



## Basic Information

- **STCW applies to all present & future mariners who wish to sail beyond the boundary lines of the United States on commercial vessels. (The boundary lines essentially separate the bays, harbors & other inland waters from the oceans. In the U.S. we have exempted mariners from STCW requirements who serve on vessels less than 200 gross tons sailing on voyages which begin & end in a U.S. port. This is known as a domestic voyage).**
- STCW emphasizes “hands-on” demonstrations of your skill & ability to prove that you are qualified to serve aboard seagoing vessels. Most U.S. mariners have already done this in their careers. The biggest change with STCW is that it formalizes the documentation of your ability to perform these tasks.
- Completing a Coast Guard approved training course may be the least complicated way to meet the additional STCW qualification requirements. You may also demonstrate your knowledge & ability for STCW “covered” tasks before a Designated Examiner (DE). This is an individual qualified to observe your performance & assess your competence. (This process is in the early stages of development & may not be available to you yet.)
- **If you meet the requirements of STCW you will be issued an STCW 95 Certificate . Your present license or document are separate credentials from this certificate. You may still maintain your license or document without it, however, you will be essentially limited to inland waters only employment.**
- **Mariners who began training or service prior to August 1, 1998 have one time gap-closing requirements to meet prior to February 1, 2002. (See this pamphlet). Existing mariners may upgrade their license or document (and STCW certificate) prior to this date under the current regulations, however, the additional requirements still apply if you want the STCW**

- Persons beginning training or service employment on or after August 1, 1998 must be part of an organized training program approved by the Coast Guard in order to upgrade their STCW certification beyond entry-level qualifications.

## STCW

An international agreement providing for improved Standards of Training, Certification, & Watchkeeping for seafarers throughout the world & the United States which will:

### Ensure Safer Seas

- Safer Navigation
- Reduce seaman deaths & injuries
- Protect the public in U.S. ports from maritime disasters

### Conserve Our Marine Environment

Improve The Competitiveness Of The U.S. Maritime Industry

- Prepare mariners to utilize rapidly changing technology to benefit from the competitive advantages it can provide
- Reduce the economic advantages of “flags of convenience” employing poorly trained “crews of convenience”

# Existing Mariners

- ❑ **All mariners** except those in non-qualified entry-level positions (ordinary seaman, wiper/oil, steward) must show that they are competent in four areas of basic safety. These are basic fire fighting, personal survival techniques, elementary first aid, & personal safety & social responsibility. Again, this can be most readily accomplished by attending an approved course, but demonstration of knowledge & ability before a DE may be a future option. This must be done every five years.
- ❑ **Engineers** must show knowledge, skill, and ability operating lifeboats. Again, this may be done by attending an approved course or demonstrating proficiency before a DE. Academy graduates initially examined & qualified as “Lifeboatman” have already met this requirement. This is a one time only requirement.
- ❑ **Deck officers** must demonstrate proficiency in Bridge Teamwork Procedures. This can be accomplished by taking an approved course, or if you have served on vessels practicing Bridge Resource Management, documenting your ability during that service. This is a one time only requirement.
- ❑ **Deck officers** must attend an approved training program and obtain certification as GMDSS Operator to serve on a GMDSS-equipped ship after February 1, 2002. (After February 1, 1999 there must be at least two GMDSS operators aboard every such vessel. Since all vessels above 300 gross tons must have this equipment, the GMDSS training will apply to most deck officers.) This is a one time only requirement.
- ❑ **Deck officers** must pass an approved ARPA course for service on ARPA-equipped vessels after February 1, 2002.
- ❑ **Officers** must receive training in Advanced Fire Fighting if they wish to be the “individual designated to control fire fighting operations” aboard ship.

- ❑ **Persons** wishing to serve on tank vessels, RO RO’s, or to operate Fast Rescue Craft must complete additional training programs.
- ❑ **Deck Officers** are reminded that they are still required to pass an approved radar course every five years
- ❑ Keep documentation for all training you have received together in a “record of training”. The Coast Guard Regional Exam Center will use this to verify your eligibility for a STCW 95 Certificate.

## For Further Information

### FIRST

Refer to the Coast Guard’s STCW web site at: [www.uscg.mil/stcw](http://www.uscg.mil/stcw)

### SECOND

Contact your employer

### THIRD

Call the nearest Regional Exam Center

### FOURTH

- ❑ Call the National Maritime Center at:  
(703) 235-0002
- ❑ Call the Coast Guard’s Maritime Personnel Qualifications Division at:  
(202) 267-0214



# New Mariners

- ❑ **All new mariners** who began seagoing service on or after August 1, 1998 must have completed an approved Basic Safety course (or demonstrated ability before a DE) prior to being certificated as a qualified rating or as an officer. This must be done every five years.
- ❑ **All new mariners** must be enrolled in, or be a part of, a Coast Guard approved training program in order to be issued an STCW certificate as a qualified rating or as an officer.
- ❑ Under this program new mariners must demonstrate ability to perform certain tasks in the presence of a DE. If the task is completed correctly the DE will “sign off” that item in that person’s “record of training”. Entry-level officers must use a CG approved Training Record Book (TRB) for this purpose. The TRB must be completed to qualify for a license or STCW certificate.
- ❑ All existing regulations still apply to obtaining an initial license or document. These include minimum age, citizenship, security & medical requirements, as well as obtaining a drug test, & recommendations attesting to your character.