

NMSC Circular No: 03-2

Principles for Assessing Sea Service

Aim / Purpose

The aim of this Circular is to foster national consistency in the measurement and assessment of sea service for certificates of competency.

Principle 1 Calculation of sea service

In NSCV Part D the month is the basic unit for measuring sea service. A month shall be defined as—

“A minimum of 150 hours of work over a period of at least 20 days.”

Principle 2 Restricted certificates

- The sea service requirements for the award of a restricted certificate should be tailored, both in terms of time and nature of service, to the type of restriction being sought. The amount of sea service should be appropriate to the activity, complexity of the task, operation and area of the restriction.
- If the ROPES book is being used, then the tasks to be completed should be limited to those relevant to the nature of restriction being sought.

Principle 3 Dual deck/engineering sea service for entry-level certificates

- The sea service undertaken on vessels less than 24 metres and assessed for an entry-level deck certificate of competency (i.e.: Coxswain or Master V) may also be used for the purposes of gaining an engineering certificate of competency as a MED 2 or MED 3 or vice-versa. In other words it is not necessary to undertake an additional period of sea service to satisfy the sea service requirements of the additional dual certificate, provided the service has been performed on vessels less than 24 metres.
- On vessels 24 metres or over, separate relevant sea service is required.
- This principal recognises that on vessels less than 24 metres the master is usually dual certified and will be performing both deck and engineering tasks.

Principle 4 Sea service on longer voyages

- For the award of a Master Class 5/ Skipper 3 certificate of competency, sea service in vessels that spend long periods at sea (i.e. are not day work boats) shall be accrued at a higher rate than service in a vessel conducting day work operations.
- The higher rate of accrual should only apply to service in vessels where there are long periods underway in a watchkeeping situation covering periods underway both by day and night, and where fatigue is being managed appropriately.

- The minimum length of time for voyages to be considered for this principle is 24 hrs. This does not imply that persons are expected to work 24 hours without relief.
- For every month accumulated under Principle 1 where all the voyages were over 24hrs, an additional half-month of sea service shall be credited.
- For a Master 5, the factors may be applied cumulatively with the discount for ROPES at Principal 6 below provided that at a minimum a period of 12 months service is obtained.

NOTE: Candidates who wish to apply for an STCW-95 endorsement should be aware that AMSA will apply the sea service assessment rules specified in Marine Orders and may not accept the service at the higher rate.”

Principle 5 Assessment of sea service in recreational vessels, other industries, or on a vessel in a non deck or engineering role

- The acceptance of sea service should be based on its relevance for developing the skills and competencies required for a certificate of competency, not on the definition of the vessel or the classification of the employment etc.
- Relevant experience that could count towards sea service may be gained in a variety of non-traditional ways.
- The following identifies examples of relevant types of experience that could be counted towards sea service—
 - Experience in non-marine engineering or similar trade ie: car mechanic, etc,
 - Experience on recreational vessels ie: operating a powerboat, crewing on racing yachts, ocean cruising or racing etc.
 - Hospitality staff, scientists, divers, special personnel, military staff, hydrographers etc. serving onboard a vessel
- The experience gained in non-traditional way for applicants for an unrestricted certificate should be balanced with commercial service to avoid an overly narrow range of knowledge, skills and experience.
- Where an applicant’s service is particularly narrow but where thorough induction/onboard familiarisation training is given on a particular vessel, the issue of a suitably restricted certificate of competence may be considered. The restriction may be later removed after wider suitable marine industry experience has been gained.

NOTE: Candidates who wish to apply for an STCW-95 endorsement should be aware that AMSA will apply the sea service assessment rules specified in Marine Orders and will not accept service that is outside of the published guidelines under IMO.”

Principle 6 Assessment of sea service for those completing ROPES or equivalent programs for enhancing the quality of sea service.

- Candidates satisfactorily completing ROPES (or equivalent program) will receive a 50% reduction of sea service.
- A pro-rata reduction in sea service may be applied to those who partially complete the ROPES or equivalent program.