How To Document Sea Service Experience

The first step to getting your USCG Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC) is to document the qualifying sea service experience. Not every Merchant Mariner Credential requires sea service experience, but most do. Check the Credential Information pages to determine the amount of qualifying sea service experience required for the desired credential.

Sea service experience is measured in eight-hour calendar days. Any day that you are on a vessel of any type or size, have a position of responsibility, and are away from the dock for more than four hours counts as one day of sea service experience. On commercial vessels greater than 100 gross tons that maintain a two-watch system where the crew is contracted to work 12-hour days the applicant may be credited for 1.5 days of service for each 12-hour day worked, but this credit is NOT extended to non-commercial vessel experience.

A Sea Day is equal to eight-hours of sea service experience, where any time you are on a vessel of any size or type and away from the dock for more than four hours counts as one calendar day.

One Month is equal to 30 days of sea service experience.

One Year is equal to 12 months or 360 days of sea service experience.

To document non-commercial sea service experience and sea service experience from vessels of less than 200 gross tons use the Small Vessel Sea Service Form USCG form CG 719S provided by the US Coast Guard. Complete one form for every vessel you are claiming sea service experience on. This form consists of three sections:

**Section I Applicant Information**
This section contains basic information about the applicant and the vessel. When completing this section be as descriptive as possible when describing the body of waters the vessel was operated on. If you operated on ocean waters include the name of the ocean.

*Example: Columbia River and North Pacific Ocean between Newport, OR and Westport, WA.*

**Section II Record of Underway Service**
Treat this section like a calendar record of your sea service experience. List the number of days that you were underway for each month of each year, based on your best memory. Use the information from the calendar section to fill in the boxes at the bottom.

The three on the left side include the total number of days from the calendar record; the average hours underway per day; and the average distance offshore.

The on the right side are used to record the number of days served on the Great Lakes; shoreward of the boundary line; and seaward of the boundary line based on the total number of days underway.

The "boundary line" is a line drawn between the most seaward points of land at the entrance to rivers, harbors, bays, sounds, and straights. If the vessel was operated on inland waters (shoreward of the boundary line) the sea day is considered to be an inland day; but if the vessel crossed the boundary line into ocean waters (seaward of the boundary line) than that sea day is considered to be an ocean or near coastal sea day.

**Section III Signature and Verification**
Completing this section is considered documenting your sea service experience. It must be signed by the applicant and the vessel owner, operator or master. If the applicant was the vessel owner than proof of ownership, such as state registrations or vessel documentation, must be included. All original signatures must be included, faxed copies are generally not excepted.