



FEATURES:

Merchant Mariner Credentials and Skin Cancer

In the words of Baz Luhrmann, "If I could offer you only one tip for the future, sunscreen would be it." It recently came to our attention that a Merchant Mariner was having trouble renewing his credentials due to a melanoma diagnosis. The US Coast Guard Navigation and Vessel Inspection NVIC NO. 04-08; Medical and Physical Evaluation Guidelines for Merchant Mariner Credentials, classifies "History of Malignant Skin Tumors" as a medical condition subject to further review. Specifically, the NVIC states if there is a history of malignant skin tumors within the last 5 years, additional evaluation data must be obtained prior to obtaining the credential. In the case of skin tumors, "dermatology consultation documenting staging, histologic diagnosis, Breslow depth, tumor stage, any post-operative therapies, ability to wear protective equipment, ability to perform duties, and operative/ pathology reports are required. Malignant melanoma requires CXR, other imaging studies, if appropriate, and laboratory tests. Basal cell carcinomas with only local excisions do not require this evaluation".

Skin cancer is defined as the abnormal growth of skin cells. It commonly develops on skin exposed to the sun but can be found on other areas of the body. According to the National Cancer Institute, the best way to prevent skin cancer is to protect your skin from the sun. The following recommendations are from their website:

- Stay out of the midday sun (from mid-morning to late afternoon) whenever you can.
- Protect yourself from UV radiation reflected by sand, water, snow, and ice noting that UV radiation can go through light clothing, windshields, windows, and clouds.
- Wear long sleeves and long pants of tightly woven fabrics, a hat with a wide brim, and sunglasses that absorb UV.
- Use sunscreen lotions. Sunscreen may help prevent skin cancer, especially broad-spectrum sunscreen (to filter UVB and UVA rays) with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15.

In the end, the National Cancer Institute comments that even with sunscreen precautions, "you still need to avoid the sun and wear clothing to protect your skin".