



Marine Safety Unit Pittsburgh Waterways Information March 2022



Ohio River

Ninth Street Bridge (90.8): Rehabilitation and painting. Vertical clearance reduced by 4 inches until Oct. 2022.

Bellaire Bridge (94.3): Demolition date to be determined.

Tygart River

1-79 Twin Bridges Replacement (2.6): Pre-application stage.

Areas of Interest

- 1. New fire extinguisher rules for recreational boaters go into effect April 20, 2022:** Recreational boaters should be aware that on April 20, 2022 updated Coast Guard requirements take effect for the type of portable disposable fire extinguishers that need to be onboard recreational boats propelled or controlled by propulsion machinery. In October 2021 The Coast Guard announced these amended fire extinguishing equipment regulations in the [Federal Register](#).

These rules do not change how many extinguishers are required, but they do require the removal of certain extinguishers from service. If your boat was required to have one or more fire extinguishers prior to these updated regulations, it will still need to have the same number of extinguishers with this update.

For boats manufactured in model year 2018 and after, the fire extinguisher must be replaced if it is over 12-years old from the date of manufacturing. Boats of model year 2017 and older should replace older, undated, fire extinguishers but can continue to carry these undated extinguishers if they are maintained in good and serviceable condition. Disposable fire extinguisher bottles manufactured during the past 20 years contain a manufacture date stamp on the bottom of the cylinder.

Fire extinguishers must: be on board and readily accessible, be of an approved type, not be expired or appear to have been previously used, and be maintained in a good and serviceable working condition.

For more information about the final rule, view the [Federal Register](#) or search docket number [USCG-2018-0099](#) on <https://www.regulations.gov>.

- 2. MSIB: Ensuring the validity of merchant mariner credentials and endorsements:** The Coast Guard Assistant Commandant for Prevention Policy has published [Marine Safety Information Bulletin 01-22](#) "Ensuring the validity of merchant mariner credentials and endorsements" to discuss the process of verifying the validity of merchant mariner credentials (MMCs) for current and prospective employees. As a maritime employer, do you know how to verify the validity of merchant mariner credentials (MMCs) for current and prospective employees?

This is an important question to consider when deciding whether to hire, promote, or discipline a merchant mariner. It is also critical step to ensure the overall safety of your maritime operations. As such, the United States Coast Guard has implemented new control measures to ensure mariners inform their marine employer of the status of their MMC following administrative enforcement action by the USCG. For example, mariners must notify their employer of the



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Suspension & Revocation (S&R) enforcement action being taken against their MMC within one week of entering into a settlement agreement. While in settlement, they must also provide current employment information as well as any prospective employers to the USCG for verification purposes. Failure to make either notification will be considered a breach of the settlement agreement and subsequently trigger the USCG's pre-settlement proposed sanction (e.g., revocation).

In the past, the USCG has encountered situations in which mariners failed to disclose the status of their credential to their marine employers while in settlement and/or have continued to work under the authority of their credential while it or certain endorsements were suspended or reduced in scope. For example, the USCG has identified that multiple mariners in drug settlements sought and obtained new employment in safety-sensitive positions while their credentials were on deposit, knowing that many marine employers do not check credential validity or status during the hiring process. In another case, a mariner who submitted fraudulent training certificates to the USCG continued to serve as a master despite having their MMC reduced and endorsements removed by the National Maritime Center (NMC).

Credentialed mariners are entrusted with the safety and security of commercial vessels, and the vast majority are dedicated, safety-conscious individuals who work hard to earn and maintain their professional credentials and endorsements. However, the small percentage of mariners who willingly subvert the USCG's credentialing rules, pose a significant threat to the entire marine transportation system. I am publishing this Marine Safety Information Bulletin to highlight the importance of verifying the authenticity of all MMCs and the associated endorsements.

To assist marine employers in determining whether mariners are qualified to serve in specific shipboard roles and duties, the following recommendations are provided:

1. Merchant Mariner Verification: Marine employers are encouraged to periodically verify the validity of their employees' MMCs by utilizing the USCG's Merchant Mariner Verification tool. An MMC and its endorsements may be invalidated, revoked, suspended, or fraudulently altered over the course of the standard 5-year issuance cycle. The USCG highly recommends using this verification tool during the hiring process as it displays only the most recently issued MMC, endorsements, and medical certificates. For more information, please visit: [Merchant Mariner Verification tool](#). The USCG recommends using either Microsoft Edge or Internet Explorer to access the tool. Unsupported browsers such as Chrome, Firefox or Safari, may erroneously show that credentials are invalid or display an incompatibility warning. If this occurs, please contact the NMC via chat, email, or phone.
2. General Questions Concerning MMCs or Endorsements: Anyone with general questions or concerns related to specific MMCs or endorsements can contact the [National Maritime Center](#) or their local [Regional Exam Center](#). For the most up-to-date news concerning the National Maritime Center, maritime transportation system stakeholders can also sign-up for [email notifications](#).
3. Information Related to Suspected Credentialing Fraud or Other Criminal Acts: Any information related to Merchant Mariner Credentialing Fraud, or other federal crimes committed on or affecting the maritime community, should be reported to the Coast Guard. Reports can be made anonymously to the [Coast Guard Investigative Service](#) (CGIS) either via the internet or through the CGIS Tips App, which can be downloaded from a mobile provider's marketplace using the following QR code:

