

**Editorial Notes**

## AMENDMENTS

1985—Pub. L. 99-36, §1(a)(9)(B), May 15, 1985, 99 Stat. 67, substituted “Merchant Seamen Licenses, Certificates, and” for “Licenses, Certificates, and Merchant Mariners’” in part E heading.

**CHAPTER 71—LICENSES AND CERTIFICATES OF REGISTRY**

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**Editorial Notes**

## AMENDMENTS

2018—Pub. L. 115-282, title VI, §601(c)(2), Dec. 4, 2018, 132 Stat. 4289, struck out item 7115 “Merchant Mariner Medical Advisory Committee”.

2016—Pub. L. 114-120, title III, §315(b)(2), Feb. 8, 2016, 130 Stat. 62, added item 7116.

2010—Pub. L. 111-281, title II, §210(c), Oct. 15, 2010, 124 Stat. 2914, added item 7115.

1990—Pub. L. 101-380, title IV, §4102(e)(2), Aug. 18, 1990, 104 Stat. 510, substituted “Review of criminal records” for “Renewal of licenses” in item 7109.

1984—Pub. L. 98-364, title IV, §402(8)(A), July 17, 1984, 98 Stat. 447, substituted “Oral examinations for licenses” for “Licenses for fishing vessels not subject to inspection” in item 7111.

**§ 7101. Issuing and classifying licenses and certificates of registry**

(a) Licenses and certificates of registry are established for individuals who are required to hold licenses or certificates under this subtitle.

(b) Under regulations prescribed by the Secretary, the Secretary—

(1) issues the licenses and certificates of registry; and

(2) may classify the licenses and certificates of registry as provided in subsections (c) and (f) of this section, based on—

(A) the tonnage, means of propulsion, and horsepower of machine-propelled vessels;

(B) the waters on which vessels are to be operated; or

(C) other reasonable standards.

(c) The Secretary may issue licenses in the following classes to applicants found qualified as to age, character, habits of life, experience, professional qualifications, and physical fitness:

(1) masters, mates, and engineers.

(2) pilots.

(3) operators.

(4) radio officers.

(d) In classifying individuals under subsection (c)(1) of this section, the Secretary shall establish, when possible, suitable career patterns and service and other qualifying requirements appropriate to the particular service or industry in which the individuals are engaged.

(e) An individual may be issued a license under subsection (c)(2) of this section only if the applicant—

(1) is at least 21 years of age;

(2) is of sound health and has no physical limitations that would hinder or prevent the performance of a pilot’s duties;

(3) has a thorough physical examination each year while holding the license, except that this requirement does not apply to an individual who will serve as a pilot only on a vessel of less than 1,600 gross tons as measured under section 14502 of this title, or an alternate tonnage measured under section 14302 of this title as prescribed by the Secretary under section 14104 of this title;

(4) demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the Secretary, that the applicant has the requisite general knowledge and skill to hold the license;

(5) demonstrates proficiency in the use of electronic aids to navigation;

(6) maintains adequate knowledge of the waters to be navigated and knowledge of regulations for the prevention of collisions in those waters;

(7) has sufficient experience, as decided by the Secretary, to evidence ability to handle any vessel of the type and size which the applicant may be authorized to pilot; and

(8) meets any other requirement the Secretary considers reasonable and necessary.

(f) The Secretary may issue certificates of registry in the following classes to applicants found qualified as to character, knowledge, skill, and experience:

(1) pursers.

(2) medical doctors.

(3) professional nurses.

(g) The Secretary may not issue a license or certificate of registry under this section unless an individual applying for the license or certificate makes available to the Secretary, under section 206(b)(7) of the National Driver Register Act of 1982 (23 U.S.C. 401 note), any information contained in the National Driver Register related to an offense described in section 205(a)(3)(A) or (B) of that Act committed by the individual.

(h) The Secretary may review the criminal record of an individual who applies for a license or certificate of registry under this section.

(i) The Secretary shall require the testing of an individual who applies for issuance or renewal of a license or certificate of registry under this chapter for use of a dangerous drug in violation of law or Federal regulation.

(j) The Secretary may issue a license under this section in a class under subsection (c) to an applicant that—

(1) has at least 3 months of qualifying service on vessels of the uniformed services (as that term is defined in section 101(a) of title 10) of appropriate tonnage or horsepower with-

in the 7-year period immediately preceding the date of application; and

(2) satisfies all other requirements for such a license.

(Pub. L. 98-89, Aug. 26, 1983, 97 Stat. 539; Pub. L. 98-557, §29(a), Oct. 30, 1984, 98 Stat. 2873; Pub. L. 101-380, title IV, §4101(a), Aug. 18, 1990, 104 Stat. 509; Pub. L. 104-324, title VII, §720, Oct. 19, 1996, 110 Stat. 3938; Pub. L. 113-281, title III, §305(a), Dec. 18, 2014, 128 Stat. 3043.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Table with 2 columns: Revised section, Source section (U.S. Code). Row 7101 lists various source sections like 46:214, 46:224, 46:226, 46:228, 46:229, 46:229a, 46:229b, 46:242, 46:243, 46:244, 46:247.

Section 7101(a) provides the authority for the establishment of licenses and certificates of registry for officers and individuals operating vessels who are required to hold them under Subtitle II.

Subsection (b) authorizes the Secretary to issue licenses and certificates of registry based on tonnage, means of propulsion, horsepower, vessel operating area, and other reasonable standards.

Subsection (c) authorizes the Secretary to issue licenses to masters, mates, engineers, pilots, operators, and radio officers when found qualified as to age, character, habits of life, experience, professional qualifications, and physical fitness. These qualifying standards must by necessity be reasonable and related to the rigors of the profession.

Subsection (d) requires the Secretary to establish, when possible, suitable career patterns and service for and other qualifying requirements appropriate to the particular service or industry for the individuals so engaged.

Subsection (e) sets forth the requirements that pilots must meet before being issued a license.

Subsection (f) authorizes the Secretary to issue certificates of registry to qualified individuals as pursers, medical doctors, and professional nurses.

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Sections 205(a)(3)(A) or (B) and 206(b)(7) of the National Driver Register Act of 1982, referred to in subsec. (g), are sections 205(a)(3)(A), (B) and 206(b)(7) of Pub. L. 97-364, which are set out as a note under section 401 of Title 23, Highways.

AMENDMENTS

2014—Subsec. (j). Pub. L. 113-281 added subsec. (j).

1996—Subsec. (e)(3). Pub. L. 104-324 inserted "as measured under section 14502 of this title, or an alternate tonnage measured under section 14302 of this title as prescribed by the Secretary under section 14104 of this title" after "1,600 gross tons".

1990—Subsecs. (g) to (i). Pub. L. 101-380 added subsecs. (g) to (i).

1984—Subsec. (e)(3). Pub. L. 98-557 inserted exemption for pilots on a vessel of less than 1,600 gross tons.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1990 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 101-380 applicable to incidents occurring after Aug. 18, 1990, see section 1020 of Pub. L. 101-380, set out as an Effective Date note under section 2701 of Title 33, Navigation and Navigable Waters.

PLAN FOR LICENSING OPERATORS OF FISHING INDUSTRY VESSELS

Pub. L. 100-424, §3, Sept. 9, 1988, 102 Stat. 1590, required the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating, within two years after Sept. 9, 1988, to prepare and submit to the Congress a plan for the licensing of operators of documented fishing, fish processing, and fish tender vessels.

§ 7102. Citizenship

Licenses and certificates of registry for individuals on documented vessels may be issued only to citizens of the United States.

(Pub. L. 98-89, Aug. 26, 1983, 97 Stat. 540.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Table with 2 columns: Revised section, Source section (U.S. Code). Row 7102 lists source sections 46:242 and 46:1132(a).

Section 7102 requires that any individual issued a license or certificate of registry allowing the individual to be engaged on a documented vessel must be a U.S. citizen.

§ 7103. Licenses for radio officers

(a) A license as radio officer may be issued only to an applicant who has a first-class or second-class radiotelegraph operator license issued by the Federal Communications Commission.

(b) Except as provided in section 7318 of this title, this part does not affect the status of radiotelegraph operators serving on board vessels operating only on the Great Lakes.

(Pub. L. 98-89, Aug. 26, 1983, 97 Stat. 540.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Table with 2 columns: Revised section, Source section (U.S. Code). Row 7103 lists source sections 46:229a, 46:229b, 46:229g.

Section 7103 requires an applicant for a license as a radio officer to have, as a prerequisite, a first-class or second-class radiotelegraph operator license issued by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). It also exempts radiotelegraph operators that are engaged on Great Lakes vessels from the requirement of having to obtain a radio officer's license.

§ 7104. Certificates for medical doctors and nurses

A certificate of registry as a medical doctor or professional nurse may be issued only to an applicant who has a license as a medical doctor or registered nurse, respectively, issued by a State.

(Pub. L. 98-89, Aug. 26, 1983, 97 Stat. 540.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Table with 2 columns: Revised section, Source section (U.S. Code). Row 7104 lists source section 46:243.

Section 7104 requires an applicant for a certificate of registry as a medical doctor or professional nurse to have, as a prerequisite, a license as a medical doctor or registered nurse issued by a State.

§ 7105. Oaths

An applicant for a license or certificate of registry shall take, before the issuance of the li-

cense or certificate, an oath, without concealment or reservation, that the applicant will perform faithfully and honestly, according to the best skill and judgment of the applicant, all the duties required by law.

(Pub. L. 98-89, Aug. 26, 1983, 97 Stat. 540; Pub. L. 111-281, title VI, §613, Oct. 15, 2010, 124 Stat. 2970.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised section</i>	<i>Source section (U.S. Code)</i>
7105 .....	46:229e 46:231 46:244

Section 7105 requires all individuals who wish to be issued a license or certificate of registry to take an oath before a government official that they will perform all the duties required by law according to their best skill and judgment.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2010—Pub. L. 111-281 struck out “before a designated official” after “an oath”.

§ 7106. Duration of licenses

(a) IN GENERAL.—A license issued under this part is valid for a 5-year period and may be renewed for additional 5-year periods; except that the validity of a license issued to a radio officer is conditioned on the continuous possession by the holder of a first-class or second-class radiotelegraph operator license issued by the Federal Communications Commission.

(b) ADVANCE RENEWALS.—A renewed license issued under this part may be issued up to 8 months in advance but is not effective until the date that the previously issued license expires or until the completion of any active suspension or revocation of that previously issued license, whichever is later.

(Pub. L. 98-89, Aug. 26, 1983, 97 Stat. 540; Pub. L. 101-380, title IV, §4102(a), Aug. 18, 1990, 104 Stat. 509; Pub. L. 111-281, title VI, §614(b), Oct. 15, 2010, 124 Stat. 2970; Pub. L. 115-282, title V, §510(1), Dec. 4, 2018, 132 Stat. 4274.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised section</i>	<i>Source section (U.S. Code)</i>
7106 .....	46:214(c) 46:225 46:226 46:228 46:229 46:229c

Section 7106 sets a 5 year time limit on the validity of a license. It also requires a licensed radio officer to be in continuous possession of an FCC license.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2018—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 115-282 substituted “license, whichever” for “merchant mariner’s document, whichever”.

2010—Pub. L. 111-281 amended section generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “A license issued under this part is valid for 5 years and may be renewed for additional 5-year periods. However, the validity of a license issued to a radio officer is conditioned on the

continuous possession by the holder of a first-class or second-class radiotelegraph operator license issued by the Federal Communications Commission.”

1990—Pub. L. 101-380 inserted “and may be renewed for additional 5-year periods” after “for 5 years”.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1990 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 101-380 applicable to incidents occurring after Aug. 18, 1990, see section 1020 of Pub. L. 101-380, set out as an Effective Date note under section 2701 of Title 33, Navigation and Navigable Waters.

TERMINATION OF EXISTING LICENSES, CERTIFICATES, AND DOCUMENTS; APPLICABILITY OF 1990 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 101-380, title IV, §4102(d), Aug. 18, 1990, 104 Stat. 510, provided that: “A license, certificate of registry, or merchant mariner’s document issued before the date of the enactment of this section [Aug. 18, 1990] terminates on the day it would have expired if—

“(1) subsections (a), (b), and (c) [amending this section and sections 7107 and 7302 of this title] were in effect on the date it was issued; and

“(2) it was renewed at the end of each 5-year period under section 7106, 7107, or 7302 of title 46, United States Code.”

§ 7107. Duration of certificates of registry

(a) IN GENERAL.—A certificate of registry issued under this part is valid for a 5-year period and may be renewed for additional 5-year periods; except that the validity of a certificate issued to a medical doctor or professional nurse is conditioned on the continuous possession by the holder of a license as a medical doctor or registered nurse, respectively, issued by a State.

(b) ADVANCE RENEWALS.—A renewed certificate of registry issued under this part may be issued up to 8 months in advance but is not effective until the date that the previously issued certificate of registry expires or until the completion of any active suspension or revocation of that previously issued certificate of registry, whichever is later.

(Pub. L. 98-89, Aug. 26, 1983, 97 Stat. 540; Pub. L. 101-380, title IV, §4102(b), Aug. 18, 1990, 104 Stat. 509; Pub. L. 111-281, title VI, §614(c), Oct. 15, 2010, 124 Stat. 2971; Pub. L. 115-282, title V, §510(2), Dec. 4, 2018, 132 Stat. 4274.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised section</i>	<i>Source section (U.S. Code)</i>
7107 .....	46:243

Section 7107 specifies that there is no time limit on the validity of a certificate of registry issued to a medical doctor or a professional nurse but is conditioned on the continuous possession of the appropriate license issued by a State.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2018—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 115-282 substituted “certificate of registry, whichever” for “merchant mariner’s document, whichever”.

2010—Pub. L. 111-281 amended section generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “A certificate of registry issued under this part is valid for 5 years and may be renewed for additional 5-year periods. However, the validity of a certificate issued to a medical doctor or professional nurse is conditioned on the continuous possession by the holder of a license as a medical doc-

tor or registered nurse, respectively, issued by a State.”

1990—Pub. L. 101-380 substituted “is valid for 5 years and may be renewed for additional 5-year periods” for “is not limited in duration”.

**Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries**

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1990 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 101-380 applicable to incidents occurring after Aug. 18, 1990, see section 1020 of Pub. L. 101-380, set out as an Effective Date note under section 2701 of Title 33, Navigation and Navigable Waters.

TERMINATION OF EXISTING LICENSES, CERTIFICATES, AND DOCUMENTS; APPLICABILITY OF 1990 AMENDMENT

For provisions that a certificate of registry issued before Aug. 18, 1990, terminates on the day it would have expired if the amendment to this section by Pub. L. 101-380 were in effect on date it was issued and was renewed at the end of each 5-year period under this section, see section 4102(d) of Pub. L. 101-380, set out as a note under section 7106 of this title.

**§ 7108. Termination of licenses and certificates of registry**

When the holder of a license or certificate of registry, the duration of which is conditioned under section 7106 or 7107 of this title, fails to hold the license required as a condition, the license or certificate of registry issued under this part is terminated.

(Pub. L. 98-89, Aug. 26, 1983, 97 Stat. 540.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised section</i>	<i>Source section (U.S. Code)</i>
7108 .....	46:229c 46:243

Section 7108 specifies if any individual issued a license or certificate of registry fails to have the required FCC or appropriate State medical license, the license or certificate is automatically terminated. The suspension and revocation procedures provided in chapter 77 are not applicable in these cases.

**§ 7109. Review of criminal records**

The Secretary may review the criminal record of each holder of a license or certificate of registry issued under this part who applies for renewal of that license or certificate of registry.

(Pub. L. 98-89, Aug. 26, 1983, 97 Stat. 540; Pub. L. 101-380, title IV, §4102(e)(1), Aug. 18, 1990, 104 Stat. 510.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised section</i>	<i>Source section (U.S. Code)</i>
7109 .....	46:225 46:233

Section 7109 authorizes the Secretary to renew licenses and certificates of registry for additional 5 year periods.

**Editorial Notes**

AMENDMENTS

1990—Pub. L. 101-380 substituted “Review of criminal records” for “Renewal of licenses” in section catchline and amended text generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “A license issued under this part may be renewed for additional 5-year periods.”

**Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries**

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1990 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 101-380 applicable to incidents occurring after Aug. 18, 1990, see section 1020 of Pub. L. 101-380, set out as an Effective Date note under section 2701 of Title 33, Navigation and Navigable Waters.

**§ 7110. Exhibiting licenses**

Each holder of a license issued under this part shall display, within 48 hours after employment on a vessel for which that license is required, the license in a conspicuous place on the vessel.

(Pub. L. 98-89, Aug. 26, 1983, 97 Stat. 541.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised section</i>	<i>Source section (U.S. Code)</i>
7109 .....	46:229f 46:232

Section 7110 requires licensed individuals to display the license in a conspicuous place on the vessel within 48 hours after they are employed.

**§ 7111. Oral examinations for licenses**

An individual may take an oral examination for a license to serve on a fishing, fish processing, or fish tender vessel not required to be inspected under part B of this subtitle.

(Pub. L. 98-89, Aug. 26, 1983, 97 Stat. 541; Pub. L. 98-364, title IV, §402(8)(B), July 17, 1984, 98 Stat. 447; Pub. L. 99-307, §1(10), May 19, 1986, 100 Stat. 445.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised section</i>	<i>Source section (U.S. Code)</i>
7109 .....	46:224a(2)

Section 7111 provides for oral tests for licenses for individuals on fishing vessels that are not required to be inspected under part B.

**Editorial Notes**

AMENDMENTS

1986—Pub. L. 99-307 substituted “part” for “Part”.  
1984—Pub. L. 98-364 substituted in section catchline “Oral examinations for licenses” for “Licenses for fishing vessels not subject to inspection” and in text “An individual may take an oral examination for a license to serve on a fishing, fish processing, or fish tender vessel not required to be inspected under Part B of this subtitle” for “Examinations for licensing individuals on fishing vessels not required to be inspected under part B of this subtitle shall be oral”.

**§ 7112. Licenses of masters or mates as pilots**

A master or mate licensed under this part who also qualifies as a pilot is not required to hold 2 licenses. Instead, the qualification of the master or mate as pilot shall be endorsed on the master’s or mate’s license.

(Pub. L. 98-89, Aug. 26, 1983, 97 Stat. 541.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

<i>Revised section</i>	<i>Source section (U.S. Code)</i>
7112 .....	46:230

Section 7112 provides for the endorsement of a master’s or mate’s license as a pilot if they meet those

specifications. These individuals do not have to hold two separate licenses.

§ 7113. Exemption from draft

A licensed master, mate, pilot, or engineer of a vessel inspected under part B of this subtitle, propelled by machinery or carrying hazardous liquid cargoes in bulk, is not liable to draft in time of war, except for performing duties authorized by the license. When performing those duties in the service of the United States Government, the master, mate, pilot, or engineer is entitled to the highest rate of wages paid in the merchant marine of the United States for similar services. If killed or wounded when performing those duties, the master, mate, pilot, or engineer, or the heirs or legal representatives of the master, mate, pilot, or engineer, are entitled to all the privileges under the pension laws of the United States provided to members of the Armed Forces.

(Pub. L. 98-89, Aug. 26, 1983, 97 Stat. 541.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Table with 2 columns: Revised section, Source section (U.S. Code). Row 1: 7113, 46:225

Section 7113 exempts licensed masters, mates, pilots, and engineers of inspected vessels that are propelled by machinery or carrying hazardous liquid cargo from the Selective Service draft in time of war.

This section also provides that, while serving in that capacity during war, they shall be entitled to the highest rate of pay paid in the U.S. merchant marine for similar services.

If a master, mate, pilot, or engineer is killed or wounded when performing those duties during a war, these individuals, their heirs or legal representatives, are entitled to all the privileges provided to members of the Armed Forces under the pension laws of the United States.

§ 7114. Fees

The Secretary may prescribe by regulation reasonable fees for the inspection of and the issuance of a certificate, license, or permit related to small passenger vessels and sailing school vessels.

(Pub. L. 98-89, Aug. 26, 1983, 97 Stat. 541.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Table with 2 columns: Revised section, Source section (U.S. Code). Row 1: 7114, 46:390a(b)

Section 7114 allows the Secretary to prescribe reasonable fees for the issuance of a certificate of inspection, license, or registry, or permits related to small passenger vessels and sailing school vessels.

[§ 7115. Repealed. Pub. L. 115-282, title VI, § 601(c)(2), Dec. 4, 2018, 132 Stat. 4289]

Section, added Pub. L. 111-281, title II, §210(a), Oct. 15, 2010, 124 Stat. 2913, established the Merchant Mariner Medical Advisory Committee. See section 15104 of this title.

§ 7116. Examinations for merchant mariner credentials

(a) REQUIREMENT FOR SAMPLE EXAMS.—The Secretary shall develop a sample merchant mariner credential examination and outline of mer-

chant mariner examination topics on an annual basis.

(b) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—Each sample examination and outline of topics developed under subsection (a) shall be readily available to the public.

(c) MERCHANT MARINER CREDENTIAL DEFINED.—In this section, the term “merchant mariner credential” has the meaning that term has in section 7510.

(Added Pub. L. 114-120, title III, §315(b)(1), Feb. 8, 2016, 130 Stat. 62.)

CHAPTER 73—MERCHANT MARINERS' DOCUMENTS

- Sec. 7301. General.
7302. Issuing merchant mariners' documents and continuous discharge books.
7303. Possession and description of merchant mariners' documents.
7304. Citizenship notation on merchant mariners' documents.
7305. Oaths for holders of merchant mariners' documents.
7306. General requirements and classifications for able seamen.
7307. Able seamen—unlimited.
7308. Able seamen—limited.
7309. Able seamen—special.
7310. Able seamen—offshore supply vessels.
7311. Able seamen—sail.
7311a. Able seamen—fishing industry.
7312. Scale of employment.
7313. General requirements for members of engine departments.
7314. Service requirements for qualified members of engine departments.
7315. Training.
7316. Lifeboatmen.
7317. Tankermen.
7318. Radiotelegraph operators on Great Lakes.
7319. Records of merchant mariners' documents.

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Chapter 73 establishes the general requirements for the issuance of a merchant mariners' document to those individuals who are required to have a document prior to engagement or employment on certain vessels of the United States.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

1984—Pub. L. 98-364, title IV, §402(9)(A), July 17, 1984, 98 Stat. 448, added item 7311a.

§ 7301. General

(a) In this chapter—

(1) “service on deck” means service in the deck department in work related to the work usually performed on board vessels by able seamen and may include service on fishing, fish processing, fish tender vessels and on public vessels of the United States;

(2) 360 days is equal to one year's service; and

(3) a day is equal to 8 hours of labor or duty.

(b) The Secretary may prescribe regulations to carry out this chapter.

(Pub. L. 98-89, Aug. 26, 1983, 97 Stat. 541; Pub. L. 98-364, title IV, §402(9)(B), July 17, 1984, 98 Stat. 448.)