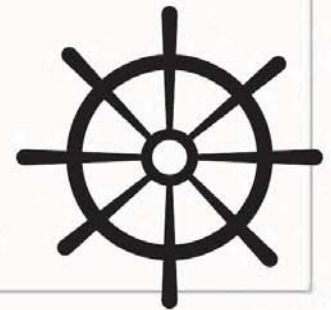




SHIP'S CAPTAIN

JOB DESCRIPTION

A ship's captain takes overall command of a vessel, its cargo or passengers, and crew. In this role, you oversee the navigation and handling of the ship, manage the crew, and ensure the safe and timely passage of cargo or passengers. Each class of vessel—from cruise ships and ferries to tankers and cargo ships—requires specialized skills, and every captain has a legal duty to keep an accurate log of voyages.



SALARY

Newly qualified officer ★★☆☆☆

Experienced captain ★★★★★

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Wide range of opportunities across various sectors • Reduced demand for travel and goods during economic downturn can affect job prospects

AT A GLANCE



YOUR INTERESTS Seas and oceans • Ships and sailing • Geography • Mathematics • Engineering • Physics • Information Technology (IT)



ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS A good general education is required to train as a ship's officer. A degree in maritime science or similar is desirable.



LIFESTYLE Captains work in shifts and may also be on call. Leave periods vary in length, but are often one-for-one—the same length as your previous voyage.



LOCATION The captain is stationed on the ship's bridge, but also has an office onboard for paperwork. Captains spend long periods of time away from home.



THE REALITIES Responsibility for crew and passenger safety, and valuable cargo, makes this a high-pressure job. Overtime and reimbursed living costs boost pay.

CAREER PATHS

To become the captain of a ship, it is necessary to become licensed, either through an accredited training program or by passing a series of exams after spending many hours at sea. As you gain experience as a deck (navigation) or technical officer, you move through the ranks, taking more responsibility for other officers and crew.

TRAINEE With good school grades in English, science, and mathematics, you can apply to train as an officer. Training allows you to study while gaining onboard experience in junior positions.



GRADUATE You can apply for accelerated officer-training posts, or a range of junior officer positions, with a specialized industry-accredited degree.



▼ RELATED CAREERS

- ▶ **NAVY SAILOR** *see pp. 234–235*
- ▶ **COAST GUARDSMAN** *see pp. 238–239*
- ▶ **FISHING VESSEL SKIPPER** Manages the running of a commercial fishing vessel. Roles include piloting, navigation, using fish-locating sonar, and bringing in, storing, and arranging the sale of the catch. Fishing vessel skippers need a minimum of 18 months' sea-faring experience to qualify for the job.
- ▶ **MARINA MANAGER** Coordinates staff and services in a leisure marina, from allocating moorings to ensuring that maintenance and refueling facilities are available. The job may also include contacting potential customers, marketing, and maintaining financial records.

SKILLS GUIDE



Excellent communication skills for making clear radio transmissions, often in international waters.



The ability to form and motivate a team of crew members with varying levels of experience.



Strong leadership skills and the ability to motivate, instruct, and inspire confidence in your crew.



Effective problem-solving skills for dealing with issues or emergencies in a calm, controlled manner.



Excellent numerical skills in order to perform accurate navigational calculations.

CRUISE LINER CAPTAIN

Commands all onboard staff, from engineers to entertainers, oversees operational functions, such as planning routes and docking at port, and socializes with passengers at the captain's table.



CONTAINER SHIP CAPTAIN

Has responsibility for loading and unloading containers safely, and for navigating and course-setting this class of exceptionally large vessel.



SUPPORT VESSEL CAPTAIN

Commands a range of specialized vessels, such as survey ships, anchor-handling ships for oil rigs, and transportation vessels for positioning new offshore wind farms.

SHIP'S CAPTAIN To become the captain of a ship, you will spend several years working in different officer roles. After reaching the rank of captain, you can choose to command a vessel at sea or work onshore for a maritime agency or port authority.



TANKER OR BULK VESSEL CAPTAIN

Oversees the transportation of liquids, such as oil, or gases, and bulk cargos, such as grain, ore, and coal. Tanker captains have specialized training in transporting hazardous materials safely.