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United States Coast Guard

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COMDTINST 5213.9
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COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 5213.9

Subj: FORMS MANAGEMENT AND AUTOMATION

1. PURPOSE. To provide policy and procedures for administering, implementing, creating, maintaining, funding, automating, and using forms designed for conducting Coast Guard business. This includes paper and automated forms created for the Coast Guard (CG) Standard Workstation (CGSW).
2. ACTION. All Coast Guard unit commanders, commanding officers, officers-in-charge, deputy/assistant commandants, and chiefs of headquarters staff elements shall comply with the provisions of this Instruction. Internet release is authorized.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. Section I, Chapter 4 and Chapter 6 Part II of the Information and Lifecycle Management Manual, COMDTINST M5212.12A are hereby cancelled. The Catalog of Forms, COMDTINST M5213.6 is hereby cancelled and incorporated into the Directive, Publications, Forms and Reports Listing (DPFRL).
4. DISCUSSION. Forms are important tools in the life cycle management of collecting, organizing, transmitting, and retrieving data. They constitute a principal method of controlling operations, evaluating the effectiveness of a program, and are also needed to provide reliable raw data that can be used in formulating policies, making decisions, and coordinating or directing operations. Forms management and automation is a staff function that provides one of the essential methods of controlling the creation and use of records. The provisions of this Instruction affect forms approved by Commandant (CG-6) for Service-wide use and issuance of Other Government Agency (OGA) forms. All electronic forms used by the Coast Guard are created using the Adobe Acrobat software. All Adobe forms are accessible via the Adobe[®] Acrobat Reader version 8.0 or higher. Automation eliminates running out, using the wrong forms, handling information more than once, and obsolescence. Forms with Stock Points other than Adobe will be supported by the Surface Force Logistics Center (SFLC) Baltimore, MD. The Catalog of Forms is the printed directory of all official CG forms.

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NON-STANDARD DISTRIBUTION:

5. DISCLAIMER. This guidance is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is it itself a rule. It is intended to provide operational guidance for Coast Guard personnel and is not intended to, nor does it impose legally-binding requirements on any party outside the Coast Guard.
6. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS.
 - a. The development of this Instruction and the general policies contained within it have been thoroughly reviewed by the originating office in conjunction with the Office of Environmental Management, and are categorically excluded (CE) under current USCG CE # 33 from further environmental analysis, in accordance with Section 2.B.2. and Figure 2-1 of the National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures and Policy for Considering Environmental Impacts, COMDTINST M16475.1 (series). Because this Instruction contains guidance on, and provisions for, compliance with applicable environmental mandates, Coast Guard categorical exclusion #33 is appropriate.
 - b. This directive will not have any of the following: significant cumulative impacts on the human environment; substantial controversy or substantial change to existing environmental conditions; or inconsistencies with any Federal, State, or local laws or administrative determinations relating to the environment. All future specific actions resulting from the general policies in this Instruction must be individually evaluated for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), DHS and Coast Guard NEPA policy, and compliance with all other environmental mandates. Due to the administrative and procedural nature of this Instruction, and the environmental guidance provided within it for compliance with all applicable environmental laws prior to promulgating any directive, all applicable environmental considerations are addressed appropriately in this Instruction.
7. DISTRIBUTION. No paper distribution will be made of this Instruction. Official distribution will be via the Coast Guard Directive (CGDS) DVD. An electronic version will be located on the following Commandant (CG-612) web sites. Internet: <http://www.uscg.mil/directives>, Intranet: <http://cgweb.comdt.uscg.mil/CGDirectives/Welcome.htm>, and CG Portal: <https://cgportal2.uscg.mil/library/directives/SitePages/Home.aspx>.
8. PROCEDURES. To ensure regulatory compliance, all forms for CG-wide use will be contracted out through a vendor. Office Chiefs and special staff divisions shall submit Form/Report Information and Authorization Record, Form CGHQ-3342, to Commandant (CG-612), Forms Manager, for technical support and approval. Include the following with each request:
 - a. Signed Form/Report and Authorization Record, Form CGHQ-3342 with Section A and C filled out;
 - b. Draft or final copy of the directive, or applicable portion thereof, prescribing use and availability of the form; and,
 - c. FTA for forms automation requests.
 - d. Provide an electronic template or paper copy, as a sample, to obtain a quote for the cost of creating the form:
 - (1) For revised forms, itemize the changes to be implemented to the existing form; and,

- (2) The Forms Manager will obtain a quote from the vendor for the requested changes.
- e. For printed, hard-copy forms (including any graphics) include a completed Printing and Binding Requisition to the Public Printer, Form SF-1; <http://www.gpo.gov/customers/sf1.htm>.
- f. Creation/revision of forms commences upon completion of the following:
 - (1) Receipt of a Funds Transfer Authorization (FTA) from originating office; and,
 - (2) Verification of funds received.
9. **RECORDS MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS.** This Instruction has been evaluated for potential records management impacts. The development of this Instruction has been thoroughly reviewed during the directives clearance process, and it has been determined there are no further records scheduling requirements, in accordance with Federal Records Act, 44 U.S.C. 3101 et seq., National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) requirements, and the Information and Life Cycle Management Manual, COMDTINST M5212.12 (series). This policy does not have any significant or substantial change to existing records management requirements.
10. **OBJECTIVE.** The objective of forms management and automation is to ensure that forms are designed and managed to meet the needs of our customers while adhering to standards mandated by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Coast Guard:
 - a. Simplify and reduce paperwork and document processing;
 - b. Eliminate unnecessary or duplicate forms and consolidate those with similar or like functions;
 - c. Reduce systems operating cost and increase serviceability by developing forms that are easy to read, fill-in, transmit, process, and retrieve;
 - d. Reduce storage and reproduction costs;
 - e. Ensure standardization of design and printing;
 - f. Ensure applicable laws and regulations, i.e., Paperwork Reduction Act, Freedom of Information & Privacy Acts, and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act are considered;
 - g. Ensure that automated forms are managed and controlled; and
 - h. Strive for automation with all forms.
11. **DEFINITIONS.**
 - a. **Form.** A form is a fixed arrangement of captioned spaces designed for gathering prescribed information. This definition encompasses Automated Data Processing (ADP) system forms that are preprinted on continuous feed paper or overlays used to generate formatted computer outputs.
 - b. **Electronic Form.** An electronic form is an electronic representation or facsimile of a prescribed form that resides in an electronic medium. It has the capability for integration into the Coast

Guard's computerized information systems and can be managed and processed electronically. This is also referred to as automated forms.

- c. Bootleg Form. A bootleg form is an unapproved form created by users. These forms are duplicative, inconsistent with forms design standards, and do not have an approved Coast Guard form number. Automated bootleg forms can impact database management systems by collecting data in a different format or preventing access to other potential users. Bootleg forms are not authorized to be used or placed on the CG servers, portal and/or websites.
- d. Creation/Revision. All new forms, as well as revisions to currently existing forms, must go through Commandant (CG-61) for processing to ensure standardization and compliance with the applicable laws in Paragraph 10.f of this Instruction.
- e. Forms Library. The Forms Library is a database of CG and CGHQ forms. All such forms that are new, revised, or removed from the system must be verified through this database. The Library shall retain approved CG forms and will serve as the distribution point for authorized forms CG-wide. No OGA form shall be automated without prior written approval of the originating government agency. Automation will increase office productivity but will not eliminate the requirement for control and standardization. The Library will serve as the final repository for all approved forms.

12. FORMS IDENTIFICATION.

- a. Coast Guard (CG) Forms. CG forms are prescribed by the program manager for and used by at least two districts, Headquarters' units, or the public in conducting Coast Guard business.

NOTE: CG forms that are used by the public must be approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

- b. Coast Guard Headquarters (CGHQ) Forms. CGHQ forms are prescribed by the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) for use at Headquarters only.
- c. Standard Forms (SF). Standard forms are those forms identified by the letters "SF" before the number and are prescribed by a Federal agency, pursuant to its authority, and approved by the General Services Administration (GSA) for mandatory government-wide use.
- d. Optional Forms. Optional forms are those forms identified by the letters "OF" before the number. These are developed for use in two or more federal agencies and are approved by the GSA for non-mandatory use.
- e. OGA Forms. OGA forms are produced by another agency such as the Department of Defense (DOD), or the Environment Protection Agency (EPA), and, are adopted for CG use to fulfill a requirement. The CG does not keep an inventory or maintain these forms, which are owned by their respective agency. Therefore, these agencies are the final authority concerning use of their forms.
- f. Local Forms. Local (or internal) forms are those created by a Unit Commanding Officer (CO)/Officer-in-Charge (OIC) specifically for internal use within their command. Local forms

are created for convenience and specific uses when a CG form is not applicable. The CO/OIC shall establish procedures for the forms design, use, and automation. It shall be labeled with the unit name/acronym and form number (e.g. CGTRACENPET-002, CGYARD-15). It must conform to standards outlined in Paragraph 14 of this Instruction.

- g. Printed. Printed forms are those which, for various reasons, cannot be printed electronically. These include: awards and promotion certificates; carbon/carbon-less forms; forms that are a set with multiple pages together; and those in a pad that have one side glued. These cannot be downloaded from the Forms Library and have to be physically stocked at the Surface Force Logistics Center in Baltimore, MD. They are ordered using their respective National Stock Number (NSN).

13. RESPONSIBILITIES.

- a. Commandant (CG-61). The Chief, Office of Information Management (CG-61), is responsible for administering the Coast Guard forms management program. Responsibilities include:
- (1) Implementing GSA, DHS, GPO, and OMB standards and guidelines for developing and approving forms;
 - (2) Developing and applying standards governing the design of forms in all media;
 - (3) Analyzing and approving all requests for new and revised CG and CGHQ forms;
 - (4) Maintaining the Catalog of Forms and Forms Library to ensure that it is current;
 - (5) Providing technical assistance to requesting offices in forms composition, preparation, and reproduction;
 - (6) Assigning form numbers and edition dates for new forms, as well as revised forms;
 - (7) Notifying SFLC Baltimore of all changes to paper forms via a Form Change Notice, Form CGHQ-3932;
 - (8) Conducting a periodic evaluation of forms for continuing effectiveness and improvement;
 - (9) Ensuring that each form is supported by a directive, which sets forth instructions for obtaining, preparing, and submitting the form;
 - (10) Reviewing all directives pertaining to forms; and
 - (11) Establishing and maintaining historical, alphanumeric, and functional files of all approved forms.
- b. Headquarters Office Chiefs. Office Chiefs and special staff divisions are responsible for prescribing forms required for the operation of Coast Guard functions within their program areas. This includes forms used in the Service-wide business of the Coast Guard and those used locally at Headquarters. Specific responsibilities include:

- (1) Submitting requirements for forms (new, revise, or cancel) to Commandant (CG-612) Forms Manager for review and approval by filling out Section A of Form/Report Information and Authorization Record, Form CGHQ-3342;
- (2) Issuing a directive prescribing the use of all required forms;
- (3) Advising Commandant (CG-612) Forms Manager of cancelled or obsolete forms under their cognizance;
- (4) Procuring, maintaining, and providing, upon request, forms stocked in their office, as well as an inventory list of forms under their cognizance;
- (5) Conducting an annual, periodic review of all forms under their cognizance to justify its continued existence or to identify the need for revision;
- (6) Monitoring inventories of paper forms to assure timely stock replenishment and determining viability for electronic conversion; and
- (7) Providing funding via an FTA for new and revised forms.

c. SFLC Baltimore. Commanding Officer of SFLC Baltimore shall:

- (1) Continue to stock and distribute paper forms until those forms are obsolete or automated.
- (2) Devise a system for receiving and tracking forms requests, if necessary.

d. Unit Commanding Officers/Officers in Charge. Unit CO/OICs who wish to have their local forms considered for CG-wide use must submit to Commandant (CG-61) via their CGHQ program, a Form/Report Information and Authorization Record, Form CGHQ-3342, with Section A filled out.

14. FORMS STANDARDS. To ensure regulatory and agency compliance, all CG/CGHQ forms will incorporate the following defined standards:

- a. Fonts. The fonts on ALL CG/CGHQ forms should be Arial.
- b. Pitch. The pitch on the body of ALL CG/CGHQ forms will be 8. This pitch may be adjusted to suit the needs of the form.
- c. Borders. ALL CG/CGHQ forms will incorporate borders, which should not detract from the main purpose of the form. The preferred margin is one-half (1/2) inch. One-quarter (1/4) inch is the minimum.
- d. Reserved Fields. The top, bottom-left corner, and bottom-right corner are reserved fields. See the example in Figure 1.
 - (1) Top. The top is reserved for DHS/USCG identification, form title, and OMB approval information if applicable. The top line will spell out U.S. Department of Homeland Security in all capital letters, Arial 10 point, centered. On the next line, U.S. Coast Guard, in all

capital letters, Arial 10 point, centered. On the next line will be the form title in all capital letters, Arial, 12 point, bold, centered. If the form is public-use and requires OMB approval, the top right will contain the OMB control number and expiration date.

- (2) Bottom-left corner. The bottom left corner is reserved for the form number (e.g., CG-1234) and the revision date. The revision date will be in the (MM/YY) format, Arial 9 point.
- (3) Bottom-right corner. The bottom right corner is reserved for page numbers on forms with multiple pages. The page number will be in the “Page x of x” format, Arial 9 point.
- e. Sub-Title. Sub-titles in the body of the form must not detract from the title requirement of the form. The pitch must be, at a minimum, one pitch smaller than the title pitch to prevent confusion. It cannot exceed the pitch of the title itself. It may be adjusted to suit the needs of the form.
- f. Multi-page forms. CG/CGHQ forms requiring more than one page will conform to the standard in Paragraph 14.d. (3) above.
- g. Privacy Act Statement. Forms determined by the Privacy Officer to require a Privacy Act Statement must be included in the form.

Figure 1: Sample view of reserved fields and other standard displays.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY U.S. COAST GUARD TITLE OF FORM		OMB Control Number: 1625-XXXX Expiration Date: mm/dd/yyyy
Privacy Act Statement (if applicable)		
Directions		
Body of form		

CG-1234 (05/12)
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15. FUNDING.

- a. New Forms. The initiating office shall provide the initial two-year supply of all paper forms stocked at SFLC Baltimore, MD, or provide funds to cover stock for the first two years.
- b. Automated Forms. Each office should conduct a review of forms under their cognizance and develop a plan for automation. The office requesting the form(s) must submit an FTA to Commandant (CG-612) that identifies the account established for each office by project and accounting identification numbers. Commandant (CG-612) account information is as follows:

- (1) Account ID: 2/P/Y01/199/30/0/6PF (the “Y” reflects the last digit of the current fiscal year.)
- (2) Program/ATU: CG-6
- (3) Project Number: FORMS

Note: Failure to provide this number will cause a delay in the creation/revision of forms.

- (4) Description: Provide information unique to the originating office. For example:
Creation/revision of new/existing form with form number CG-XXXX.
- (5) Point of Contact: Provide a name, phone number, and e-email address for the point of contact who will be managing the life cycle of the form.

16. REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS.

- a. Prescribing Directive. The description of the way a form is prepared, submitted, used, and its relation to fulfilling a mission must be prescribed in a directive. It is the responsibility of the promulgating office to furnish effective instructions for its use.
- b. OMB Approval. Anytime the Coast Guard collects information from the public, per provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the CG forms used by any person or group other than Federal employees must be specifically approved by OMB. Any such form being considered for adoption, or in use and not presently cleared through OMB, shall be reported to Commandant (CG-612). These forms are recognized by the OMB control number and expiration date in the upper right corner. For further information, see US Coast Guard Information Collection Program, COMDTINST 5213.1.

17. ANALYSIS, DESIGN, PRINTING, AND AUTOMATION OF FORMS.

- a. Analysis. Form analysis requires the examination of all aspects of its use and issuance. Originators must consider the following criteria to ensure effectiveness and cost efficiencies.
 - (1) Is the record (form) necessary for its intended customers and purpose?
 - (2) What is the most efficient way to capture real time data, considering the supplier(s) available facilities, and subsequent collection of data?
 - (3) Is the proposed form the only source available for collecting the information? Often, the required data can be taken from other sources, such as existing forms, records or reports, thus achieving cost savings.
 - (4) Is a Privacy Act Statement required per the provisions of the Coast Guard Freedom of Information and Privacy Acts Manual, COMDTINST M5260.3 (series)?
 - (5) What is the burden to collect and report the information for the form/report?

- b. Design and Printing. Although most Coast Guard forms are automated, hard copy forms require an initial design that entails review of headings, spaces, and columns as a draft to produce an effective layout ready for printing. Other factors to consider concern optimum size for filing or mailing. These steps may include offset reproduction, typesetting, presswork, collating, carbon interleaving, or padding. Since many of these steps are labor intensive, a reasonable amount of time for production must be allowed.
- c. Automation. Automation of Coast Guard forms includes: the ability to link to a website and download a blank for printing on an on-demand basis; to fill out the form online; digitally sign, and submit it to the receiver. Online forms are created in the Adobe[®] software for convenience and future use. This is the preferred method of new form creation.

18. GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE FORMS MANAGEMENT. The following guidelines apply to all Coast Guard forms:

- a. The Coast Guard shall not adopt and renumber other agency forms as their own if they are available from the other agency.
- b. Forms may be produced as carbon inter-leaved or “No Carbon required” paper sets when there is high volume public usage, when they are used in data processing machines, or otherwise justified as cost effective.
- c. Personal names, signatures, telephone and room numbers, and other variable information shall not be printed on forms. This does not apply to form letters.
- d. Colored paper and ink shall only be used when there is a functional purpose.
- e. Logos are not authorized except in limited cases (certain certificates carry the United States or Coast Guard shield).
- f. The words “Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Coast Guard” must appear on the forms face. Those issued by a local command must have a distinguishing designation. An example would be, CG-YARD-15, which denotes this form is for use locally at the CG Yard.
- g. Whether it is an original edition or revision, a form must bear an edition date. If revised, there must be a note on the face stating whether previous editions may still be used or are obsolete.
- h. Each form must have a brief, descriptive title denoting subject and function.
- i. The following additional design standards are recommended:
 - (1) Size – To affect savings in paper costs, forms should be designed in the common standard printer sizes. Always choose the smallest standard size which will accommodate the data required and yet meet mailing and filing requirements.

NOTE: Post Cards may not be smaller than 3 ½ X 5”, or larger than 4 ¼ X 6”

(2) Box Style – Whenever possible, forms should be designed in box style, which not only conserves space but also minimizes the possibility of error in completion. Spacing size should be sufficient to accommodate various fonts used. For vertical spacing, one sixth of an inch is required for each line. An item heading should be entered in the upper left corner of each box, which should also be numbered to facilitate referencing.

(3) Instructions – If the heading is not self-explanatory, include concise instructions.

19. ISSUANCE.

- a. Most Coast Guard forms are now available online and can either be downloaded on an as-needed basis or completed online and electronically transmitted.
- b. Documents with links to forms available on the Intranet, Internet, and CG Portal must link to at least one of the websites listed below in Paragraph 21. Links to forms should not be the PDF of the form itself, since these links can change over time.
- c. A limited number of forms are required to be in hard-copy format. These are not available online and should be ordered from their respective ICP using the form NSN.

20. OTHER AGENCY FORMS. Use of OGA forms is highly encouraged. However, Commandant (CG-61) does not maintain or keep an inventory of these forms. These forms are maintained by their respective agencies. When OGA forms are referenced in CG directives, the originating CGHQ office must adhere to the following guidelines:

- a. Provide a direct link to parent directory of the forms when it is required as part of doing business.
- b. A direct link to the form is not required when it is used as a reference.
- c. The link should follow after the form number.
- d. Do not modify OGA forms without first having obtained approval from the appropriate respective agency.

21. FORMS/REPORTS. The forms called for in this Instruction are available in USCG Electronic Forms on the Standard Workstation or on the Internet: <http://www.uscg.mil/forms/>; CGPortal at <https://cgportal2.uscg.mil/library/forms/SitePages/Home.aspx>; and Intranet at <http://cgweb.comdt.uscg.mil/CGForms>.

22. REQUEST FOR CHANGES. To submit recommended changes, please contact the Commandant (CG-612) Forms Manager at hqs.forms@uscg.mil.

R. E. Day /s/
Assistant Commandant for
Command, Control, Communications,
Computers and Information Technology