



Guidelines for Mariners with Positive Drug Test Results – For Original Credentials

NOTE: If a mariner is applying for a first time, US Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC), and has a positive drug test, they will not be eligible for a credential for at least a one-year assessment period. It is important to know that if the mariner choose to pursue a career in the maritime industry, they must complete the Coast Guard Suitability requirements and the minimum one-year assessment period before they can be considered for a credential.

The minimum one-year assessment period is effective from the date of the last positive drug test. It is recommended that mariner not delay submitting their application and starting the Suitability requirements. Completing the Suitability requirements do not guarantee issuance of an MMC.

The Process:

1. Submit application with positive drug test

- i. (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 issuance
- 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 then 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
- e. Submit new application to have credential reconsidered for issuance**
- 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 issued
 - 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**