taken within the past year. The photo must show your full face without obstructions such as a hat, sunglasses, or glasses with photogray lenses.

General Requirements For Renewal Of U.S. Merchant Mariner Credentials

I. Professional Requirements ([Back to Top](#))

A. How do I comply with the professional requirements?

This chart lists the professional requirements for renewal. In some cases, there is more than one way to meet the requirements.

ITEM(S) TO BE RENEWED:	PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● License other than Radio Officer ● License as First Class Pilot¹ ● Merchant Mariner's Document with <u>Qualified Ratings other than Tankerman</u> (e.g. AB, QMED, LBMAN). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One year (360 days) of sea service during the past five years, <u>OR</u> 2. Pass a comprehensive, open-book exercise², <u>OR</u> 3. Complete a Coast Guard approved refresher training course, <u>OR</u> 4. Three years of employment in a marine-related position.³
Merchant Mariner's Document without Qualified Ratings (e.g. OS, WI, SD (FH))	None required for renewal.
Certificate of Registry as Medical Doctor or Professional Nurse	Present a currently valid license as a physician, surgeon or registered nurse issued by a state or territory of the U.S.
Certificate of Registry as Staff Officer <u>other than</u> Medical Doctor or Professional Nurse	None required for renewal.
Radio Officer License	Present a currently valid license as first or second class radiotelegraph officer issued by the FCC.
Radar Observer endorsement ⁴	Complete a Coast Guard approved Radar Observer course.
Tankerman endorsement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participate in at least two transfers within the last 5 years, <u>OR</u> 2. Complete a Coast Guard approved cargo course.

Notes:

1. Certain additional requirements may be required for a particular pilotage route. Contact the responsible REC for the specific requirements to maintain a route authority.
2. If you choose to take the open-book exercise, contact your local REC for test materials.
3. Evaluation of marine related employment is on a case by case basis. To qualify, you must have been in a position closely related to the operation, construction, or repair of vessels (either deck or engineer as appropriate). If you hold a deck license and seek this option, then you must also complete the Rules of the Road portion of the open-book exercise.
4. Radar Observer endorsement renewals may be done at any time and is not required at the same time of a deck officer license renewal if the endorsement has not yet expired.

B. How do I prove that I have met the professional requirements for renewal?

You may document professional service for renewal in various forms, including original certificates of discharge and/or official documents from marine companies on original company letterhead signed by authorized officials. For military members, you must have your service documented on Command letterhead. All original proof of qualifying sea service **MUST** also include the following information about the amount and nature of your experience:

1. Name and documentation/official number of each vessel on which the service was obtained.
2. Vessel's gross tonnage, shaft horsepower and type of propulsion.
3. Number of days underway on each vessel including the dates the service was obtained.
4. Number of days spent in each type of route (Ocean, Near Coastal, Inland, specific river or lake, etc.).
5. Average number of hours worked per day.
6. A brief description of duties or work performed.

NOTE: Title 18 U.S. Code (USC), Section 1001 states that intentionally making false or fraudulent statements or representations in any matter within the jurisdiction of any department or agency of the United States is a Federal crime punishable by a maximum fine of \$10,000, 5 years imprisonment, or both. When signing the application and forms to apply for a MMD, you acknowledge awareness of the meaning of the statute in 18 USC 1001. If there is evidence that an application was submitted fraudulently, the application may be denied and the case will be forwarded to the local U.S. Attorney for appropriate action.

II. User Fees [\(Back to Top\)](#)

A. How much does renewing my credential cost?

The below table lists the User Fees associated with renewing your credential. If you are renewing more than one credential at the same time, you only have to pay one evaluation fee and, in most cases, only one examination fee if required. However, you must pay the Issuance fee for each credential being renewed if renewing more than one.

Transaction:	Evaluation:	Examination (if applicable):	Issuance:	Total:
Renewal:				
License (other than Radio Officer):				
Radio Officer License:	\$50	\$45	\$45	\$140
Certificate of Registry:	\$50	N/A	\$45	\$95
Merchant Mariner's Document (with qualified rating):	\$50	N/A	N/A	\$50
Merchant Mariner's Document (without qualified rating):	\$50	\$45	\$45	\$140
Merchant Mariner's Document (without qualified rating):	\$50	N/A	\$45	\$95
Renewal for Continuity Purposes Only:				
License	N/A	N/A	\$45	\$45
Certificate of Registry:	N/A	N/A	\$45	\$45
Merchant Mariner's Document:	N/A	N/A	\$45	\$45

B. How do I pay the user fees?

You may pay in person at a REC or through the mail by check or money order payable to "U.S. Coast

Guard" or "U.S. Government." You must include your social security number on the check or money order. User fee payments will only be accepted in exact amounts. If making payment by mail, only a check or money order can be accepted. **DO NOT SEND CASH FOR PAYMENTS BY MAIL.**

III. Physical Requirements and Drug Requirements([Back to Top](#))

A. When is a physical examination required?

The below table lists when a physical examination is required for renewal:

Credential to be renewed:	Physical examination required?
License:	Yes
Certificate of Registry ¹ :	No ¹
Merchant Mariner's Document (with qualified rating other than Lifeboatman):	Yes
Merchant Mariner's Document (with Lifeboatman or without qualified rating) ¹ :	No ¹

Note:

1. If you are renewing a Certificate of Registry, Merchant Mariner's Document (MMD) with Lifeboatman, or MMD without qualified ratings and you plan to serve on a seagoing vessel beyond the boundary lines , then you need to provide proof of physical agility, strength, and flexibility. For more information, see Section D below.

B. What is required for a physical examination?

If you are renewing a License or a Merchant Mariner's Document with a qualified rating other than Lifeboatman (LBMAN), then you must submit an original physical examination report ([Form CG-719K](#), pages 1 and 2) completed by a U.S. Licensed physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner within one year of the application. This report must certify that you are in good health and have no physical impairment or medical condition which would render you incompetent to perform the ordinary duties allowed by your credential. Please ensure this form has been completed entirely. Delays in approving applications are frequently the result of incomplete physical examination reports. For example, if you are taking any medications prescribed by your physician, then your physician must have all of the medications disclosed in block 15 of the form with a statement regarding whether or not you experience any side effects from them. If side effects are experienced, they must be listed. If no side effects are experienced, then a statement to that effect must be included.

C. What are some examples of the physical examination standards?

1. Renewal of a License as deck officer or Merchant Mariner's Document as Able Seaman (AB) or Tankerman (TKMAN): You must have uncorrected vision of at least 20/800 in each eye, correctable to at least 20/40 in each eye. You must also possess normal color vision as determined by one of the methods listed on the CG-719K Physical Examination Report.
2. Renewal of a License as engineer officer or Merchant Mariner's Document as Qualified Member of the Engine Department (QMED): You must have uncorrected vision of at least 20/800 in each eye, correctable to at least 20/50 in each eye. However, you only need to possess the color sensing ability to distinguish between red, green, blue and yellow.
3. For renewal of all licenses or Merchant Mariner's Documents with qualified ratings other than Lifeboatman, you must not have blood pressure higher than 160/100 if under the age 50 or higher than 175/100 if over 50, regardless of treatment or medication.
4. If you want more information on the Coast Guard's physical examination standards, connect here to [NVIC 2-98](#)

D. What are the physical agility, strength, and flexibility standards?

If you are renewing a Certificate of Registry, Merchant Mariner's Document (MMD) with Lifeboatman, or

MMD without qualified ratings, you are not required to submit a physical examination report (Form CG-719K). However, if you plan to work on seagoing vessels beyond the boundary lines, you will have to submit documentation from a U.S. licensed physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner certifying that you have the agility, strength, and flexibility to:

1. Climb steep or vertical ladders,
2. Maintain balance on a moving deck,
3. Pull heavy fire hoses up to 400 feet, and have the ability to lift fully charged fire hoses,
4. Rapidly don an exposure suit,
5. Step over door sills of 24 inches in height, and
6. Open or close watertight doors that may weigh up to 56 pounds.

E. What if I don't meet the physical requirements?

Not meeting the vision, hearing, or general physical condition required for renewal does not automatically cause you to be denied. The Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard may consider you for a physical waiver if extenuating circumstances warrant special consideration. The REC reviewing your application may request that your physician provide additional information to support a waiver in such cases.

F. What are "dangerous drugs?"

"Dangerous drugs" under the Department of Transportation rules are: marijuana, cocaine, opiates, phencyclidine (PCP), and amphetamines. Proof that you are free of dangerous drugs is required with your renewal application. Only a screening that tests for the five dangerous drugs is accepted. All tests must be conducted in accordance with "Procedures for Transportation Workplace Drug Testing Programs" in Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 40 and done by laboratories certified by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an agency of the Department of Health and Human Services. All qualifying random and periodic drug-testing programs must also meet these requirements. To obtain a phone number for the nearest approved laboratory or a collection site, you may contact the Drug Free Workplace Hotline at 1-800-843-4971.

G. How do I prove that I am free of dangerous drugs?

Acceptable proof of meeting the drug testing requirements can be any one of the following:

1. A completed drug test form (report or letter) signed by the Medical Review Officer (MRO) or authorized representative of a consortium showing that you passed a chemical test for dangerous drugs conducted in accordance with 49 CFR 40 within the previous six months with no subsequent positive drug tests during the remainder of the six-month period.
2. A letter on company or consortium stationary signed by the authorized official that administers the drug testing program stating that you passed a pre-employment or periodic test for dangerous drugs within the previous six months with no subsequent positive drug tests during the remainder of the six month period.
3. A letter on company or consortium stationary signed by the authorized official that administers the drug testing program stating that you have been subject to random drug testing required by 46 CFR 16.230 for at least 60 days during the previous 185 days and did not fail or refuse to participate in any required chemical test.
4. If you are an active duty U.S. military member, a letter from your command stating that you have been subject to random drug testing for the past six months and have not failed or refused to participate in any required test. Random testing letters are not accepted for reserve military members since they are only subject to testing during monthly drills. However, if you are a reserve or active duty member and passed a required chemical test for dangerous drugs within the previous six months, then you may submit a letter from your command stating this.

IV. National Driver Register (NDR) Check ([Back to Top](#))

A. What is required for the NDR check?

You must agree to a check of the NDR for offenses in connection with your operation of a motor vehicle.

B. What is the NDR check used for?

Your application may be disapproved if information from the NDR check leads the Coast Guard to determine that you cannot be entrusted with the duties and responsibilities of holding a U.S. Merchant Mariner credential.

V. Forms and Application Information ([Back to Top](#))

A. How do I apply?

You must complete an Application ([Form CG-719B](#)) and all necessary paperwork to support meeting qualification requirements. Read all instructions thoroughly on filling out the application and other forms prior to submitting an application package to your nearest REC. Please note that an application is **ONLY VALID FOR ONE YEAR** after approval by a REC. Connect [here](#) to the Forms and Application page.

B. How do I find out the status on my application?

The REC that reviews your application package will notify you in writing on the status of your application, including whether you have been approved or additional information is required. If you are approved, you will receive the renewed credential as part of your approval. The time to complete the review of each application varies greatly depending on the complexity. Please feel free to contact your local REC any time after submitting your application. However, it is recommended that you allow at least one full week before contacting the REC.

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