



## **Guidelines for Mariners with Positive Drug Test Results – For Renewal Credentials**

NOTE: If a mariner holding a US Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC), a positive drug test will render the credential inactive. The mariner has lost their ability to legally work under their endorsement. They are subject to a minimum one-year assessment period. During that time, the mariner must complete and submit Suitability requirements to the NMC for evaluation and consideration for re-instating of their credential. Completing the Suitability requirements do not guarantee issuance of an MMC.

### **The Process:**

#### **1. Submit renewal application with positive drug test**

- i. (Optional) Voluntarily surrender your credential
- ii. (Optional) Include a letter of acknowledgement and “Requesting to prove Suitability.”
  1. Give the big picture...reason for positive test results, drug use history, related convictions, plan to prove Suitability

#### **b. NMC will issue a letter stating Suitability requirements**

- i. These are tasks that need to be accomplished to be consider for re-instatement
- ii. Note, not all are required, but it is recommended to complete them all and/or state in a letter reasons for not completing
- iii. The requirements must be completed and submitted within 90-days of the letter
  1. Extensions requests are granted on a case-by-case basis
- iv. There are 5 Key Suitability Requirements
  1. Complete an accredited drug abuse rehabilitation program
    - a. Pass a drug test “negative result”
    - b. Enroll in a random drug testing program
  2. Provide evidence you are an active member in a rehabilitation/counseling group
  3. Provide Character References –
    - a. Recommended 4 or more
    - b. Letters should include knowledge of drug use with examples of how your behavior and habits of life have changed in a positive way. It should address sobriety, reliability, and suitability
    - c. Letters stating knowing of drug use and positive habits of life hold more weight than a generic letter stating how great of a person you are
  - d. Examples:
    - i. Employer/Captain – attest to suitability as a mariner & evidence of steady employment
    - ii. Probation Officer, if applicable
    - iii. Non-Maritime Employer - Evidence of steady employment



iv. Letter from Mariner – Include:

1. Statement: “Requesting to prove Suitability.”
  2. If not previously provided - Give the big picture...reason for positive test results, drug use history, related convictions
  3. Outline completion of Suitability requirements
  4. Positive life changes
  5. Why having a MMC is important to you
4. Work Status – See Character Reference from Employer Above
    - a. If not working, mariner should explain why
  5. Probation, If applicable
    - a. Supply letter and/or court documentation stating you have meet requirements
    - b. Probation Officer should state they do not have an issue with you working on a vessel.

**c. There is a minimum 1-year assessment period**

- i. The assessment period means = your credential will not be active for use during this time
- ii. The assessment period starts from date of the positive drug test
- iii. Complete all Suitability requirements with in the 90-day period

**d. Submit all Suitability requirements**

- i. Submit within the 90-day period or by extension date
- ii. Submit prior to the end of the 1-year assessment period
- iii. *MUST BE SUBMITTED PRIOR TO END OF MMC EXPIRATION GRACE PERIOD*
  1. If submitted after the grace period, your credential has officially expired, and you will need to apply for re-instatement
    - a. Note: Re-instatement includes retaking endorsement(s) exams and/or approved course(s). Refer to NMC checklists for complete requirements

**e. Submit new application to have credential reconsidered for renewal/activation**

- i. Submit no earlier than one month prior to the end of assessment period
- ii. NMC will evaluate your request
  1. Completion of suitability requirements does not guarantee issuance
  2. Potential outcomes
    - a. Credential is renewed/re-instated
    - b. NMC will request additional information
    - c. If applicable, NMC will issue an approval to test letter
      - i. It is recommended to wait to re-test or attend endorsement course/s until the NMC issues an approve to test letter

**f. After the 1-year assessment period the mariner will be in a probationary status for 4 years**