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Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



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MARINE SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETIN 02-15

New Application Process for Restricted Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessel (OUPV) Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC) on Inland Waters in Western Alaska

Ref: (a) Title 46 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 11.201(i)
(b) CG-543 Policy Letter 10-03 "Restricted Endorsements for Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMC) as Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessels (OUPV)"

PURPOSE: This informational bulletin provides guidance for mariners seeking Restricted Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessel (OUPV) Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMCs) on Inland lakes and/or rivers within the Western Alaska Officer in Charge of Marine Inspection (OCMI) Zone.

BACKGROUND: Reference (a) permits the OCMI to set sea service and examination standards for a Restricted OUPV MMC that are less stringent than those required for an Inland OUPV MMC. Prior to 2014, a mariner could obtain a Restricted or Limited "Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessels Guide License on the Freshwaters and Rivers of Western Alaska" that permitted operation on all freshwater rivers or lakes in Western Alaska. This geographically broad credential does not align with Reference (b), which stipulates that a Restricted OUPV MMC must be limited to a specific waterway. From this point forward, Restricted OUPV MMCs issued for Western Alaska will contain explicit geographical restrictions—for example, *Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessels Upon Inland Waters Restricted to Lake Aleknagik*. A mariner seeking the flexibility to operate on any Inland water body in Western Alaska (and elsewhere in the United States) should obtain a regular Inland OUPV MMC. Note that term "Merchant Mariner Credential" has replaced the old term "License."

IMPLEMENTATION: Effective immediately, the "Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessels Guide License on the Freshwaters and Rivers of Western Alaska" credential will no longer be issued. A mariner holding a currently valid "Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessels Guide License on the Freshwaters and Rivers of Western Alaska" credential may use it until it expires. Anyone who wishes to apply for an initial or renewal Restricted OUPV MMC in Western Alaska must submit an application under the updated terms set forth in this bulletin.

NAVIGABLE WATERWAYS: Coast Guard credentialing requirements apply only to mariners operating on Navigable Waterways. Not all Inland waters in Western Alaska are Navigable Waterways. Included as Enclosure (1) to this MSIB is a list of waterways in Western Alaska that Coast Guard District Seventeen has determined to be navigable. Mariners are encouraged to verify, before applying for a credential, that the Inland waters on which they intend to operate are indeed Navigable Waterways.

"LOW RISK" WATERWAYS: Reference (b) specifies that the OCMI may only exercise the discretion to modify sea service and examination requirements for a Restricted OUPV MMC if the Navigable Waterway to which the credential is restricted is "low risk." **A Restricted OUPV MMC will not be issued for any waterway that is not "low risk."** As of the date of this MSIB, the OCMI has provisionally classified some of Western Alaska's Navigable Waterways as "high risk" based on the

presence of known commercial vessel traffic other than uninspected passenger vessels and small passenger vessels. Sector Anchorage will maintain a current list of risk determinations on Sector's website at <<http://www.uscg.mil/d17/sectoranchorage/inspections.asp>> in the document titled "Restricted OUPV Waterway Risk Determinations." For waterways for which Sector Anchorage has not yet made a risk determination, mariners may initiate the risk assessment process. To prompt Sector Anchorage to conduct a risk assessment, a mariner must complete a "Western Alaska OCMI Zone Waterway Risk Assessment for a Restricted Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessel (UPV) Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC)," provided as Enclosure (2) to this MSIB. Taking into consideration the information provided in this form, the OCMI will: (a) determine whether a waterway is "high risk" or "low risk;" (b) notify the mariner of the determination; (c) update the list on Sector's website. Sector Anchorage will aim to issue a risk determination within 30 days of receipt of the completed form.

MULTIPLE WATERWAYS: A mariner may apply for a Restricted OUPV MMC that covers up to three waterway as defined on the Navigable Waterways list in Enclosure (1). Each waterway will require a separate risk assessment and will be listed on the MMC as a separate endorsement. Mariners desiring a wider span of operations are ineligible for a Restricted OUPV MMC in Western Alaska and must obtain an Inland OUPV MMC.

FRACTION OF A WATERWAY: A mariner may apply for a Restricted OUPV MMC for a portion of one of the rivers listed as a Navigable Waterway in Enclosure (1). This option may be advantageous to the mariner if the entire length of a river cannot be considered "low risk," but the portion the mariner wishes to operate on does not share the same "high risk" factors as another portion of the waterway. If Sector Anchorage determines that the lower portion of a river is "high risk" and the upper portion is "low risk," the upper and lower portions of the river will be broken at a mile marker, or other geographical reference point, and listed on separate lines in the next update to Enclosure (1).

HEADQUARTERS APPROVAL: Each time the OCMI wishes to issue a Restricted OUPV MMC Endorsement for a new "low risk" waterway, the OCMI must submit a memorandum to Coast Guard Headquarters (CG-CVC-4) requesting approval. The approval is waterway-specific, not mariner-specific. Once Headquarters has approved a given endorsement (for example, "*Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessels Upon Inland Waters Restricted to Lake Aleknagik,*") any qualified mariner may apply for that endorsement without further Headquarters review. Sector Anchorage will list approved endorsements in Column 3 of future updates to Enclosure (1).

MINIMUM AGE, SEA SERVICE AND EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS: The OCMI's sea service and examination standards for the new Restricted OUPV MMC remain unchanged from those set forth as requirements for "Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessels Guide License on the Freshwaters and Rivers of Western Alaska," modified and approved on September 1, 2009. These standards are as follows:

- **AGE:** Applicants seventeen years old and older may be awarded a Restricted OUPV Credential.
- **TESTING:** Applicants may pass either the Inland OUPV Examination or the Restricted OUPV Examination. (Both of these tests are standard nationally-available tests approved by the National Maritime Center. The "Restricted" option has fewer questions.)
- **COURSE IN LIEU OF TESTING:** As an alternative to examination, applicants may pass a Coast Guard Approved Course for a Restricted OUPV MMC. Contact the Coast Guard Regional Examination Center (REC) in Anchorage for a current list of approved courses. Below are organizations approved, as of 30 September 2014, to conduct courses that meet the examination requirements for this credential: (a) Alaska Nautical School (907-232-1792 or 866-357-2687);

(b) Alaska Rescue (907-209-4781); and (c) Alaska Waters Consulting (907-677-2606 or 866-373-3613).

- **SEA SERVICE:** In lieu of the 12 months of sea service required for an Inland OUPV MMC, an applicant for a Restricted OUPV MMC may present just 120 days of sea service. Of those 120 days, a maximum of 30 days of drift boat experience may be used to meet the 120 day total service requirement; the rest of the time must have been on motorized vessels. (Sea service is not creditable on canoes, paddle boats, jet skis, house boats, or float planes.) For original applicants to meet sea service recency requirements, 30 of the 120 days must have been completed within the last three years.

FIRST AID AND C.P.R.: Due to the remote nature of Alaskan waterways, Sector Anchorage requires that all Restricted OUPV MMC applicants show proof of current first aid and CPR qualifications as part of their application package. A Wilderness First Aid credential is encouraged, but not required.

APPLICATION: Reference (b) provides a comprehensive list of application elements and explains how a mariner should apply for a Restricted OUPV MMC. More general information on the OUPV MMC application process is available at the National Maritime Center website under the “Charter Boat Captain” page at < http://www.uscg.mil/nmc/credentials/charter_boat_capt/default.asp>. Mariners should not submit applications to the Anchorage REC until Headquarters’ approval of the Restricted OUPV MMC Endorsement is on file. **If a Sector Anchorage risk determination and Headquarters endorsement approval are not already in place, mariners are advised to initiate the process of requesting the risk assessment determination and endorsement approval several months in advance of their anticipated start of employment.**

CONTACTS: Questions regarding the Restricted OUPV MMC application process should be directed to the REC in Anchorage at 907-271-6736. The Anchorage REC is located at 222 West 7th Avenue in Room 154. Questions regarding Sector’s waterway risk assessment process or Headquarters’ endorsement approval status should be directed to Sector Anchorage’s Assistant Chief of Inspections at 907-428-4164.

Sincerely,



PAUL MEHLER III
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard
Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection
Western Alaska

Copy: CG District Seventeen
CG MSU Valdez
CG MSD Dutch Harbor
CG MSD Homer
CG MSD Kodiak

Navigable Waterways in Sector Anchorage's Area of Responsibility (AORs), including the AORs of MSU Valdez, MSD Dutch Harbor, MSD Homer and MSD Kodiak	Date on which a OUPV Waterway Risk Assessment was submitted to Sector Anchorage	Sector Anchorage's Risk Determination	Headquarters (CG-CVC-4) Restricted OUPV Endorsement Approval
Agulowak River		NONE YET	
Agulukpak River		NONE YET	
Alagnak River		NONE YET	
Aleknagik (Lake)		NONE YET	
Alexander Creek		NONE YET	
Beverly (Lake)		NONE YET	
Big Lake		NONE YET	
Bonanza Creek, North Fork		NONE YET	
Bonanza Creek, South Fork		NONE YET	
Chatanika River		NONE YET	
Chauekuktuli (Lake)		NONE YET	
Chena River (Fairbanks, Big Delta & Circle Quads)		NONE YET	
Chistochina River		NONE YET	
Chulitna River		NONE YET	
Clark (Lake)		NONE YET	
Colville River (Mouth to junction with the Killik River)		NONE YET	
Copper River		NONE YET	
Delta River		NONE YET	
Deshka River (Kroto Creek)		NONE YET	
Dietrich River		NONE YET	
Fish Creek - between Big Lake and Knick Arm		NONE YET	
Gakona River		NONE YET	
Gardiner Creek		NONE YET	
Gerstle River		NONE YET	
Gulkana River (Gulkana Quad) - Sourdough Campground (mile 33.5) to confluence with Copper River		NONE YET	
Hammond River		NONE YET	
Honolulu Creek		NONE YET	
Jarvis Creek		NONE YET	
Johnson River		NONE YET	
Julius Creek - From its confluence with Seventeen Mile Slough at 64° 29'N; 149° 08'W to the Alaska Railroad Bridge which is located at 64° 25'N; 149° 05'W		NONE YET	
Kahilitna River		NONE YET	
Kashwitna River - 2 miles below its confluence with North Fork to confluence with Susitna River		NONE YET	
Kenai Lake		NONE YET	
Kenai River - Mouth at Cook Inlet to Kenai Lake		NONE YET	
Klutina River - Lower River from confluence with Copper River up to and including Klutina Lake		NONE YET	
Knik River - From the new Glenn Highway bridges to the Knik Glacier		NONE YET	
Kobuk River - Mouth to Village of Kobuk		NONE YET	
Kukaklek Lake		NONE YET	
Kulik (Lake)		NONE YET	
Kuskokwim River - Mouth to town of McGrath	N/A	HIGH RISK	N/A
Kvichak River - Mouth to and including Iliamna Lake		NONE YET	

Navigable Waterways in Sector Anchorage's Area of Responsibility (AORs), including the AORs of MSU Valdez, MSD Dutch Harbor, MSD Homer and MSD Kodiak	Date on which a OUPV Waterway Risk Assessment was submitted to Sector Anchorage	Sector Anchorage's Risk Determination	Headquarters (CG-CVC-4) Restricted OUPV Endorsement Approval
Little Susitna River - Schrock Road Bridge to confluence with Cook Inlet		NONE YET	
Little Tok River		NONE YET	
Little Willow Creek (Tyonek, Anchorage Quads)		NONE YET	
Iliamna (Lake)	N/A	HIGH RISK	N/A
Low River - Mouth at Port Valdez to Wortmanns Creek		NONE YET	
Matanuska River - from Caribou Creek to its mouth at Knik Arm		NONE YET	
Naknek Lake		NONE YET	
Naknek River - Mouth to Naknek Mile 25	N/A	HIGH RISK	N/A
Nancy Lake (Lake Creek)		NONE YET	
Neil Lake		NONE YET	
Nenana River (Fairbanks, Healy) - From Mile 121.2, near Cantwell, AK to its junction with the Tanana River		NONE YET	
Nerka (Lake)		NONE YET	
Newhalen River - Mouth to Village of Noatak		NONE YET	
Noatak River - Mouth to Village of Noatak		NONE YET	
Nonvianuk Lake		NONE YET	
Nonvianuk River		NONE YET	
Nushagak River - Mouth the Village of Koliganek	N/A	HIGH RISK	N/A
Nuyakuk Lake		NONE YET	
Nuyakuk River		NONE YET	
Porcupine River		NONE YET	
Portage Creek		NONE YET	
Portage Lake		NONE YET	
Red Shirt Lake		NONE YET	
Sagavanirktok River - Mouth at the Beaufort Sea to confluence with the Lupine River at mile 109		NONE YET	
Salcha River		NONE YET	
Scottie Creek		NONE YET	
Shaw Creek - Mouth at confluence with Chisana River to Canadian border		NONE YET	
Shilak Lake		NONE YET	
Susitna River - Mouth of Cook Inlet to village of Gold Creek, AK		NONE YET	
Talkeetna River - From Iron Creek to its confluence with the Susitna River		NONE YET	
Tanana River		NONE YET	
Tikchik Lake		NONE YET	
Tikchik River		NONE YET	
Togiak Lake		NONE YET	
Togiak River		NONE YET	
Tokositna River		NONE YET	
Tolovana River		NONE YET	
Ugashik River - In its entirety including Upper and Lower Ugashik Lake	N/A	HIGH RISK	N/A
Willow Creek (Tyonek, Anchorage Quads)		NONE YET	
Wind River		NONE YET	
Wood River		NONE YET	
Yentna River		NONE YET	
Yukon River	N/A	HIGH RISK	N/A

Western Alaska OCMI Zone Waterway Risk Assessment for a Restricted Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessel (UPV) Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC)

Updated 13 January 2015



Risk Assessment Process:

- 1) Section A through Section F of this supplement must be completed by the applicant (or by another mariner or remote lodge owner wishing to employ the applicant).
- 2) The information contained in the supplement must be vouched for by a credentialed mariner, other than the applicant, who has commercial experience operating on the waterway in question within the previous five years. If no other credentialed mariners operate on the waterway, review by a non-credentialed individual with knowledge of the waterway may be accepted by Sector Anchorage on a case-by-case basis. (See Section G: "Peer Review.")
- 3) The completed supplement must be submitted to Sector Anchorage by email (sector.anchorage@uscg.mil) or mail (*Commander, Sector Anchorage, Attn: Prevention, P.O. Box 5800, JBER, AK 99505-0800*).
- 4) Sector Anchorage will analyze the information provided in the supplement to determine whether the operating area is "low risk" per terms established by the OCMI. Evaluation criteria in bold decisively determine whether an operating area is "low risk." Evaluation criteria in italics provide supporting information to be used in the case of an assessment of a special hazard, or in an appeal.
- 5) Sector Anchorage will notify the applicant if Sector considers the waterway to be "high risk."
- 6) If the waterway is "low risk," Sector Anchorage will send a memorandum to Coast Guard Headquarters (CG-CVC-4) requesting formal approval of the proposed Restricted OUPV endorsement for the specific operating area.
- 7) Upon receipt of approval (or disapproval) from Coast Guard Headquarters, Sector Anchorage will notify the applicant so that the applicant may submit to REC Anchorage a Restricted OUPV MMC application package for a credential restricted to that waterway.

Section A: Area of Operation

- In the space below, provide a concise written description of your proposed area of operation. If describing a river, name the river and denote the upper and lower limits of the area of operation by referencing villages, confluences, bridges, or other landmarks, or by referencing lines of latitude or longitude. If describing a lake, the name of the lake is sufficient. This description will form the basis of the text that will be used on your Restricted OUPV MMC.

Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessels Upon Inland Waters Restricted to:

- Verify that the waterway named above is considered Federally Navigable. A list of Federally Navigable waterways in Western Alaska, current as of 13 January, 2015, is provided as Enclosure (1) to Sector Anchorage MSIB 02-15. Mariners should consult Sector Anchorage or the Anchorage REC for an up-to-date list in subsequent years.

- Yes, the waterway is Federally Navigable, per Coast Guard District Seventeen.
- No, the waterway is not Federally Navigable (in which case, a MMC is not required).

- On a separate page, provide a map/chart of the specific lake(s)/river(s) on which you would like to operate. (Use of a commonly available internet mapping service or local navigational publication as a basis for your map/chart is recommended). If you anticipate operating from a specific lodge, indicate the lodge on your map/chart. Also indicate the following information:

- Boundaries of your proposed operating area.
- Scale and orientation.
- Villages, lodges, boat ramps, or other landmarks.
- Hazards (rapids or other areas of risk).

Section B: Navigational Complexity

- Is the waterway charted by NOAA?
(<http://www.charts.noaa.gov/InteractiveCatalog/nrnc.shtml>)
 - No, it is not charted by NOAA.
 - Yes, it is charted by NOAA. Elaborate, if only a portion of the waterway is charted, and the rest is not:

If yes, the OCMI will consider the waterway “high risk.”

Section C: Vessel Traffic

- Does the waterway support commercial vessel traffic other than Uninspected Passenger Vessels (UPVs) and Small Passenger Vessels (SPVs)? If so, describe what type(s) of commercial vessels use the waterway. Commercial vessel types may include, but are not limited to: towing vessels, fuel barges, freight barges, self-propelled freight vessels, commercial fishing vessels, and passenger vessels greater than 100 gross tons.
 - Only UPVs, SPVs and recreational vessels operate in the area.
 - Other commercial vessels operate in the area, including:

If commercial vessels other than UPVs and SPVs operate in the area, the OCMI will consider the waterway “high risk.”

Section D: Characteristics of the Waterway	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the maximum distance to shore from any point in the operating area? _____ 	<p>If any part of an operating area is more than one nautical mile from shore, the OCMI will not consider the operating area to be “low risk.”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the operating area contain any rapids? If so, what class are the rapids, and can they be avoided? <input type="checkbox"/> No rapids are present. <input type="checkbox"/> Rapids are present; they are Class ____. 	<p>The OCMI will not consider the operating area to be “low risk” beyond Class 2 rapids.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the waterway present any other special hazards besides those described above? If so, describe them. <input type="checkbox"/> No other special hazards are present. <input type="checkbox"/> Other special hazards include: _____ 	<p><i>The OCMI will evaluate special hazards on a case-by-case basis.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the range of water depths in the operating area? _____ 	<p><i>The OCMI has not assigned a particular depth as “low risk,” but shallow waterways are less likely to support large vessel traffic, favoring a “low risk” determination.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the maximum current, in knots, that might be encountered in the operating area? _____ 	<p><i>The OCMI has not assigned a particular current speed as “low risk,” but the absence of strong currents favors a “low risk” determination.</i></p>
Section E: Availability of Emergency Resources	
<p>What villages or lodges are in the vicinity of the operating area? (Specify how close they are, in terms of distance and travel time.) _____ _____</p>	<p><i>The OCMI may consider operating areas near larger population to favor a “low risk” determination.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What hospitals or village clinics are closest to the operating area? (Specify how close they are, in terms of distance and travel time.) _____ _____ 	<p><i>The OCMI may consider operating areas in close proximity to medical aid to favor a “low risk” determination.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the vessels you intend to operate equipped with VHF radios? If so, is continuous monitoring provided by a shoreside entity? What channel is monitored? Who monitors it? <input type="checkbox"/> Vessel(s) are equipped with radios. <input type="checkbox"/> Continuous shoreside monitoring is provided on Channel(s) _____ by: _____ 	<p>If the operator of a vessel cannot contact shoreside support at all times via VHF, satellite phone, cellular phone or other means, the waterway will not be considered “low risk.”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will you carry a satellite phone on your vessel? <input type="checkbox"/> Vessel(s) are equipped with satellite phones. 	<p>If the operator of a vessel cannot contact shoreside support at all times via VHF, satellite phone, cellular phone or other means, the waterway will not be considered “low risk.”</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will you carry a cellular phone on your vessel? Is the operating area within a cellular service area? Which carrier(s) provide(s) service? Is service available across the entire operating area and in nearby population centers (villages, lodges or other places offering shoreside support). <input type="checkbox"/> Vessel(s) are equipped with cellular phones. <input type="checkbox"/> Cellular phone coverage provided by _____ is available throughout the entire operating area, including shoreside lodges and/or villages. 	<p>If the operator of a vessel cannot contact shoreside support at all times via VHF, satellite phone, cellular phone or other means, the waterway will not be considered “low risk.”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Besides VHF, satellite phone or cellular phone, what other methods do you have for contacting shoreside support? Please describe them in detail. _____ _____ _____ 	<p>If the operator of a vessel cannot contact shoreside support at all times via VHF, cellular phone or other means, the waterway will not be considered “low risk.”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What waterborne emergency response assets are available in the operating area? (This may include other Uninspected Passenger Vessels.) What is their approximate response time from their dock or mooring to the most remote part of the operating area? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ 	<p>If another vessel cannot be reasonably expected to respond to a stricken vessel in the operating area within 30 minutes, the waterway will not be considered “low risk.”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What land-based emergency response assets are available in the operating area? What access points do they have to the waterway? What is their approximate response time to the access points? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ 	<p><i>Rapid and robust shoreside emergency response favors a “low risk” determination.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What airborne emergency response assets are available in the operating area? What is their approximate response time to the most remote part of the operating area? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ 	<p><i>Rapid and robust airborne emergency response favors a “low risk” determination.</i></p>

Section H: Sector Anchorage Review

- *I have reviewed this supplement and have determined that the operating area is:*

- Low-risk
- High-risk, because:

- *I have reviewed Sector Anchorage files to determine whether a supplement has been reviewed for an identical area of operation.*

- No supplements have been revised for this waterway segment, or
- One or more (#____) supplements have been reviewed for this waterway segment, the most recent of which was dated _____ and,
 - This supplement is in alignment with the conclusion of previous Sector Anchorage reviews; or
 - This supplement is not in alignment with previous Sector Anchorage reviews. The difference is:

Name of USCG Reviewer	Signature of USCG Reviewer	Today's Date

WESTERN ALASKA RESTRICTED OUPV MMC PROCESS

