

Frequently Asked Questions: Merchant Mariner Credentials

1. What is a Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC)?

All mariners employed aboard United States (U.S.) merchant vessels greater than 100 Gross Register Tons (Domestic Tonnage), except operators of uninspected passenger vessels, are required to have a valid [U.S. MMC](#). An MMC is not a guarantee of finding work, but rather a certification allowing you to work in the shipboard merchant marine industry.

2. What kind of work can I do with an MMC?

With an MMC, you may work in the deck, engineering, or steward's departments of a ship. Where you can work and what you can do will depend on the type of endorsement(s) you hold.

- The deck department is concerned mainly with the navigation and operation of a ship.
- The engineering department is concerned mainly with the propulsion and maintenance of the machinery on a ship.
- The steward's department is concerned mainly with the supplies and food services on a ship.

3. Where can I get an MMC?

You may apply for an MMC at any of the 17 Coast Guard Regional Examination Centers (RECs). There are several requirements for obtaining an MMC, including the completion of an application and payment of user fees. All of the requirements are listed on our [Credentialing Process page](#). Visit our [REC page](#) to see a list of RECs and their locations.

4. How does the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 (STCW) apply to me if I have an MMC?

The requirements of the STCW Convention and Code may apply to you depending on the vessel, capacity, and route in which you serve. For more information on which STCW requirements may apply to you, visit [46 CFR Subpart K](#) (46 CFR 15.1101 through 15.1113).

5. Once issued, how long is my MMC valid? Can I continue to work after my MMC is expired?

An MMC is valid for a term of 5 years. Adding an endorsement during this period does not change the expiration date. The only time the expiration date will change is when a mariner applies for and meets all renewal requirements. Once an MMC has expired, a mariner may not serve under the authority of that credential.

6. Can I use my MMC as a Passport?

No. While the MMC is a government-issued document, when traveling abroad you are still required to possess a valid U.S. Passport.

7. Since I have an MMC, does that mean I am active duty Coast Guard?

No. An MMC makes the holder a part of the maritime industry, but not an active duty member of the United States Coast Guard.