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NMC Policy Letter 04-03
April 22, 2003

From: Commanding Officer, U.S. Coast Guard National Maritime Center
To: Distribution

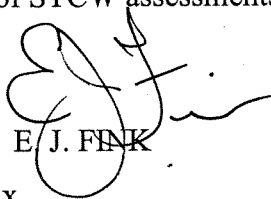
Subj: ACCEPTANCE OF STCW ASSESSMENTS OF SKILLS TO QUALIFY FOR NEAR
COASTAL AND OCEANS TOWING VESSEL LICENSES AND ENDORSEMENTS

Ref: (a) Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular (NVIC) 04-01
(b) National Maritime Center Policy Letter 01-02

1. **PURPOSE.** This policy letter provides guidance on accepting practical assessments of competence required for certification as *Officer in Charge of a Navigational Watch* (OICNW) under the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended, (STCW) to meet the practical assessment requirements for candidates for licenses and endorsements for service on towing vessels. This guidance is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is it itself a rule. It is not intended to, nor does it impose, legally binding requirements on any party. Applicants for the credentials addressed in this policy letter may propose alternatives to qualify for these credentials. Such alternatives should be forwarded to the U. S. Coast Guard National Maritime Center for evaluation.
2. **ACTION.** Commanding officers of units with marine safety responsibilities should bring this policy letter to the attention of the maritime industry with interests in marine personnel issues and to institutions that offer U. S. Coast Guard approved training. This policy letter will be distributed by electronic means only. It is available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.uscg.mil/STCW/m-policy.htm>.
3. **BACKGROUND.** In order to qualify for towing vessel licenses and endorsements, mariners must demonstrate their skills before a Coast Guard approved Designated Examiner and document their completion in a Towing Officer Assessment Record (TOAR). Copies of these assessments and route-specific TOARs are found in reference (a). In addition, candidates for OICNW certification are also required to compete the practical skills assessments specified in reference (b).
4. **DISCUSSION.**
 - a. Many mariners required to complete the Near Coastal/Oceans TOAR for service on a towing vessel may also require certification under STCW. Both the TOAR and STCW certification require that mariners demonstrate competence through practical assessments of skills.

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- b. Some of the skills to be assessed in the Near Coastal/Oceans TOAR are duplicative of the assessments required for STCW certification as OICNW.
- c. In order to ease the burden on mariners completing both a TOAR and STCW certification as OICNW, mariners who are assessed for OICNW certification need not complete those portions of the Near Coastal/Oceans TOAR that are duplicative of STCW assessments.
- d. Enclosure (1) indicates which STCW assessments will be accepted for towing vessel licenses and endorsements, and the equivalent portions of the TOAR. When more than one STCW assessment is listed for a single TOAR task, the mariner must complete all of the specified STCW assessments to have them accepted in lieu of the TOAR task.
- e. As the assessment guidelines and requirements for the conduct of assessments under STCW are more stringent than those for TOAR assessments, successful completion of a TOAR may not be used in lieu of STCW assessments.



E. J. FINK

Encl: (1) Assessment Equivalency Matrix

Distribution: Commandant (G-MSO)
All District Commanders (m)
All COs, MSOs
All Activity Commanders
All RECs

Near Coastal/Oceans TOAR Assessments Satisfied by STCW OICNW Assessments

OICNW ASSESSMENT(S) THAT WILL SATISFY TOAR TASK	NEAR COASTAL/OCEANS TOAR
Assessment No. and Description	Task No. and Description
B. NAVIGATION & PILOTING	
OICNW-1-6A: Steering gear test OICNW-1-4A: Position fix by GPS OICNW-1-4D: Use of echo sounder OICNW-2-3A: Voyage planning	B.3 Conduct pre-voyage tests and inspections per 33 CFR 164.80
OICNW-2-2B: Keep a safe navigation watch OICNW-2-3A: Voyage planning OICNW-2-3B: Execute a voyage plan	B.4 Describe and comply with VTS reporting requirements
OICNW-2-2B: Keep a safe navigation watch OICNW-2-3A: Voyage planning OICNW-2-3B: Execute a voyage plan	B.5 Communicate using VHF radio
OICNW-2-2B: Keep a safe navigation watch OICNW-2-3A: Voyage planning OICNW-2-3B: Execute a voyage plan	B.7 Make security calls
OICNW-2-2E: Navigate in restricted visibility	B.8 Initiate appropriate actions in reduced visibility
OICNW-1-3A: Correction of charts and publications	B.9 Identify and maintain required charts and publications
OICNW-2-3A: Voyage planning OICNW-2-3B: Execute the voyage plan	B.10 Use required charts and publications
OICNW-1-2B: Fix by two ranges OICNW-1-2C: Fix by tangents to two identified objects OICNW-1-4A: Position fix by GPS OICNW-1-4C: Position fix by LORAN OICNW-2-2B: Keep a safe navigation watch	B.11 Determine vessel's position on chart
OICNW-1-3B: Chart selection OICNW-2-3A: Voyage planning	B.12 Plan a route on a paper chart
OICNW-1-7C: Determine expected weather conditions OICNW-2-3A: Voyage planning	B.13 Incorporate information on forecast weather and sea conditions in route planning
OICNW-1-2B: Fix by two ranges OICNW-1-2E: Determine the course to steer OICNW-1-4C: Position fix by LORAN OICNW-1-4D: Use of echo sounder OICNW-2-3B: Execute a voyage plan OICNW-3-1K: Parallel indexing	B.14 Maintain track by plotting with electronic aids
C. WATCHSTANDING	
OICNW-1-2B: Fix by two ranges OICNW-1-2C: Fix by tangents to two identified objects OICNW-1-4A: Position fix by GPS OICNW-1-4B: Use of GPS position save function OICNW-1-4C: Position fix by LORAN OICNW-1-4D: Use of echo sounder	C.1 Operate and use all electronic navigation equipment in pilothouse
OICNW-2-2B: Keep a safe navigation watch	C.3 Make appropriate entries in logbook
OICNW-2-1A: Identify light configurations OICNW-2-1B: Identify day shapes OICNW-2-1C: Identify sounds signals OICNW-2-1D: Determine risk of collision. OICNW-2-2B: Keep a safe navigation watch OICNW-2-2D: Keep a safe anchor watch	C.4 Maintain proper lookout

OICNW ASSESSMENT(S) THAT WILL SATISFY TOAR TASK	NEAR COASTAL/OCEANS TOAR
Assessment No. and Description	Task No. and Description
OICNW-2-2A: Watch relief OICNW-2-2F: Turn over a watch	C.5 Communicate navigation and vessel status information to the relieving watch officer
OICNW-2-2D: Keep a safe anchor watch OICNW-2-3C: Watch augmentation	C.6 Follow standing orders or master's instructions on watch
OICNW-2-1D: Determine risk of collision OICNW-2-1E: Maneuver to avoid risk of collision -- meeting OICNW-2-1F: Maneuver to avoid risk of collision -- overtaking OICNW-2-2B: Keep a safe navigation watch OICNW-2-3D: BRM Condition III -- collision avoidance OICNW-2-3E: BRM Condition III -- navigation OICNW-2-3F: BRM Condition II or III -- error trapping OICNW-2-3G: BRM Condition II or III -- prioritization OICNW-2-3H: BRM Condition II -- establish a bridge team	C.7 Monitor traffic using visual, audio, and electronic aids (e.g., binoculars, VHF, sound signals, and radar)
E. RULES OF THE ROAD	
OICNW-2-1D: Determine risk of collision OICNW-2-1E: Maneuver to avoid risk of collision -- meeting	E.1.a Meeting while towing
OICNW-2-1D: Determine risk of collision	E.1.b Crossing while towing
OICNW-2-1D: Determine risk of collision OICNW-1-2F: Maneuver to avoid risk of collision -- overtaking	E.1.c Overtaking another vessel while towing
OICNW-2-1D: Determine risk of collision OICNW-2-1E: Maneuver to avoid risk of collision -- meeting OICNW-1-2F: Maneuver to avoid risk of collision -- overtaking	E.1.d Being stand-on vessel
OICNW-2-1D: Determine risk of collision OICNW-2-1E: Maneuver to avoid risk of collision -- meeting OICNW-1-2F: Maneuver to avoid risk of collision -- overtaking	E.1.e Being give-way vessel
OICNW-2-2E: Navigate in restricted visibility	E.1.f Operating in restricted visibility
OICNW-2-1C: Identify sound signals	E.1.h Provide proper sound and light signals
OICNW-2-1A: Identify light configurations OICNW-2-1B: Identify day shapes	E.2 Recognize and use lights and shapes
G. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION	
Successful completion of Coast Guard approved <i>Personal Safety & Social Responsibilities</i> course	G.1.a Garbage
Successful completion of Coast Guard approved <i>Personal Safety & Social Responsibilities</i> course	G.1.d Regulated Waste