



## Organizational History of Atlantic Area

Much like the Coast Guard's organizational composition, the Coast Guard's district system has gone through numerous iterations. The district system of organization was initially created for the Lighthouse Service. Established by an act of Congress on 7 June 1838, there were six districts on the Atlantic Coast and two on the Great Lakes. This number increased as the nation continued to grow with westward expansion and the acquisition of Alaska and Hawaii.

The creation of the Life-Saving Service also saw the adoption of the district system to facilitate administration. By 1881 the service had 183 stations organized into 12 districts. These were:

District 1 (Maine & New Hampshire),  
District 2 (Massachusetts),  
District 3 (Rhode Island & Long Island),  
District 4 (New Jersey),  
District 5 (Cape Henlopen to Cape Charles),  
District 6 (Cape Henry to Cape Hatteras),  
District 7 (eastern Florida),  
District 8 (Gulf Coast),  
District 9 (Lake Erie & Lake Ontario),  
District 10 (Lake Huron & Lake Superior),  
District 11 (Lake Michigan), and  
District 12 (Pacific Coast).

While the USLSS used a district system, the US Revenue Cutter Service did not. Instead cutters were organized simply by the location of their home port.

With the merger of the two services to create the Coast Guard in 1915, however, the district system was adopted service wide. The only differences were the establishment of 13, instead of 12, districts with slightly different borders. This organization was maintained during the service's attachment to the Navy during World War I and continued into the 1930s. By 1939 the district organization remained, but the borders were modified along with the names. So what once constituted the First District and most of the Third, became known as the Boston District. With war on the horizon, the Coast Guard was again attached to the Navy in November, 1941. As a result the Coast Guard

districts became part of the Naval District System. By 1944 the districts were again re-organized and the numerical designation re-established. This time, however, there were 14 districts with the territories of Alaska and Hawaii each constituting separate organizations.

This organization has been, more or less retained, with slight modifications. These include consolidations of districts and the creation of area commands. These area commands, initially known as the Eastern Area and Western Area, were renamed, in January, 1973, to Atlantic Area and Pacific Area, respectively. Each area has a Maintenance and Logistics Command (MLC) under its organizational control.

Over the years, the number of districts, through mergers, was whittled down to 10 by 1987. On 30 May 1996 the 8th and 2nd Districts were combined to form the new 8th District. As such, the Coast Guard's current district organization numbers 9 districts. Their designations and HQs are:

1st (Boston),  
5th (Portsmouth, VA),  
7th (Miami),  
8th (New Orleans & St. Louis)  
9th (Cleveland)  
11th (Alameda, CA)  
13th (Seattle),  
14th (Honolulu), and  
17th (Juneau, AK).