

# Transition from NZOM STCW-95 with unit standards to Master <500 GT

**This guideline describes how to transition to the Master  
<500 GT certificate from NZOM STCW-95 with Unit  
Standards 6912 and 6913.**

# Transition from NZOM STCW-95 with unit standards to Master <500 GT

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# 1. Overview

## Transition from NZOM STCW-95 with unit standards to Master <500 GT

This guideline is for seafarers who hold a New Zealand offshore master (NZOM) certificate of competency endorsed with STCW-95 (International Convention on the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 as amended) and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) Unit Standards 6912 and 6913 (NZOM STCW-95 with unit standards), issued before 1 April 2014.

### What do you need to do?

You do not need to apply to transition to the new certificate immediately. You may continue to use your existing certificate on vessels less than 500 GT:

- in the near-coastal area until your certificate expires
- as master on vessels less than 500 GT in the unlimited area up to 31 December 2016 or until the expiry date on your certificate (whichever date comes first).

To continue working beyond these dates without interruption you must:

- renew your certificate to Master<500 GT NC limited to the near coastal area (see 2. *Renewing to Master <500 GT NC*) or
- transition to Master <500 GT, which will allow you to continue working as master in the unlimited area (see 3. *Transitioning to Master <500 GT*).

For general information about the transition requirements for certificates issued before 1 April 2014, refer to MNZ's website:

[maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers](http://maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers)

### Disclaimer:

These guidelines provide information and explanations about the requirements set out in the maritime rules, but are not a substitute for the rules themselves, which are the law. These guidelines refer to provisions in the Maritime Rules Part 32, Seafarer Certification. The Director of Maritime New Zealand (MNZ) will grant a certificate only when satisfied that all requirements have been met. In this guideline, any references to 'we' or Maritime New Zealand (MNZ) relating to a decision impacting on the issue or renewal of any seafarer certificate are references to the Director or a person acting under the Director's delegated authority.

[maritimenz.govt.nz/rules](http://maritimenz.govt.nz/rules)

## 2. Renewing to Master<500 GT NC

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The NZOM certificate with STCW-95 endorsement (without unit standards) is deemed equivalent to a Master<500 GT NC certificate, and you can apply to renew it as this certificate if you do not wish to upgrade your certificate to a Master <500 GT.

Note that the Master <500 GT NC certificate complies with STCW regulation II/3 and does not give you master privileges on ships in the unlimited area.

**Note:**

The rest of the information in this guideline applies *only* to the process and requirements for transitioning to Master <500 GT. Refer to the STCW renewal guidelines on MNZ's website for more information about the requirements for carrying over your NZOM STCW-95 certificate to the Master <500 GT NC certificate:

**[maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers)**

## 3. Transitioning to Master <500 GT

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The option to transition to Master <500 GT is only available if you held NZOM STCW-95 with unit standards before 1 April 2014. It upgrades your certificate to allow you to operate in the unlimited area.

The Master <500 GT certificate of competency is issued under STCW Regulation II/2 and entitles you to perform the functions and duties of master on a ship less than 500 GT in any operating area. This is a transitional measure and there are no associated privileges such as Chief Mate or Master <3000GT NC or Watchkeeper Deck.

You can apply to transition from NZOM STCW-95 with unit standards any time before 1 April 2019, but you cannot work as master on an STCW ship in the unlimited area after 31 December 2016 (or after your certificate has expired) until you have a valid Master <500 GT certificate.

The Master <500 GT certificate is more advanced than the Master<500 GT NC certificate, with extra requirements which are set out in this guideline. Applicants must have 24 months' qualifying sea service, provide medical and ancillary certificates and fit and proper person documents, and pass a final exam.

### Interim transition

There is an interim approach if your certificate expires before you are ready to transition to Master <500 GT and need to continue working without interruption when your certificate expires.

This approach is to transition to Master <500 GT NC (see 2. *Renewing to Master <500 GT NC*) and, as part of that application, asking MNZ to provide you with a letter confirming that you held Unit Standards 6912 and 6913 before 1 April 2014. You will receive a Master<500 GT NC certificate that is valid for five years and a letter that enables you to continue to work as master on New Zealand-registered vessels under 500 GT in the unlimited area until 31 December 2016. (There is no training or exam for this approach.)

From 1 January 2017 you must hold a valid Master <500 GT certificate to continue working in the unlimited area. You can use your Master<500 GT NC certificate and letter from MNZ to apply for a Master <500 GT certificate at any time before 1 April 2019. Note that you will also need to meet the requirements set out in this guideline.

### Associated privileges

The Master < 500 GT certificate is a significant advance in competency from NZOM STCW-95 with unit standards. While the new certificate provides the privileges of master of a non-fishing vessel in any operating area, it has no associated privileges such as Chief Mate or Master <3000 NC, or Watchkeeper Deck.

To progress to a more advanced certificate from Master <500 GT, you would need to complete all of the sea service and training requirements set out in STCW Regulations II/1 and II/2 for the higher-level certificate.

## 4. Requirements

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Before you apply to transition to the Master <500 GT certificate, we recommend you check that you can meet the medical fitness and eyesight standards (including for colour vision), and that you understand the fit and proper person requirements.

To apply to transition to the Master <500 GT certificate, you will need to:

- be medically fit and have good eyesight (visual acuity and colour vision)
- be of good character and a fit and proper person
- have a valid NZOM certificate endorsed with STCW-95 and the NZQA Unit Standards 6912 and 6913, issued before 1 April 2014
- provide evidence of at least 24 months' qualifying sea service
- hold the required ancillary proficiencies for Master<500 GT and demonstrate ongoing competence in these where required
- pass MNZ's final examination.

### 4.1 Prior certification and qualifications

You must have obtained an NZOM STCW-95 certificate of competency and the NZQA Unit Standards 6912 and 6913 before 1 April 2014.

### 4.2 Sea service

To be eligible to sit the final exam to transition to Master<500 GT, your sea service must be relevant and appropriate to the requirements set out in the maritime rules.

To progress to Master<500 GT from NZOM STCW-95 with unit standards (or from Master <500 GT NC with MNZ's letter), you must have completed at least 24 months' sea service in charge of a navigational watch on a vessel of 24 metres or more, or 80GT or more. You should have served:

- 12 months within 10 years of the date of your application *and*
- 12 months while operating beyond restricted limits as chief mate or master while holding an NZOM STCW-95 certificate with Unit Standards 6912 and 6913 or equivalent.

## 4. Requirements (continued)

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### Proving your sea service

You are responsible for making sure your sea service is documented and verified by your ship's master or company.

To support your sea service, you must provide at least one of the following documents for each vessel you have served on:

- certificate of sea service (available on MNZ's website)
- completed seafarer's record book
- discharge certificate or discharge book (ensuring that any section on watchkeeping is appropriately signed off).

If it is not included in one of the documents above, you must also provide a reference (on company letterhead) from the ship's master or your employer. The reference(s) must state the start and end dates of your service and duties while in service. Any references you provide must cover your experience, conduct, sobriety and ability.

The documents you provide must contain all of the following details for each vessel you have served on:

- your employer's name and contact details
- the name, tonnage and type of vessel (for example, cargo vessel, tanker, bulk carrier)
- the type of cargo carried and area of operation
- the dates you were employed and the sea time completed between those dates
- your duties.

Any statutory declarations you have made are not acceptable as proof of your sea service.

### Calculating sea service

Relevant qualifying sea service is expected to be on voyages of 24 hours or more, calculated as follows:

- from the sign-on date of starting work on the ship to the sign-off date of discharge (both dates are inclusive)
- by counting each whole calendar month during this period as one month
- for multiple voyages, by adding together extra days that do not fall within a calendar month, with each additional 30 days to be calculated as one month.

Extended time in port is generally not counted as sea service, and nor is time on leave.

## 4. Requirements (continued)

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### Note:

Voyage means a voyage between a port or place of departure and a ship's final port or place of arrival. It includes any period of 24 hours (or more) where you are signed on or employed on the vessel and you remain on board.

**For example:** If your service record shows your sign-on date as 3 March and sign-off date as 14 April, your sea service would be calculated as one month (3 March to 2 April) and 12 days (from 3 to 14 April inclusive).

### Sea service pre-assessment

If you are unsure about whether you have met the sea service requirements, you can ask us to assess your sea service time before you make your full application.

To have your sea service pre-assessed, you need to:

- apply for pre-assessment using MNZ's *pre-assessment form*
- send us the documents we need (see *Proving your sea service* above) to check your sea service.

### Note:

If you are pre-assessed and have the required sea service for the Master <500 GT certificate, add your pre-assessment reference number to your *seafarer certificate application form*.



## 4. Requirements (continued)

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### 4.3 Training

There is no specific training for NZOM STCW-95 certificate holders who have NZQA Unit Standards 6912 and 6913 and are transitioning to Master <500 GT. However, you may wish to contact a training provider to see if they offer any bridging training in the competency standards for the new certificate.

Competency standards specifically developed for the transition from NZOM STCW-95 with Unit Standards 6912 and 6913 to the Master <500 GT certificate cover the differences between the required competencies for these certificates. The standards are based on relevant sections of STCW Code section A-II/2 for a vessel limited by its tonnage, and cover the functions of navigation, cargo handling and stowage, and controlling the operation of the ship and care for persons on board, at the management level.

For more information about training providers and the competency framework for NZOM STCW-95 with Unit Standards 6912 and 6913 to transition to Master <500 GT, refer to MNZ's website:

**[maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers](http://maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers)**

### Final examination

You need to pass a final examination to show you have met the standards of competency required (see 4.3 *Training* above). The exam is based on the competency standards developed for the transition from NZOM STCW-95 with Unit Standards 6912 and 6913 to Master <500 GT.

The final examination is currently an oral examination by an MNZ-approved Maritime Examiner. Your results will be sent to MNZ.

Refer to the MNZ website for more information:

**[maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers](http://maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers)**

## 4. Requirements (continued)

### Ancillary certificates

You must provide certified copies of the ancillary certificates required. If you already have an ancillary certificate that demonstrates proficiency in any of the areas listed above and at the required level, you may use it – as long as all the requirements are met.

Ancillary certificate requirements	Document(s) you must provide
STCW basic training	STCW basic training that complies with STCW A-VI/1 paragraph 2 and covers basic personal survival techniques (A-VI/1-1), fire prevention and fire fighting (A-VI/1-2), elementary first aid (A-VI/1-3) and personal safety and social responsibility (A-VI/1-4). This may be issued as one certificate citing the four elements or as four separate certificates
Proficiency in survival craft and rescue boats other than fast rescue boats (PISC)	STCW survival craft and rescue boats other than fast rescue boats certificate that complies with STCW Code section A-VI/2 paragraphs 1-4 (Table A-VI/2-1)
Advanced fire fighting	STCW advanced fire-fighting certificate that complies with STCW Code section A-VI/3, paragraphs 1-4 (Table A-VI/3)
Charge of medical care on board ship	STCW charge of medical care on board ship certificate that complies with STCW Code section A-VI/4-2
Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) radio operator	As provided for in Maritime Rule 32.114, or recognised equivalent certificate that complies with STCW IV/2

Your ancillary certificates must:

- be current (not expired) when we issue your Master <500 GT certificate  
Note: The following ancillary certificates must be less than five years old from the date of issue (or, if older, you must demonstrate that you have maintained the required standard of competency to undertake the tasks, duties and responsibilities specified in the relevant STCW tables):
  - STCW A-VI/1-1 basic personal survival techniques
  - STCW A-VI/1-2 fire prevention and fire fighting
  - STCW A-VI/2-1 proficiency in survival craft and rescue boats other than fast rescue boats (PISC)
  - STCW A-VI/3 advanced fire fighting (section 3.6 and Table A-VI/3).

For more details, including the information you need to provide to demonstrate currency if you already hold an ancillary certificate, refer to the ancillary certificate guidelines on MNZ's website.

Although it is not an STCW requirement, we encourage you to maintain the currency of your certificates for first aid and charge of medical first aid/care on board ship, in accordance with the requirements of the issuing organisation.

## 4. Requirements (continued)

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Your ancillary certificates must also:

- conform to the STCW regulations and have the appropriate STCW regulation number
- be from a training provider approved under the New Zealand Education Act or by Maritime New Zealand, or from a training provider in a country where MNZ has determined that ancillary training is STCW-compliant. (Refer to the recognition guidelines on MNZ's website for information about recognition of ancillary certificates obtained outside New Zealand.)

### Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) certificate

Before we can issue your Master<500 GT certificate, you must provide MNZ with a certified copy of a valid GMDSS certificate of competency as a specialist radio operator that complies with STCW regulation IV/2. The certificate must be less than five years old from the date of issue.

If you do not have a GMDSS certificate you will need to complete GMDSS training and obtain a course completion letter, and hold a maritime general operator certificate (MGOC) as a radio operator (issued under the Radiocommunications Act 1989 or an equivalent under the International Radio Regulations). Information about how to obtain your GMDSS certificate is available on MNZ's website.

If you already hold a GMDSS certificate, refer to the renewal guidelines on MNZ's website about keeping this certificate current.

**Note:** If you intend to work on ship registered by a flag state other than New Zealand, you will need to check with the administration of that flag state whether it will recognise both your Master<500 GT certificate and your GMDSS certificate.

### Security awareness training

MNZ strongly recommends that you also get an ancillary certificate of proficiency in security awareness training (STCW A-VI/6-1). This certificate is needed if you wish to work on any ship that the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code applies to.

If you do not provide this ancillary certificate, your certificate will have a condition stating that without a current certificate of proficiency in Security Awareness Training (STCW A-VI/6-1), it is not valid for vessels to which ISPS applies.

We will accept a certificate of proficiency in security awareness training certificate that has been approved by the administration of any country with which New Zealand has an agreement for recognition of STCW certificates.

For more information about the ancillary security awareness training or recognition process, refer to the ancillary guidelines or recognition guidelines, respectively, on MNZ's website:

**[maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers)**

## 4. Requirements (continued)

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### 4.4 Fit and proper person

We need to confirm that you are of good character. To help us do this, there are several forms we need from you, which are outlined below.

Requirement	Document(s) you must provide
Be of good character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A character reference describing what you are like as a person. It must:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ be signed and dated</li><li>○ refer to the last 12 months</li><li>○ not be from a family member</li></ul></li><li>• A completed <i>fit and proper person form</i>, which must have been signed and dated no more than three months before we receive your application</li><li>• A completed <i>consent to disclosure of information form</i> so that the New Zealand Police can check your record. You must have signed and dated this form no more than three months before we receive your application</li><li>• A police clearance report for any country or countries outside New Zealand that you have lived in for 12 months or longer in the past five years (covering the entire period you lived in that country or countries)</li></ul>

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Refer to 7. *Forms* for all of the forms that you will need to complete your application.

## 4. Requirements (continued)

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### 4.5 Medical examination and eyesight tests

You need to prove that your medical fitness and eyesight meet the required standard.

Requirement	Document(s) you must provide
Be medically fit	<p>A certificate of medical fitness for seafarers that is valid at the time we issue your Master &lt;500 GT certificate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This is a special medical certificate that complies with STCW regulation I/9. You must get this from an approved medical practitioner, or from a medical practitioner approved for issuing seafarer medicals in another country that is party to STCW.</li><li>• You may use an existing medical certificate if it will be valid (usually less than two years old) when your Master &lt;500 GT certificate is issued.</li><li>• Your medical practitioner will send us a copy or we will accept a certified copy.</li></ul>
Have good eyesight	<p>Eye test results from a registered optometrist showing you have met the required standards for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• visual acuity (including a letter eyesight test). Your visual acuity eyesight test results must be less than 12 months old at the time we issue your certificate.</li><li>• colour vision. This is initially assessed using the Ishihara colour vision test. If you fail the Ishihara test, you will need to take an alternative colour vision test (for more details, refer to the Advisory Circular for Part 34 on MNZ's website).</li></ul> <p>Your colour vision test results (of either test) must be less than six years old at the time your Master &lt;500 GT certificate is issued.</p> <p>Your optometrist will send us the results of your eye tests.</p>

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For more information about the medical and eyesight requirements for this certificate, refer to the guidelines on MNZ's website:

**[maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers)**

## 4. Requirements (continued)

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### 4.6 Identity

We need to confirm your identity. There are several documents we need from you to help us do this.

Requirement	Document(s) you must provide
Prove your identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your completed <i>seafarer certificate application form</i> (remember to sign both boxes)</li><li>• Either your passport (make sure it has not expired) <i>or</i> your driver's licence and birth certificate</li><li>• Four passport-sized photographs (<i>or</i> ask the photographer to provide an electronic copy, which you can then forward to MNZ if you are emailing us your application)</li></ul>

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Refer to 7. *Forms* for all of the forms that you will need to complete your application.

#### Links for these requirements

- *Seafarer certificate application form*
- Apply for or renew a passport [Internal Affairs website]
- Get your driver's licence [NZ Transport Agency website]
- Apply for your birth certificate [Internal Affairs website]

## 5. When and how to apply

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Apply when you have completed all of the certificate requirements. Once we have received all of the information we need from you, it may take us up to 20 working days to process your application, so send it in as soon as possible (and at least one month before you need your certificate).

Make sure you include all of the documents we have asked for. Refer to 5.4 *Checklist* to make sure you have everything you need for your application. (If you have made a mistake or left out something we have asked for, your application is likely to be delayed.)

### 5.1 Certified copies

We need certified copies of your supporting documents, not the original versions.

A certified copy is a photocopy that has been certified as being a true and accurate copy. Certified copies must clearly show the certifier's name and title beneath their signature. Any additional pages must show the initials of the person certifying the document.

Your documents can be certified by:

- a justice of the peace
- a notary public
- a barrister or solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand
- your training provider.

You can get contact details for your local certifiers from the Citizens Advice Bureau or Yellow Pages.

We do not need to see any of the documents you have already sent to us for other applications (unless they have expired or will expire before we issue your certificate). Just make a note about these documents in your application. However, if any of these documents has expired or will expire before we issue your certificate, we need to see a certified copy of the new or renewed document.

## 5. When and how to apply (continued)

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### 5.2 Fees

There is a fee for your application. Refer to the Maritime NZ website for information about fees.

#### **[maritimenz.govt.nz/fees](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/fees)**

You will be invoiced once we have formally received your application. A reference number and instructions explaining how to pay will be sent with the invoice. You can pay:

- online using a credit card or debit card, *or*
- by internet banking or bank deposit

Refer to the MNZ website for more information about how to pay your fees.

**[maritimenz.govt.nz/how-to-pay](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/how-to-pay)**

As well as the application fee, you will have other fees and expenses to pay. For example, you may need to pay for your eyesight tests and medical examination, your training and ancillary courses, and to make copies of your documents and have them certified.



## 5. When and how to apply (continued)

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### 5.3 Application process

This is the application process for this certificate of competency. Complete each step before you move on to the next one.

#### 1 Do you meet all the requirements?

You need to check that you meet all of the requirements for this certificate.

Apply for pre-assessment of your sea service time if you are unsure about meeting the sea service requirements.

#### 2 Do you have the documents we need?

You need to prove that you meet the requirements. Include all of the documents we have asked for with your application form. Use the checklist to help you (see 3.4. *Checklist*).

Remember we need copies, not the originals.

#### 3 Send us your application by courier or email

There are two options for you to send your application:

1. Send your application by email, attaching the scanned documents.  
The application form has information about the requirements for electronic copies.
2. Use a courier to send us your completed application forms and supporting documents.

The addresses are on the application form.

#### 4 Confirmation and/or request sent

We will send you an email or letter to confirm that we have received your application and advise you of any documents we need from you before we can assess your application.

We must receive your payment before we can finalise your application.

## 5. When and how to apply (continued)

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### 5 Assessment and payment of application fee

Once you have sent us all the documents we need, we will assess your application and make a decision. This will usually take 20 working days (about a month) from the time we let you know that we have received your application.

We will send you an invoice with your reference number and information on how to pay the application fee once we begin the assessment. Please note we cannot release your certificate unless payment has been received.

### 6 Issue certificate

We will send you:

- your certificate, if your application has been successful, or
- a letter or email explaining why your application was unsuccessful.

## 5. When and how to apply (continued)

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### 5.4 Checklist

Use this checklist to make sure that you have everything you need for your application.

Check that your documents are complete and have been signed, dated and certified as required.

We need to see all of the documents listed below to confirm that you have met each requirement. The only exceptions to this are documents that you have already sent to us for other applications (just note this in your application). However, if a document has expired or will expire before we issue your certificate, we need to see a certified copy of the new or renewed document.

#### About you

- Seafarer certificate application form* (remember to sign in the boxes)
- Passport or driver's licence and birth certificate
- Four passport-sized photos or an electronic copy
- Character reference
- Fit and proper person form*
- Consent to disclosure of information form*
- Police clearance for other countries (if applicable)
- Certificate of medical fitness for seafarers
- Eyesight test(s) (check that your optometrist has sent your results to us)
- Your pre-assessment reference number if we pre-assessed your sea service time

#### Your current certificate

- Either* your NZOM STCW-95 certificate endorsed with NZQA Unit Standards 6912 and 6913 (issued before 1 April 2014)

Or your Master<500 GT NC certificate and a letter issued by MNZ confirming you held NZOM STCW-95 endorsed with NZQA Unit Standards 6912 and 6913 (issued before 1 April 2014)

## 5. When and how to apply (continued)

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### Your sea service

Include at least *one* of the following for each vessel/period of sea service:

- Certificate of sea service*
- Discharge book (or discharge certificates)
- Seafarer's record book showing your seagoing service

Include the following to cover *all* of your sea service:

- Summary of sea service form*
- Master's and/or employer's reference (testimonial) on company letterhead (unless included in evidence of sea service above)

### Your ancillary certificates and GMDSS

- STCW A-VI/1 basic training
- STCW A-V1/2-1 proficiency in survival craft and rescue boats
- STCW A-V1/3 advanced fire fighting
- STCW A-V1/4-2 charge of medical care on board ship
- STCW A-VI/6-1 proficiency in security awareness training (if completed)
- Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) certificate of competency

### Remember:

- Choose your payment method – credit card, bank deposit or online
- Have your documents certified
- Send your application to us by courier or by email, as early as you can
- Check that your examiner has sent your exam results to us
- Check that your optometrist has sent your test results to us

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## 5. When and how to apply (continued)

## 5.5 Where to send your application

To provide extra security, we recommend that you courier your application forms and documents to us.

Alternatively, you can scan and email your application and supporting documents (refer to the application form for information about how to send your documents electronically).

### **Courier your application to:**

Seafarer Certification  
Maritime New Zealand  
1 Grey Street  
WELLINGTON 6011

*Or*

### **Email your application to:**

seafarers@maritimenz.govt.nz

## 6. Contact us for help

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If you need more information about the requirements for your application, visit the Seafarer Certification section of our website.

**[maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers)**

If you can't find the information you need, send us an email:

**[seafarers@maritimenz.govt.nz](mailto:seafarers@maritimenz.govt.nz)**

Tell us what you need help with and remember to include your contact details (email address and phone numbers).

We need your completed application before we can assess whether you meet the requirements for this certificate of competency. However, you may apply for pre-assessment of your sea service (refer to 4.2 *Sea service*).

## 7. Forms

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To apply for a maritime certificate of competency, there are several forms that you must provide and some that you may provide, depending on your situation.

Everyone applying for this certificate of competency must complete and send us all of the following forms:

- *Seafarer certificate application form*
- *Fit and proper person form*
- *Consent to disclosure of information form*

Other forms you may need to use:

- *Sea service pre-assessment form*
- *Certificate of sea service*
- *Summary of seagoing service form*

**Each of these forms is available on the MNZ website:**

**[maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers)**

**Note:**

You must complete these forms correctly for your application to be valid. Carefully read any notes before you start.