

TraCen Cape May Education Update #326

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Education Center Closed 22-25 March

TraCen Cape May's Education Center will be closed from Tuesday, 22 March through Friday, 25 March 2011. No testing will be conducted during that period. **Please plan accordingly.**

Question of the Week

Q: I want to teach 7th grade when I leave the Coast Guard and want to find out how to get an education degree. Where do I start?

A: It's admirable that you want to teach our children. Is there a specific subject you're most interested in teaching? If so, are you aware you don't necessarily have to have a degree in education to teach?

In many states you can have a bachelor's degree in some other major and still teach. Some states are actively looking for people who have degrees in a subject for which there's a shortage of teachers. For example, math and science majors are sought to teach those subjects and are sometimes eligible for monetary incentives to do so. Check out the information throughout the Teachers Count web site (start at <http://www.teacherscount.org/wannateach/faq.shtml#5>).

Also, Troops to Teachers provides counseling and referral services to military personnel interested in beginning a second career in public education as a teacher. And the DANTEs Troops to Teachers office will help you identify teacher certification requirements, programs leading to certification, and employment opportunities. The main web site (http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/troopstoteachers/index.asp) has all kinds of information about the program. Including a new on-line way to determine if you're eligible to participate in Troops to Teachers: http://www.dantes.doded.mil/dantes_web/troopstoteachers/eligibility.asp.

If you have a question you'd like answered as a Question of the Week, e-mail it to me at andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil.

Web Page in the Spotlight

There's a lot of stuff on the TraCen Cape May web site you might not check out if you didn't know it was there. So this week, I'm spotlighting **Continuing Education & Training** (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/conted.asp>).

Grammar & Usage Corner

This feature will touch on grammar and usage questions as well as confused/misused words. This week, at the suggestion of a reader, we'll look at the words *commensurate* and *commiserate*. (These definitions are from *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*.)

Commensurate is an adjective meaning equal in measure or extent, coextensive ("The years of her life were commensurate with the early years of the republic") or corresponding in size, extent, amount, or degree ("The first lieutenant gave the new seaman a job commensurate with his abilities").

Commiserate is a verb meaning to feel or express sorrow, compassion, or sympathy for ("When the honor guard presented the flag to the soldier's widow, the president commiserated with her").

If there are any word usage, grammar, or similar issues you've encountered, please e-mail them to me at andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil.

Take the ACT on Thursday, 31 March

If you're trying to qualify for a Coast Guard advanced education program (e.g., ACET, PPEP, DCIT, etc.) and need to have current SAT or ACT scores, I'll be administering the ACT (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/act.asp>) on Thursday, 31 March.

Let me know if you want to take it. I have only three copies on-hand and it's first come, first served.

TA & Income Tax Deduction/Credit

If you used TA to pay for one or more courses in calendar year 2010, you may receive from your school an official-looking statement showing how much you (i.e., the Coast Guard) paid to your school for tuition. This form (IRS form 1098-T) is provided in case you're eligible for education-related deductions from and credits to your income tax. Be aware that only money you personally paid to the school can be used to determine if you qualify for such deductions and credits. That is, tuition assistance (and GI Bill funds) can't be included, since that money was an education benefit, not part of your earned income.

You can find the IRS publication which goes into depth about these deductions and credits is at <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p970.pdf>.

Eligibility to Take Rating or E-PME Test

There seems to be some confusion among supervisors and would-be examinees as to what a person needs to complete to take a rating or E-PME test.

Rating End-of-Course Test

To advance to E-5 and E-6 in all rates you must take and pass an end-of-course test (EOCT) on the Enlisted Performance Qualifications (EPQs) for your rate. (If you're striking for BM3, DC3, FS3, MK3, or SK3 you must also take an EOCT).

To prepare for the EOCT you complete the appropriate rating course (such as ME2 or OS1) which you order from the Coast Guard Institute through your ESO (provide your employee ID number). The course will be sent directly to you by mail at your Coast Guard address.

After completing the course, you download the EPQs for your rate (see below) and demonstrate your ability (under actual or simulated conditions) to complete each EPQ for the next higher pay grade. (See Article 5.C.7.a. of the Personnel Manual). Make sure you have the most current version of the EPQs. On page 2 of each rate's EPQs is the following statement:

"I certify that the person named below has satisfactorily completed all rate related course work and Enlisted Performance Qualifications (EPQ) for pay grade E-_____ and is eligible to take the end of course test (EOCT)."

This statement must be signed by your shop chief or division officer and shown to your ESO before you'll be allowed to take the EOCT. **NOTE: A new Rating Performance Qualification System (RPQS) is being implemented for all rates. This process began with the MST rate and is expected to be complete by 2014. Once the process is complete, EPQs will be called Rating Performance Qualifications (RPQs) and EOCTs will be called Rating Advancement Tests.**

E-PME Advancement Qualification Exam (AQE)

To advance to any pay grade in all rates you must also complete the Enlisted Professional Military Education (E-PME) Performance Requirements and learn the E-PME Knowledge Requirements for the next higher pay grade. Like the EPQs, you download these from the CGPortal (see below). Completing the Performance Requirements means demonstrating mastery of each one.

In addition to demonstrating mastery of the relevant Performance Requirements, those seeking to advance to the even pay grades (E-4, E-6, and E-8) must also complete an Advancement Qualification Exam (AQE).

- The E-4 AQE covers the E-3 and E-4 Performance and Knowledge Requirements.
- The E-6 AQE covers the E-5 and E-6 requirements.
- The E-8 AQE covers the E-7 and E-8 requirements.

You order the Study Guide that corresponds with the AQE you plan to take by providing your ESO with your employee ID number. The Study Guide will be sent directly to you by mail at your Coast Guard address.

On page 2 of the Performance Requirements is the following statement:

"I certify that the person named below satisfactorily completed all EPME performance requirements and related course work for pay grade E-_____ and is eligible to take the Advancement Qualification Exam (AQE)."

It, like the parallel statement on the EPQs, must be signed by your shop chief or division officer and shown to your ESO before you'll be allowed to take the AQE.

Downloading Your EPQs and Performance & Knowledge Requirements

To download the EPQs for your rate and the E-PME Performance and Knowledge Requirements for all enlisted personnel, go to the CGPortal (<https://cgportal.uscg.mil/>) and click on the "Training & Education" button on the blue menu bar, then follow this path: Learning Management System > Enlisted Advancement.

For EPQs, select the relevant category the select your rate and you'll find a link to the EPQs under "Course Materials" If you're an MST, select "Rating Performance Qualification System", then "000000 MST Rating Performance Qualification System (RPQS)", then the RPQ for the applicable pay grade. **NOTE: Eventually, this is what all ratings will be using.**

For E-PME requirements, select "Enlisted Professional Military Education (EPME)" then the relevant pay grade and, under "Course Materials", you'll find separate links for the "Knowledge Requirements" and the "Performance Requirements".

Do I Need a Degree to Get the Job I Want?

Many Coast Guard personnel are more interested in working with their hands (for example, carpentry, gunsmithing, plumbing, locksmithing, electrical work) than they are in sitting in class for five hours a day to get a degree. Still, everyone tells them they need to get a degree to succeed in the civilian labor market so they feel they have to do so.

But before you jump into a degree program, think about your ultimate employment goal and work backwards from it. When planning a car trip, you don't just start driving and hope to end up somewhere you wanted to go. You have a destination in mind and figure out the best route to get there. This should be the way you also plan your career, both in the Coast Guard and in the civilian world.

Let's say you want to work as a video game designer. Assuming you want to work for a company that does nothing but design and market video games, call a half dozen of them and talk with someone who makes hiring decisions in the HR department or the like. Ask what kind of training and/or education they're looking for in new hires. Ask specifically if the people they hire need a degree, a certificate of some kind, or if demonstrated ability (e.g., via a portfolio or other samples of your work) is good enough.

Remember: a college degree requires you to take many courses totally unrelated to your field of interest. Roughly half the courses you take to earn a degree fall into this category. If you're more interested in acquiring the knowledge necessary to start working in the field that interests you, a degree may not be for you.

There are a number of paths you can take once you know whether most likely employers require a degree. You can

- work with someone who has the knowledge you want to acquire (a mentor-protégé or apprenticeship relationship, formal or informal);
- learn it on your own via resources available for free (often on the Internet, see <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/distance.asp#knowledge>);
- take college courses just in your area of interest and, perhaps, earn an academic certificate in the process (see "Academic Certificates" at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/degreedesc.asp#certs>); or
- take non-credit courses that you have to pay for, for example Excelsior College's Professional Development courses (<http://www.excelsior.edu/web/center-for-professional-development>) or the Graduate School's courses (<http://graduateschool.edu/>), which GI Bill education benefits will likely cover.

First find out if a degree is something you need or want. If you don't need a degree, but you want one and/or what you learn will be useful, by all means work toward one. The point is, don't jump into a degree program just because everyone else is doing so.

New CGMA Education Loan

Coast Guard Mutual Assistance (CGMA) has just announced a new education loan, which came into being on 01 March 2011 (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/loans.asp#cgma>). This interest-free loan replaces any existing education loans offered by CGMA. It will provide up to \$2,000 to eligible clients with qualified education expenses. The proceeds from this loan may not be used for child care costs or to purchase a computer. They may, however, be used to cover the cost of parking, tolls, and other transportation-related expenses.

Applicants will not need to provide a budget form since the loan is not based on need. Unlike the Supplemental Education Grant (SEG) program (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/grants.asp#seg>), this loan may be used for graduate degree programs.

Only one education loan will be authorized at a time. That is, one education loan must be paid off before another can be authorized. You can find the application for this loan at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/CGM11.pdf>.

See CGMA's flyer at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/CGMAloan.pdf>. An ALCOAST announcing this loan will be published in the next few weeks.

Using Skillsoft at Home: Free On-line Courses on Hundreds of Subjects

Most Guardians are unaware of the free resource they have at their fingertips wherever they have computer access. This resource is called SkillSoft and it's accessible through the CGPortal (<https://cgportal.uscg.mil/>). Just click on the "Training & Education" button on the blue menu bar and scroll down. You'll see "Skillsoft Single Sign-On" where you can log in to use it at work. Below that you'll see "SkillPort Dependent Registration". To log in from home, the URL is <https://uscg.skillport.com/skillportfe/login.action>.

The courses fall into these general categories:

- Business skills & certifications
- Desktop applications
- IT professional curricula & certifications
- CG Unit Leadership Development Program
- Information systems technician
- Information systems management
- Legal compliance curricula
- Environmental, safety and health, and transportation curricula
- DHS training requirements

In addition, you can also Books 24x7, an on-line library of hundreds of books covering topics related to business, IT, office and personnel management, and office computer applications.

NJROTC Seeks Instructors

All over the country high schools have NJROTC (Navy Junior ROTC) programs that need retired Coast Guard, Navy, and Marine Corps personnel to serve as instructors. If you're interested, check out the NJROTC web site instructors pages, starting at https://www.njrotc.navy.mil/instructor/instructor_index.asp.

Officers Using TA – Beware of the Payback

A reminder to officers who are considering using tuition assistance (TA). For every course you take using TA, you're required to serve two years (if you're a regular) or four years (if you're a Reservist) after the course ends. PSC will entertain requests to waive that service obligation, but if it does you'll be required to repay the TA used during your last two (or four) years of service on a pro-rata basis.

For example, let's say you're a regular officer who used TA to take two courses in the same term (\$750/course), which ends on 14MAY2011. According to the law, you're obligated to serve two years in the Coast Guard after the date the courses end. That means your service obligation would end on 14MAY2013 (give or take a day). But you decide to resign (or retire) effective 31DEC2011 -- still owing 16.5 months of service.

How much would you have to pay back, assuming PSC didn't hold you to the service obligation? Just take the ratio of time still owed to the number of months required ($16.5 \div 24$) and multiply it by the amount TA paid (\$1,500): \$1,031.25.

The TA reimbursement is only required, however, if the officer in question isn't going to be working in another capacity for the Coast Guard – either as a Reservist (in the case of a regular) or as a civilian. In such a case, the individual would be obligated to serve out the remaining service requirement as a Reservist or civilian employee.

In the case of someone who's approaching the 30-year mandatory retirement age, she can't obligate service, so (because of her retirement) will be considered to be involuntarily separating. As a result, the Institute will not require her to reimburse the Coast Guard for the TA used during her last two/four years of service. However, she will have to complete the course(s) paid for with TA before retiring.

01 April Deadline for May Servicewide PDE Corrections

If you met all the qualifications for advancement by 01 February 2011, PSC will automatically send a SWE for you to the ESO at the examination board listed on the Personal Data Extract (PDE). ***Your ESO has nothing to do with PDEs and you cannot request a SWE.***

Check your PDE immediately, if you haven't already done so, to make sure you check **everything** on it is correct. Remember: it's **your** sole responsibility before 01 April 2011 to ensure all PDE data is accurate, to "[r]eport any discrepancies to your administration or Servicing Personnel Office (SPO)", and to "ensure that corrective action was taken". (See paragraph 4.A. of ALCGENL012/11 (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/doc/ALCGENL012-11.pdf>.) "The online PDE must show status of eligible in order to receive an exam. . . . Failure to report and verify online PDE corrections may result in a not eligible status for SWE or loss of points in the final multiple."

Ensuring everything on your PDE is accurate includes ensuring your examination board name and OPFAC are correct.

- Are you going to be on leave or TAD on the date of your SWE?
- Will you be in-transit due to a PCS move on the date of your SWE?
- Are you going to be away from the unit listed on your PDE for any other reason on the date of your SWE?

If so (and if you want to take the SWE), do the following:

- find a unit you know you'll be geographically near on your SWE date,
- contact the ESO at that unit and ask if it's OK to take your SWE there,
- assuming the ESO says "yes", ask for the unit's OPFAC,
- let your SPO know what the name and OPFAC of that unit so the info on your PDE is changed.

PSC will automatically send your exam to the unit list as your exam board on your PDE.

Substitute exams are authorized ONLY in emergencies. Regular leave (even if you scheduled a Caribbean cruise six months ago) is not an emergency. A wedding – even your own – is not an emergency. For more information on just what circumstances justify requesting a substitute exam, see Article 5.D.3. of the *Personnel Manual*.

If you change the Exam Board on your PDE and later find out you won't be able to take your SWE at the new location, let your ESO know immediately.

For info on studying and test-taking skills, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/studying.asp>.

How Do I Choose a Major?

Picking a degree and a major is a decision that can directly affect your future career opportunities and your success in whichever field you choose to go into. When making this choice, you should consider a number of factors including: your current career path, future job markets, timeline, and flexibility. Here are a few questions you should answer before you select a degree and a major:

- Do I want to continue on my present career path?
- Does my current career match the future job market?
- Do I want the quickest path to a degree, regardless of the major?
- Do I want a specific major or a major that leaves my options open?
- What level degree do I want: associate's, bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree?

For more about choosing a major and a degree level, stop by the Education Center to look through the *Book of Majors*, *10 Best College Majors for Your Personality*, or *Quick Guide to College Majors and Careers* or to pick up a copy of "Selecting the Right Degree and Major" or *College Majors That Work*.

Scholarship Opportunities

- The Jersey Cape Military Spouse's Club is offering four \$1,000 scholarships to deserving dependents of Cape May-area uniformed personnel. Its purpose is to help meet post-secondary educational expenses. The award will be made on the basis of scholastic abilities, character, leadership, and extracurricular activities.

Eligibility requirements and the application are available from <http://coastie2coastie.net/jcmssc/index.xhtml>. Don't be surprised if you're asked to complete a survey. The survey is just the gateway to the application form. **The deadline for submitting applications via this web site is 31 March 2011.**

- The Wildwood chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is offering a \$500 scholarship for seniors at Wildwood High School or Wildwood Catholic High School.

For more information, contact Mr. John Burgin (TraCen Cape May Facilities Engineering) at 609-898-6948 or 609-536-2754.

- Also, the director of the Tillman Foundation is hoping more eligible Guardians will apply for the Tillman Military Scholarship program this year than in the past. So far, no Guardians have been chosen to receive one of these scholarships. **Applications for the 2011-2012 academic year open on 07 March 2011.** Check out the foundation's web site for eligibility criteria and other application information: <http://www.patillmanfoundation.org/tillman-military-scholars/apply/>.

Service-wide Exam Study Strategies

(from "Keys to College Success" by BarCharts, Inc.)

- **Study!** This may be a case of stating the obvious but you would be surprised how many students don't bother.
 - Studying with soothing music in the background (contrary to popular opinion) can enhance your concentration.
 - Floral scented candles and mixed floral potpourri facilitate learning (strange but true).
 - Studying in a soft chair or on a cushy bed may not be the best strategy.
 - Active learning may require walking around the room or sitting on the edge of a chair. Wake up your body – wake up your mind.
- **Study space:** Your regular study space should be as quiet and comfortable as possible, and large enough to have easy access to everything you need for studying (text and reference books, paper, pencils, rulers, etc.)
 - Libraries, study lounges, or private rooms are ideal.
 - Get rid of clutter. Clear the desk or table of all materials not related to the current project.
- Tutoring is not a negative thing! Get help early, before the academic damage is irreversible. Many schools offer free tutoring in a variety of subjects.
- Study groups are great, but in general studying alone is more effective.

And check out the studying and test-taking skills described at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/studying.asp>.

Success as an On-line Student

The following list, from the Illinois On-line Network, describes what qualities a student should possess to be successful in on-line learning programs:

- Be open-minded about sharing life, work, and educational experiences as part of the learning process.
- Be able to communicate through writing.
- Be self-motivated and self-disciplined.
- Be willing to "speak up" if problems arise.
- Be willing and able to commit to 4 to 15 hours per week per course.
- Be able to meet the minimum requirements for the program.
- Accept critical thinking and decision making as part of the learning process.
- Have access to a computer and an Internet connection (preferably high-speed).
- Be able to think ideas through before responding.
- Feel that high quality learning can take place without going to a traditional classroom.

ION's web site (<http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/tutorials/pedagogy/StudentProfile.asp>) expands on each of these points and provides other pointers for would-be distance-learning students.

Going one step farther, the University of Georgia has come up with an on-line assessment tool you can use to determine if computer-based distance learning is for you. It's called READI (Readiness for Education At a Distance Indicator, <http://goml.readi.info/>). "Upon completion of READI-SmarterMeasure, you will receive a score report which will not only help you understand your strengths and opportunities for improvement, but will also provide you with resources to help you succeed."

How to Go to College Almost for Free

Whether you'd like more money for your own education (even if you're using TA or receiving GI Bill benefits) or for a dependent, you should check out <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/scholarships.asp#strategy>. You'll see that finding money for college *is* possible using a logical, linear (and not all that daunting) methodology devised by Ben Kaplan.

Also, the Education Center recently acquired Mr. Kaplan's video, "Finding College Cash in Tough Times" (<http://www.cityofcollegedreams.org/store/finding-college-cash-in-tough-times>). After a short introduction it covers the following topics:

- Part I: Exploding 3 Myths about Paying for College
- Part II: 3 Strategies for Maximizing Need-based Financial Aid
- Part III: 3 Steps for Finding Merit Scholarships
- Part IV: 3 Components of a Winning Scholarship Game Plan
- Part V: 3 Strategies for Making Your Application Shine
- Part VI: Concluding Thoughts & Final Quiz

Although I can't lend out the video, you can watch it in the Education Center. Please contact me (andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil) if you're interested in seeing it. The total running time is 71 minutes. If there's enough interest to warrant it, we'll show it in the auditorium; otherwise, in the Education Center.

Re-taking ASVAB Tests

Are you interested in going to "A" school for a particular rate, but realize your ASVAB scores aren't high enough? You may be unaware that at any time you can re-take one or more of the tests which comprise the AFCT (Armed Forces Classification Test) – the version of the ASVAB available only to military personnel.

Before you pick up the phone to call your ESO to schedule a test, however, keep in mind two things. First, whatever score you get on the re-test (higher, lower, or the same) it becomes your new official score. Second, if you're unsatisfied with the score you get on a re-test, you must wait six months to take that test again.

Other Considerations

- The VE score represents a scaled composite of the scores on two separate tests: PC and WK. You can't take a single test to improve your VE score.
- The WK test is a vocabulary test and, as such, is virtually impossible to prepare for. If you've become an avid reader since you took the ASVAB at a MEP Station or have memorized a dictionary, you may improve your WK score greatly. But if not, you should think twice about re-taking it – especially if your existing score is relatively high.
- You can qualify for five ratings' "A" schools (AET, AMT, AST, ET, IT) either by getting the required composite score or by getting an AFQT score of at least 65. (Your AFQT score is equal to $AR + MK + (2 \times VE)$.) To qualify for these schools via the AFQT score, you do *not* have to have a minimum AR score of 52.

For more information about the AFCT/ASVAB, each of its tests, and how to prepare for them, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/asvab.asp>.

TraCen Cape May Testing Calendar

Tests at TraCen Cape May are administered by appointment according to the following schedule:

Mondays (0800): Defense Language Proficiency Tests
 Tuesdays (0800): EOCTs and AQEs*
 Thursdays (0745): college tests, CLEP tests, DSSTs, SATs, ACTs

- * If operations or your work schedule make it impossible for you to take an EOCT or AQE on a Tuesday morning, you can take it on a Thursday morning.

This schedule leaves most of the day on Tuesdays, as well as all day on Wednesdays, Fridays available for other occasional tests, counseling, and other face-to-face interactions with you. When no one is taking a language test, the doors to the Education Center are open on Mondays, as well.

If you call and I don't answer the phone, I'm usually administering a test (and, because of the noise, can't talk on the phone) or otherwise busy with someone in the office. E-mail is the best way to get in touch with me at andrew.g.webb@uscg.mil.

Leaving the Coast Guard?

If you're leaving the Coast Guard within the next twelve months (whether through retirement, resignation, or expiration of your enlistment), you should be making plans for what you'll be doing after you take off your uniform for the last time. Check out the information on my web site related to career transition (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/careertrans.asp>).

Also, stop by the Education Center to check out the (small) supply of booklets related to rejoining the civilian work force. Here's are the topics of the booklets:

- Jobs With a Future
- How to Develop Job Resources
- The Resume
- The Cover Letter: A Resume Should Never Stand Alone
- The Mature Resume: The Resume with Experience
- The Follow-up Letter
- The Interview
- How to Choose a Career: A Guide to Self-Assessment
- Civilian Again
- Leaving the Service ... and Beginning Your Next Career
- Military to Civilian: Your Resume and Job Hunt
- Effective Goal Setting: How to Reach the Goals You Set for Yourself

You should also request an education assessment from the Coast Guard Institute (<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/collegefaq.asp>) to get a transcript of college credit you've acquired through your service in the Coast Guard. This is a two-step process: request an assessment, request an official copy of the resulting transcript be sent to one or more colleges of your choice. ***If you don't request an assessment before you leave active duty, you can't get one (or a transcript) later.***

If you're not planning to go to school right away, you'll probably need to find work. Here are two excellent resources for finding a job – or even a second career. Also, Military.com has a very good series of web pages devoted to veterans (<http://www.military.com/Careers/Home>).

And don't discount the idea of working in the public sector. Not only are there thousands of jobs in the federal government, identical to private-sector jobs in which you can put your skills, knowledge, and experience to use while maintaining job security unavailable in the private sector (<http://www.fedjobs.gov/>), governmental entities at all levels – state, county, municipality, school district, port district, etc. – provide similar benefits.

ACCC's Library Open for Studying

One more thing: the new campus's classrooms, labs, and library are all state-of-the-art. Even if you're not ready to register for classes right away, you should take the opportunity to visit the campus and look around. The Director of Academic and Student Services has extended a personal invitation to anyone who'd like to use the library to study, for research, or for pleasure reading. It's very quiet, well-lit, and has very comfortable furniture.

Quick Reference Study Guides

The TraCen Education Center also has a binder full of SparkCharts Quick Reference Guides on almost 40 subjects. You're welcome to use these in the Education Center or make copies to take with you. You can check out the subjects available at <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/capemay/Education/books.asp#spark>.