



LP Bulletin

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Bulletin 636 - 5/09 - Foreign crew ID - USA

The United States Coast Guard (USCG) has announced requirements for acceptable forms of seafarer identification which will come into force on the 28th of May 2009.

The new rule applies to crewmember's onboard foreign commercial vessels entering US waters or calling at US ports as well as crew from US commercial vessels returning from a foreign port. The rule requires crew to hold one of the approved documents,

- a passport,
- a US permanent resident card (green card),
- a US merchant mariner credential,
- a US merchant mariner document,
- a transportation worker identification credential (TWIC)
- a seafarers identification document issued by a country signatory to the International Labour Organisation Convention 185.

These requirements must be fulfilled before the vessel is allowed entry into US coastal waters. Penalties apply to both the individual seafarer and the vessels operator if the requirements of this rule are not met, fines could be up to \$25,000 under civil law.

Members are reminded that a vessel would be refused entry to the US if the requirements are not met and as a result the costs of returning a cargo or re-directing a port call could be much larger than the initial fine.

The Association would advise all Members to ensure that crew have the correct documentation in place before joining a vessel; those currently onboard who do not possess such documents may not be able to comply before the rule comes into force and alternative arrangements should be made if the vessel is due to trade in US waters (repatriation, change of crew etc).

The rule comes under the Maritime Transportation Security Act and aims to help the USCG identify crewmembers in US waters

Source of information: United States Coast Guard
<http://www.uscg.mil/>