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maritime mobile or maritime mobile-satellite services without a certification from the Federal Communications Commission. Accounting authorities with interim certification as of the effective date of this rule must submit to the application process discussed in §3.20. They will be “grandfathered”, i.e., granted permanent certification provided they demonstrate their eligibility and present a proper application.

(b) U.S. citizenship is not required of individuals in order to receive certification from the Commission to be an accounting authority. Likewise, joint ventures need not be organized under the laws of the United States in order to be eligible to perform settlements for U.S. licensed vessels. See, however, §3.11.

(c) Prior experience in maritime accounting, general commercial accounting, international shipping or any other related endeavor will be taken into consideration by the Commission in certifying accounting authorities. The lack of such expertise, however, will not automatically disqualify an individual, partnership, corporation or other entity from becoming an accounting authority.

(d) Applicants must provide formal financial statements or documentation proving all assets, liabilities, income and expenses.

(e) Applicants must offer their services to any member of the public making a reasonable request therefor, without undue discrimination against any customer or class of customer, and fees charged for providing such services shall be reasonable and non-discriminatory. This requirement will be waived for applicants who settle their own accounts *only* and are eligible to be “grandfathered” during the initial application period. However, should the need for additional accounting authorities be proven, these accounting authorities will be required to offer their services to the public or relinquish their certification.

[61 FR 20165, May 6, 1996, as amended at 64 FR 40776, July 28, 1999]

§3.11 Location of settlement operation.

(a) *Within the United States.* A certified accounting authority maintain-

ing all settlement operations, as well as associated documentation, within the United States will be assigned an AAIC with a “US” prefix.

(b) *Outside the United States.* A certified accounting authority maintaining settlement operations outside the United States will be assigned the same AAIC as that originally assigned to such entity by the administration of the country of origin. However, in no case will an entity be certified as an accounting authority for settlement of U.S. licensed vessel accounts unless the entity is requesting to conduct a settlement operation in the United States or has already been issued an AAIC by another administration.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

§3.20 Application form.

Written application must be made to the Federal Communications Commission on FCC Form 44, “Application For Certification As An Accounting Authority” in order to be considered for certification as an accounting authority. No other application form may be used. No consideration will be given to applicants not submitting applications in accordance with these rules or in accordance with any other instructions the Commission may issue. FCC Form 44 may be obtained from the Commission by writing to the address shown in §3.61.

§3.21 Order of consideration.

(a) Accounting Authority applications will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. When applications are received on the same day, the application with the earliest mailing date, as evidenced by the postmark, will be processed first. Interim accounting authorities seeking permanent certifications through the “grandfathering” process will not compete with other applicants during the first 60 days following the effective date of these rules which is allowed for submission of their applications. After the “grandfathering” process is completed, all other applicants will be processed as in paragraph (a) of this section.

(b) At any given time, there will be no more than 25 certified accounting

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authorities with a minimum of 15 “US” AAICs reserved for use by accounting authorities conducting settlement operations within the United States. The Commission will retain all valid applications received after the maximum number of accounting authorities have been approved and will inform such applicants that should an AAIC become available for reassignment in the future, the Commission will conditionally certify as an accounting authority the oldest of the qualified pending applicants, as determined by the order of receipt. Final certification would be conditional upon filing of an amended application (if necessary). The Commission will inform the applicant of his/her conditional selection in writing to confirm the applicant’s continued interest in becoming an accounting authority.

§ 3.22 Number of accounting authority identification codes per applicant.

(a) No entity will be entitled to or assigned more than one AAIC.

(b) AAICs may not be reassigned, sold, bartered or transferred and do not convey upon sale or absorption of a company or firm without the express written approval of the Commission. Only the FCC may certify accounting authorities and assign U.S. AAICs for entities settling accounts of U.S. licensed vessels in the maritime mobile and maritime mobile-satellite services.

(c) Accounting authorities who are “grandfathered” during the initial application period may retain their interim AAIC.

§ 3.23 Legal applicant.

The application shall be signed by the individual, partner or primary officer of a corporation who is legally able to obligate the entity for which he or she is a representative.

§ 3.24 Evidence of financial responsibility.

All applicants must provide evidence of sound financial status. To the extent that the applicant is a business, formal financial statements will be required. Other applicants may submit documentation proving all assets, liabilities, income and expenses which supports their ability to meet their per-

sonal obligations. Applicants must provide any additional information deemed necessary by the Commission.

§ 3.25 Number of copies.

One original and one copy of FCC Form 44, “Application For Certification As An Accounting Authority” will be required. Only applications mailed to the Commission on official, Commission approved application forms will be considered. Applications should be mailed at least 90 days prior to planned commencement of settlement activities to allow time for the Commission to review the application and to allow for the informal public comment period.

§ 3.26 Where application is to be mailed.

All applications shall be mailed to the Accounting Authority Certification Officer in Washington, D.C. The designated address will be provided on the FCC Form 44, “Application for Certification As An Accounting Authority”.

§ 3.27 Amended application.

Changes in circumstances that cause information previously supplied to the FCC to be incorrect or incomplete and that could affect the approval process, require the submission of an amended application. The amended application should be mailed to the Commission immediately following such change. See also §§ 3.24 and 3.51.

§ 3.28 Denial of privilege.

(a) The Commission, in its sole discretion, may refuse to grant an application to become an accounting authority for any of the following reasons:

(1) Failure to provide evidence of acceptable financial responsibility;

(2) If the applicant, in the opinion of the FCC reviewing official, does not possess the qualifications necessary to the proper functioning of an accounting authority;

(3) Application is not personally signed by the proper official(s);

(4) Applicant does not provide evidence that accounting operations will take place in the United States or its territories and the applicant does not