

# **Auxiliary Marine Safety Administrative and Management Qualification**

## **Section 11: Oral Board Exams**

### **Learning Objectives**

**Upon completion of Section 11, the member will be able to:**

- 1 – Define “Oral Board”.
- 2 – Identify when it is used and what its purpose is.
- 3- State who conducts an Oral Board exam for either the Auxiliary MSAM or MEES qualification and why.
- 4- State who may serve as an Oral Board Examiner for either the Auxiliary MSAM or MEES qualification and why.
- 5 – Discuss the process for obtaining a Letter of Designation following the Oral Board exam for either the Auxiliary MSAM or MEES qualification.
- 6 – State who conducts an Oral Board exam for the remaining Auxiliary Marine Safety qualifications and why.
- 7 – State who may serve as an Oral Board Examiner for the remaining Auxiliary Marine Safety qualifications and why.
- 8 – Discuss the process for obtaining a Letter of Designation following the Oral Board exam for the remaining Marine Safety qualifications.
- 9 – Discuss the process for entering a Letter of Designation and any Marine Safety qualification into AUX DATA II and who is responsible for doing so.

## **11.0 Oral Board**

### **11.1 Oral Board**

An oral board is an end-of-qualification exam that is held to determine if a member has sufficiently mastered the qualification knowledge to execute the mission tasks effectively, safely and successfully in a professional manner. It is designed to cover not only background content knowledge but also the technical and practical skills necessary to apply that knowledge correctly to the appropriate task. It may include knowledge of current laws, regulations and policies that govern the mission as well as knowledge of resources both necessary and appropriate to the mission. Members may bring whatever resources they feel may be of assistance during the exam unless told otherwise.

### **11.2 Use and Purpose**

An oral board is convened when the member has completed all the required qualification prerequisites and the VO has signed off successful completion of all tasks. The purpose of the oral board is to determine the member's readiness to conduct missions that require the qualification either on their own if appropriate or together with a member of the USCG.

### **11.3 MSAM and MEES Qualifications**

Both the Auxiliary Administrative and Management Specialist (MSAM) and Auxiliary Outreach Specialist (MEES) qualifications are Auxiliary-only in that there are no equivalent Active-Duty USCG qualifications. As a result, there are some differences in the way that oral boards for these qualifications are handled and processed.

#### **11.3.1 Requesting an Oral Board**

Upon completion of the PQS Workbook, the candidate will request that an oral board be convened. The VO will send the request to the DSO-MS who will begin the oral board exam process by designating the Examiners and setting a date and time that works for all members.

### **11.3.2 Oral Board Examiners**

The Oral Board shall consist of at least three Auxiliarists who hold the appropriate MSAM or MEES qualification, and who are designated to conduct the Oral Board by the DSO-MS. The DSO-MS may serve as an examiner if he/she holds the appropriate qualification. Active-Duty Officers may participate and ask questions pertaining to the structure and function of the USCG for the MSAM qualification; those who hold the Marine Science Technician rating or above may sit as Examiners for the MEES oral board. The Oral Board may be conducted by phone or electronic meeting if distance or other consideration prohibits a face-to-face gathering. If the VO cannot meet with the candidate for the Oral Board, then an elected Officer from the member's Flotilla or one of the Oral Board Examiners may sit with the candidate for the Oral Board exam unless the exam is conducted virtually, in which case the presence of an officer would not be required.

### **11.3.3 Letters of Designation (LOD) and AUX DATA II Entry**

Once the Oral Board has been successfully completed, the signed MSAM or MEES qualification package, together with copies of all supporting documentation, shall be submitted to the DSO-MS for review and signature. A cover letter with the candidate's name, address, phone contact information, email address, Division and Flotilla, and EMPLID shall be submitted with the completed PQS package. Once signed, the DSO-MS shall forward the entire package to the District DIRAUX with a request for his/her signature, the issue of a Letter of Designation (LOD), and entry into AUX DATA. ALCOAST 45/10 states: "Due to the unique nature of the AUX-MSAM and AUX-MEES PQS subject matter, Letters of Designation for these qualifications will be reviewed and signed by Regional Directors of the Auxiliary." (April 2013). A copy of the LOD will be placed in the member's personnel file at DIRAUX, and the original will

be sent to the member. It is important for members to understand that the LOD is proof of their qualification and needs to be kept in a safe place in case it is needed for future reference, and it is the responsibility of the member to verify that a copy of the LOD has been placed in their personnel file at DIRAUX.

#### **11.4 All Remaining Marine Safety Qualifications**

The remaining MS/MEP qualifications as found on the Prevention Directorate website under the Marine Safety tab in the sidebar are handled differently than the two Auxiliary-only qualifications discussed above. These qualifications require on-the-job training with the USCG and their availability is determined by the needs of each Sector which are communicated to the DSO-MS through the Auxiliary Sector Coordinator (ASC) each year as the result of a Gap Analysis. If a Sector does not need assistance in a particular mission area, training for any related qualifications will not be offered. When training is offered, it is with the expectation that the member will provide service to the Sector in that mission area. Auxiliarists who earn a particular qualification serve as “force-multipliers” for the USCG to assist in the accomplishment of authorized missions that meet strategic goals, maintain marine safety or security and provide environmental protection. When Sectors stop using the Auxiliary for extended periods of time (over 1 year), a refresher on the qualification is recommended to keep the member up to date on the qualification. When a new USCG command comes in, the Auxiliary is not always used as with the previous command, so updating qualifications and communication with the AUX LO is beneficial.

##### **11.4.1 Requesting an Oral Board**

Upon successful completion of all the qualification requirements, the candidate will request the VO to convene an Oral Board; each Sector may have its own procedure for doing so. Some may have the VO contact the Chief of either Prevention, Logistics (Planning) or Response depending on the qualification while other Sectors may have the VO make the request through the Sector

Training Officer. The responsible person will set a date and time for the Oral Board, and select the Examiners who will participate.

#### **11.4.2 Oral Board Examiners**

The Oral Board consists of at least three Active-Duty or Reserve members who hold the equivalent USCG qualification; Auxiliary members who hold the Auxiliary version of the qualification may be asked to participate. One Active-Duty or Reserve officer will be designated to conduct the Oral Board, which is usually held in person at a location specified by that USCG member. The VO may or may not be one of the Examiners.

#### **11.4.3 Letters of Designation (LODs) and AUX DATA II Entry**

Once the Oral Board has been successfully completed, either the USCG officer conducting the exam or the VO will have the member submit the completed qualification packet to the COTP or his/her designee together with a letter requesting an LOD for that qualification. The person signing an LOD is either the COTP or his/her designated individual. In some Sectors, this would be the Deputy Sector Commander; in other Sectors, the COTP may authorize one of the Department Chiefs to sign LODs for qualifications earned through their departments. At no time will an Auxiliary member be allowed to sign a Letter of Designation for a qualification. The LOD will be given or sent to the Auxiliary member who is then responsible for submitting a copy of it along with a copy of the complete PQS packet to DIRAUX through the DSO-MS for entry into AUX DATA II. The copies of the packet and LOD will be placed in the Auxiliarist's personnel file at DIRAUX. The member must understand that it is their responsibility to keep the original qualification packet and LOD in a safe place since it is the only proof that the qualification was earned.