

COAST GUARDSMAN



SALARY

Seaman recruit ★★★★★

Chief Master Petty Officer ★★★★★

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Smallest branch of the military •
Approximately 42,000 coast
guardsmen on active duty

JOB DESCRIPTION

Coast Guardsmen undertake search-and-rescue missions in coastal areas, providing emergency support to ships and people in difficulty at sea. They also monitor shipping movements, recommend safety procedures, and are responsible for checking and maintaining safety equipment, as well as reporting any pollution incidents and illegal shipping activities in a specific area.



CAREER PATHS

Initial training to be a US Coast Guardsman begins with Basic Training. Around the fourth week of training, you can request a location for your first assignment and the type of unit you wish to serve. You can also request to serve ashore or afloat.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE You must have a high school diploma or a GED with 15 or more college credits to enlist in the US Coast Guard.

COLLEGE GRADUATE A bachelor's degree is required for those who wish to apply to Officer Candidate School. Some specialties may require a master's degree.

RELATED CAREERS

- ▶ **SHIP'S CAPTAIN** *see pp. 220–221*
- ▶ **NAVY SAILOR** *see pp. 234–235*
- ▶ **CUSTOMS OFFICER** Monitors and prevents illegal trade across international borders.
- ▶ **FISHING VESSEL SKIPPER** Takes overall responsibility for a commercial fishing boat, planning routes, ensuring that the crew are safe, and arranging sale of the catch once in port.



COAST GUARDSMAN
Once you become a Coast Guardsman, you may choose to specialize. Advanced courses and "secret" security may be required for some specializations.



SKILLS GUIDE



Excellent communication skills for giving clear instructions over radio and in person during rescues.



The ability to work effectively as part of a team in dangerous and high-pressure conditions.



Good leadership skills for directing rescues, which may involve multiple air- and sea-rescue teams.



The ability to solve complex, high-risk problems in dangerous conditions while protecting lives.



Excellent numerical skills for keeping accurate logs and using navigational equipment.

AT A GLANCE



YOUR INTERESTS Serving your country • Security • Law Enforcement • Mathematics • Environmental Science • Geography • Boats • Navigation



ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS Age, education, and residency requirements must be met in order to join the military. Physical and written exams are required.



LIFESTYLE Deployment is generally for a few days to a few weeks at a time, although some deployments can be up to three months or longer.



LOCATION Guardsmen can request a location, but final determination is made by an assignment officer based on need. Locations can be ashore or afloat.



THE REALITIES The US Coast Guard has one of the oldest fleets afloat. The vessels are not built for comfort, and work can often be dangerous.



MARINE SCIENCE TECHNICIAN

Keeps waters clean and mariners safe, from ports to shorelines. Responds to oil and hazardous waste spills in national waters, inspects vessels for safety, protects wildlife and natural resources, and keeps waters free from international violators.



BOATSWAIN'S MATE Responsible for deck maintenance, small boat operations, and navigation. Supervises all personnel assigned to a ship's deck force or shore unit. Also conducts search and rescue missions and assists navigation teams.



MARITIME ENFORCEMENT SPECIALIST

Protect national ports and waterways by providing security and law enforcement. Maritime enforcement specialists also guard against terrorism and ensure force protection and port security and safety.

INTELLIGENCE SPECIALIST Collects and analyzes communication signals using computer technology, then produces and identifies intelligence from information collected. Intelligence specialists also maintain intelligence databases, libraries, and related files.