

MERIT MARK CRITERIA

In order to make your job easier, we have put together a number of case scenarios that might answer specific questions that you have concerning a particular recommendation, which you intend to submit. Understand, these rules are not chiseled in stone. There may very well be extenuating circumstances that must be considered in order to make an accurate judgment. If this is the case, it is imperative that you present **all** of the facts and don't assume that the recommendation would speak for itself.

REMEMBER, the Area Monitor and the Chief Commander do not have personal knowledge of the member, and must rely only on what is written in the recommendation.

The following material is offered as examples of work that is required to earn a Merit Mark. These examples relate to recommendations that are prepared for work performed on a single specific project. In most cases our members work on various projects during the year so number of hours and work involvement can be reduced or spread out.

It is imperative that the information that you provide gives the Chief Commander and the Area Monitors **ALL** of the facts.

- 1) **EDUCATIONAL:** Teach a minimum of two class sessions or proctor a minimum of four sessions. Be sure to signify that you are referring to class sessions not complete courses. Include the number of lesson plans that were prepared.
- 2) **TITLES:** Don't rely on job titles. Tell us what this member did in terms of work accomplished and hours of work involved. Members cannot be recommended by stating, "fulfilled the duties of their office." For instance: Commander's Aide, Law Officer, Flag Lieutenant, Chaplain, Historian, Property Officer, Photographer and Port Captain. We must know what these officers actually did to earn a Merit Mark.
- 3) **HOSTING PARTY:** hosting a party at member's home adds a plus when combined with other work performed. Be sure to include the number of hours of work including preparations.
- 4) **CRUISE AND RENDEZVOUS:** Certainly, one of the most important social functions that our members attend and contribute their efforts. General rule is work on one social event over the past 12 months does not contribute enough effort to earn a Merit Mark. However, there are certainly exceptions to this rule. For instance, a cruise that takes place over a number of days with work being performed each day. This may involve planning sessions and necessary committee meetings resulting in hours of work. Actual work performed requires a substantial number of work hours.
- 5) **BOAT SHOW PARTICIPATION:** Effort here is usually the number of hours worked. How many days did show run? How many watches did the member stand? How many hours did member work? Was set-up or tear down involved?
- 6) **COOPERATIVE CHARTING:** How many trips? How many corrections to nautical charts? How many total reports? Number of hours involved?
- 7) **VESSEL SAFETY CHECK:** The new examiner must pass examiner's qualification course, which involves 5 supervised boat inspections. Thereafter, he or she must inspect a minimum of 10 boats per year to qualify for a Merit Mark.

- 8) **MEETING ATTENDANCE:** Attending meetings is a privilege of membership and by itself doesn't count towards Merit Mark consideration. When combined with other work performed, it is definitely a contributing factor. Exceptions to this rule are attending Executive Committee Meetings as an elected member or attending District or National Meetings as a delegate. Specify number of meetings attended and in what capacity.
- 9) **TELEPHONE COMMITTEE:** To earn a Merit Mark for work performed solely on this committee requires a factual count of calls made and hours spent. Quantify the number of calls. (How many times)
- 10) **COMMITTEE WORK:** As a "stand alone" recommendation should include information on: (1) number of committee meetings, (2) number of reports written, (3) total hours of work.
- 11) **OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES:** Work performed for other organizations does not contribute towards Merit Mark consideration. The word "liaison" is often used to justify these recommendations. In order to qualify for a Merit Mark the outside activity must be an official squadron function and designated as such by the Squadron Commander with the consent of the Executive Committee. This would include work performed for the USCGAux and the Sea Scouts.
- 12) **GIFTS:** Gifts of money, meeting space, printing etc. are very helpful to the Squadron, but they should not be considered appropriate for Merit Mark consideration. Instead, commander should present these donors with a certificate of appreciation. Personal effort must be involved.
- 13) **CREDIT FOR FUTURE WORK:** Merit Marks are awarded for work that has been completed. Future efforts must be handled *later* as a separate recommendation marked "Supplemental."
- 14) **WORDS TO WATCH OUT FOR:** words such as "helped, aided, offered advice, assisted and worked with," without further supporting information are most uninformative. Spell out the actual tasks performed by these individuals.
- 15) **MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES: Active, Family and Apprentice.** By a vote at the September 2003 Governing Board Meeting the class of Apprentice Member was approved. This vote allows apprentice member to take advanced grades and elective courses, serve on appointed committees and earn family Merit Marks. The criteria for judging apprentice member's effort will be the same as that used for active and family members.