

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



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Important Information for Mariners Regarding Vessel Security Officer (VSO) Training and Certification.

The U.S. Coast Guard recently amended its regulations to implement the VSO training and certification amendments to the Seafarers' Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) Code. These rules apply to all seagoing vessels, as defined in 46 CFR 15.1101, to mean self-propelled vessels engaged in commercial service that operate beyond the Boundary Line established by 46 CFR Part 7, except those vessels which have been determined to be otherwise exempt from STCW as per 46 CFR 15.103(e) and (f).

Considering that there are a large number of mariners that have applied for their VSO endorsements, but will not receive the document in time to meet the 1 July 2009 deadline, the Coast Guard will be accepting proof of application, accompanied by a course completion certificate, after July 1, 2009 as meeting the regulatory requirements for VSO. This is a temporary measure, which will remain in effect until September 1, 2009, in order to facilitate mariner application and processing of the endorsement. Mariners can show proof of application submission via Homeport 'Mariner Application Status' and print the display. To obtain your application status use the following link: [Merchant Mariner Application Status](#)

Considering that there are a large number of mariners that meet the criteria in 33 CFR Part 104.215, paragraphs (d)(4)(i)(A) and (B), but have not applied for a VSO endorsement and/or attended a refresher Coast Guard-accepted VSO course, the Coast Guard will be extending the refresher course completion deadline to 1 July 2011. A person must present to the course provider documentary evidence that he/she met the criteria in 33 CFR Part 104.215(d)(4)(i) prior to 1 July 2009 (effective date of the regulation).

For questions concerning this temporary measure, please contact Mayte Medina at 202-372-1406

Sincerely,

David C. Stalfort
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard