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GETTING YOUR START IN THE MARITIME INDUSTRY



Maritime Required Credentials

Before starting a career in the maritime industry, one needs to obtain a Transportation Worker ID CARD (TWIC), US Coast Guard Merchant Mariner's Credential (MMC), and a medical certificate (issued by the US Coast Guard).

STEP 1: TWIC: www.tsa.gov/for-industry/twic
You **MUST** have a TWIC before applying for the MMC.

STEP 2: MMC and Medical Certificate:
www.dco.uscg.mil/nmc/merchant_mariner_credential/

As part of the application process for the MMC you will need the following:

- Application CG-719B Application for Merchant Mariner Credential. And (if applicable) a CG-719C Conviction Statement.



- Physical Exam CG-719K/E Application for Medical Certificate for Entry Level Ratings.
- Drug Testing Drug Testing using a CG-719P Periodic Drug Testing Form

This submission process is outlined at the above website.

You must get your TWIC before applying for the MMC. With these credentials, you can work on the deck, in the engine room or in the steward's department of a ship.

The MMC comes with various ratings depending on the type of work you want to do. Your rating changes as you advance your career. Some of the ratings establish the size of boat your experience and knowledge qualify you to work on; some establish what kinds of waters you can work in (inland, coastal, and open waters); and others list the positions you are qualified for (deckhand, mate, third engineer, etc.).

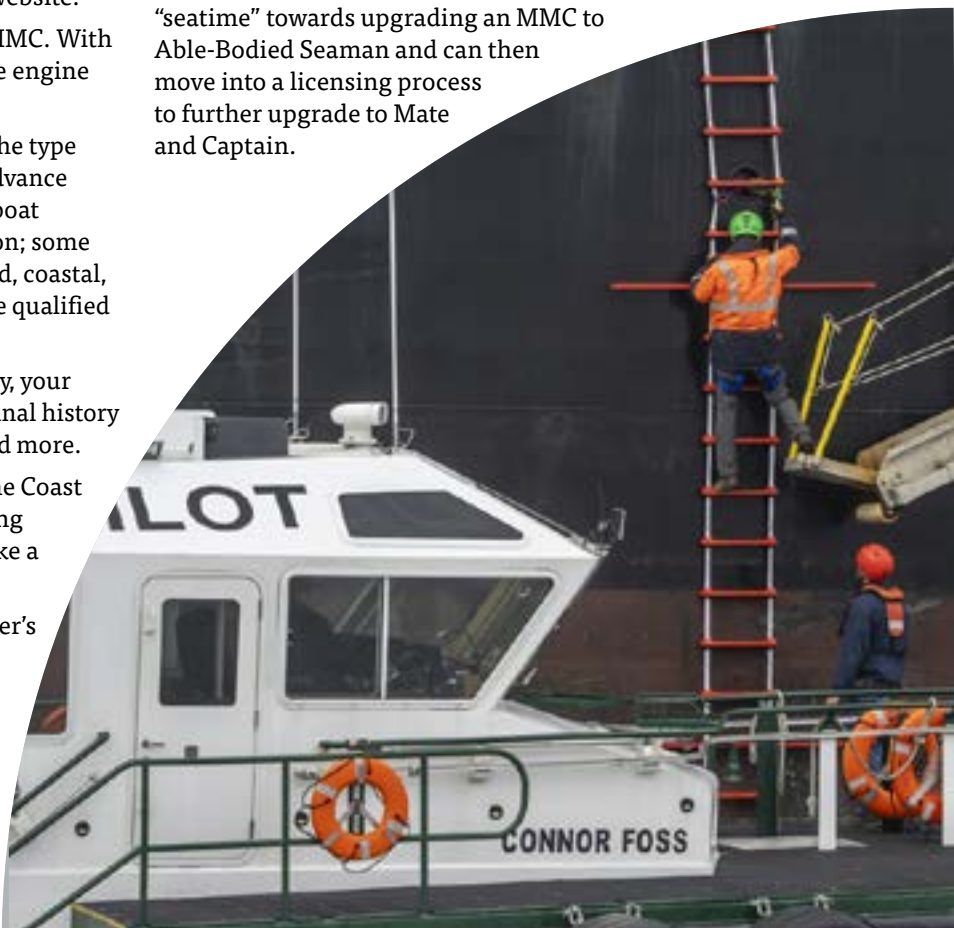
The MMC application will ask about your work history, your medical history, and your criminal history. Your criminal history includes DUI's, sealed records, suspended licenses and more.

You will take a drug test and be fingerprinted, and the Coast Guard will look at your driving record, too. Depending on which rating you're applying for, you may also take a physical and a written exam.

With an entry level US Coast Guard Merchant Mariner's Credential (MMC) application one will receive an Ordinary Seaman (OS) Ranking. As an Ordinary Seaman one can seek a job as Deckhand. Deckhand job duties on tugboats include assisting in the wheelhouse with watch standing duties, general upkeep of vessel including washing, cleaning,

and cooking, maintenance of vessel including chipping and painting, line handling for ships and barges, assisting in making and breaking tow which includes working with heavy gear such as shackles, chain, wire straps, and lines.

Once employed as an OS, one will earn experience and "seatime" towards upgrading an MMC to Able-Bodied Seaman and can then move into a licensing process to further upgrade to Mate and Captain.



Getting Started as a Merchant Mariner

Getting started and moving up in vessel operations can be very different from other industries. Sea-based jobs can be dangerous, and workers carry a lot of responsibility to do the job right. Because of this, many of the training requirements for sea-based positions are established by the U.S. Coast Guard – and many require extensive experience at sea. Fortunately, you have many options to learn the skills you’ll need.

Depending on the type of career you’d like to have and where you want to be in the future, you can choose to:

- Receive on-the-job training, then earn the necessary licenses and certifications as you go
- Earn a two-year vocational degree
- Earn a four-year college degree

While the first option may seem simplest, more mariners are getting degrees than ever before because of the opportunities for advancement that they usually provide. From there, you’ll move up based on experience, additional training or specializing, and hours logged out on the water.

Becoming a Captain

One of the most well-known positions on a boat is that of captain, or master. This individual is in charge over all – and ultimately responsible for the safe operation of the vessel. For this reason, a captain must have U.S. Coast Guard licenses that document extensive experience and training. There are, however, multiple paths to the position! If you want to work as a Captain in the U.S. Merchant Marine (another name for privately-owned, U.S. registered vessels), there are three main approaches.

The traditional approach (or “Hawse pipe method,” which is named for the hole in the vessel that the anchor chain runs through) is to work your way up the ranks with on-the-job training. This can take more than a decade of hard work – but it is also more possible to advance in this way in maritime than in most other career fields. Sailors interested in a quicker path to the top can choose one of two other methods: Vocational School or a Maritime Academy. The Maritime Academy path is for those interested in receiving a bachelor’s degree along with their on-the-water education, while Vocational Training usually costs less money and offers either an associate degree, a certificate, or no college credit at all. Both offer an accelerated route to becoming a licensed Mate. From there, graduates must work their way up to master through additional sea time and testing.



Engineering Pathways

The pathways for Deck and Engineering are quite similar, in that both are governed by the US Coast Guard's merchant mariner credentialing system. Both are categorized according to officer or rating endorsement to the merchant mariner document, and also by either national or International/STCW certifications.

To get into an engineering position on a vessel, there are several main entry points. These include:

- Direct employment by maritime vessel operators (which may or may not be through a union hall). These jobs are typically deck hand or wiper. Some employers offer Apprenticeships that can lead to an officer endorsement such as Mate or Assistant Engineer
- Enrollment in public training and education institutions. This could include getting a four year degree at MARAD-sponsored State Maritime Academy, which can lead directly to an officer endorsement – or attending a vocational college that offers training programs leading to officer or rating endorsements. These generally result in a certificate, associate degree, or bachelor degree
- Enrollment in private training institutions. Options include for profit or non-profit schools. Some are affiliated with labor unions

The US Coast Guard National Maritime Center administers the professional qualification process. You can find all you need to know at their web site, including a list of USCG-approved courses.

Advancement is earned through a combination of professional competencies, and

- Coast Guard examination Sea Service is characterized by the size, horsepower, configuration, industry and operating location of the vessel.

Additional Maritime Credentials

The MMC and the TWIC are not all it takes to work on a ship. Your company may require special training (perhaps including a separate physical exam and drug test), and specific sectors may also require specialized training.

Of note are the credentials required for work on deep sea (ocean-going) vessels. The entry-level requirement for ocean-going vessels is Basic Safety Training (BST), which teaches personal survival techniques, fire prevention and firefighting, basic first aid, and personal safety and social responsibilities.

If you plan to work on a cruise ship, you'll also need to learn passenger assistance, crowd control, passenger safety and more.

The requirements for BST and many other trainings are established by the STCW (International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers). STCW training is available at many Coast Guard-approved schools, and the Coast Guard has many resources to help you figure out what training you might need.

ALWAYS SAFE.
ALWAYS READY.



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