

E-PME  *Enlisted*
PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION

Roles and Missions 3.B.01

Learning Objective(s): LIST the roles and missions of the Coast Guard.

Why You Need to Know This

For over two centuries the U.S. Coast Guard has safeguarded our Nation’s maritime interests in the heartland, in the ports, at sea, and around the globe. The Coast Guard protects the maritime economy and the environment, defends the nation’s maritime borders, and saves those in peril. This history has forged our character and purpose as **America’s Maritime Guardian** — *Always Ready* for all hazards and all threats. Today’s U.S. Coast Guard is a unique force that carries out an array of civil and military responsibilities touching almost every facet of the U.S. maritime environment. As a member this proud and distinguished organization you should be able understand and communicate how your day-to-day duties and responsibilities relate to, and support, the Coast Guard’s **roles and missions**.

This lesson will provide you with the information you will need to know in regards to the Coast Guard’s roles and missions.

Topics Covered

This section will cover the following topics:

- Three Roles of the Coast Guard
 - Maritime Safety
 - Marine Safety Mission
 - Search and Rescue Mission
 - Maritime Security
 - Drugs Interdiction Mission
 - Undocumented Migrants Interdiction Mission
 - Defense Readiness Mission
 - Ports, Waterways, and Coastal Security Mission
 - Maritime Stewardship
 - Living Marine Resource Mission
 - Marine Environmental Protection Mission
 - Fisheries Mission
 - Aids to Navigation Mission
 - Ice Operations Mission
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**Topics Covered
(Continued)**

At the end of this lesson you will be required to participate in a learning activity. You are encouraged to first review the learning activity and the sign off requirements located in the “**You and Your Supervisor**” section of this lesson. Reviewing this information before you begin the lesson will allow you to take proper notes and focus on key learning points.

**Three Coast Guard
Roles**

The Coast Guard was established by law in 1915 as an armed service. Since then, it has evolved into a, multi-mission, maritime force offering a unique blend of humanitarian, law-enforcement, regulatory, diplomatic, and military capabilities, including:

- Maritime Safety
 - Maritime Security
 - Maritime Stewardship
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Maritime Safety

A fundamental responsibility of the U.S. government is to safeguard the lives and safety of its citizens. In the maritime realm, this duty falls mainly to the Coast Guard. In partnership with other federal agencies, state, local, and tribal governments, marine industries, and individual mariners, the Coast Guard improves safety at sea through mishap prevention, search and rescue, and accident investigation. Coast Guard prevention activities include the development of standards and regulations, various types of plan reviews and compliance inspections, and a variety of safety programs designed to protect mariners. The **two primary missions** performed within the realm of Maritime Safety include **Marine Safety** and **Search and Rescue**.

Marine Safety Mission:

- The Coast Guard is America’s voice in the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which promulgates measures to improve shipping safety, pollution prevention, mariner training, and certification standards. The Coast Guard develops and enforces vessel construction standards as well as domestic shipping and navigation regulations.
 - To ensure compliance, the Coast Guard reviews and approves plans for ship construction, repair, and alteration. The Coast Guard inspects vessels, mobile offshore drilling units, and marine facilities for safety. The aim of the Coast Guard’s Port State Control program is to eliminating substandard vessels from U.S. ports and waterways.
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**Maritime Safety
(continued)**

Marine Safety Mission (continued):

- Nearly all Coast Guard prevention activities are designed to protect mariners. For example, the commercial fishing vessel safety programs are designed to safeguard commercial fishermen, many of whom earn their living performing some of the most dangerous work in the world. The Coast Guard operates the International Ice Patrol to protect ships transiting the North Atlantic shipping lanes. The Coast Guard also documents U.S. flag vessels and licenses commercial mariners.
- America has approximately 17 million recreational boats. As National Recreational Boating Safety Coordinator, the Coast Guard works to minimize loss of life, personal injury, property damage, and environmental harm associated with this activity. The boating safety program involves public education programs, regulation of boat design and construction, approval of boating safety equipment, and vessel safety checks for compliance with federal and state safety requirements. The all-volunteer Coast Guard Auxiliary plays a central role in this program.

Search and Rescue Mission:

- The Coast Guard has a long heritage and proud tradition of immediate response to save lives and property in peril. As the lead agency for maritime search and rescue (SAR) in U.S. waters, the Coast Guard coordinates the SAR efforts of afloat and airborne Coast Guard units with those of other federal, state, and local responders. The Coast Guard also partners with the world's merchant fleet to rescue mariners in distress around the globe through the Automated Mutual-Assistance Vessel Rescue (AMVER) system. Using its Captain of the Port (COTP) authorities and responsibilities, the Coast Guard also coordinates response efforts on waterways after an incident or disaster.
- In addition to responding to a variety of maritime accidents and emergencies, the Coast Guard investigates their causes. The Coast Guard also determines whether applicable laws have been violated, or whether changes should be made to improve safety through various prevention programs. This work is often done in coordination with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

**Maritime Safety
(continued)**

Search and Rescue Mission (Continued):

- Coast Guard activities in support of maritime safety are often inseparable from those performed to protect the marine environment or secure the U.S. Marine Transportation System (MTS). A routine vessel inspection for safety compliance may uncover a serious risk to the environment. Or, Coast Guard vessel traffic services (VTS) could reduce the risk of vessel collisions by monitoring vessel traffic while also providing maritime domain awareness which improves security.
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Maritime Security

As the Nation's primary maritime law enforcement service, the Coast Guard enforces, or assists in enforcing, federal laws and treaties on waters under U.S. jurisdiction, and other international agreements on the high seas. The Coast Guard possesses the civil authority to board any vessel subject to U.S. jurisdiction. Once aboard, the Coast Guard may inspect, search, inquire, and arrest. The Coast Guard wields this broad police power with prudence and restraint primarily to suppress violations of the nation's drug, immigration, and fisheries laws, as well as to secure the nation from terrorist threats. The **four primary missions** performed within the realm of Maritime Security include; **Illegal Drug Interdiction, Undocumented Migrant Interdiction, Defense Readiness, and Ports, Waterways, and Coastal Security.**

Illegal Drug Interdiction Mission:

- The Coast Guard is the designated lead agency for maritime drug interdiction under the National Drug Control Strategy and the co-lead agency for air interdiction operations with U.S. Customs and Border Protection. As such, the Coast Guard defends America's seaward frontier against the smuggling of illegal drugs.

Undocumented Migrant Interdiction Mission:

- Coast Guard undocumented migrant interdiction operations are law enforcement missions with an important humanitarian dimension. Migrants often take great risks and endure significant hardships in their attempts to flee their countries and enter the United States. In many cases, migrant vessels interdicted at sea are overloaded and unseaworthy, lack basic safety equipment, and are operated by inexperienced mariners. Many of the undocumented migrant cases handled by the Coast Guard actually begin as search and rescue incidents.
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**Maritime Security
(continued)**

Defense Readiness Mission:

- Throughout history, the Coast Guard has served with the U.S. Navy to defend our nation. This began with the Quasi- War with France in 1798, and continued through the Civil War, the World Wars, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf War, and Operation Iraqi Freedom.
- Today, as a critical component of the U.S. National Fleet, the Coast Guard maintains a high state of readiness to operate as a specialized service alongside the Navy and Marine Corps. This close relationship has developed over two centuries of cooperation and was captured in the May 2008 agreement between the Secretaries of Defense and Homeland Security. This agreement formalizes the use of Coast Guard competencies and resources in support of the National Military Strategy and to execute essential military operations in peacetime, crisis, and war.

Ports, Waterways, and Coastal Security Mission:

- The Coast Guard has been responsible for the security of the ports and waterways of the United States during times of war since the enactment of the Espionage Act of 1917. After World War II, the Magnuson Act of 1950 assigned the Coast Guard an ongoing mission to safeguard U.S. ports, harbors, vessels, and waterfront facilities from accidents, sabotage, or other subversive acts.
 - Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, these authorities took on grave new importance. This includes denying terrorists the use of the U.S. maritime domain to mount attacks on our territory, population, or critical infrastructure.
 - The Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 designated Coast Guard Captains of the Port as the Federal Maritime Security Coordinators. The Coast Guard thus became the lead agency for coordinating all maritime security planning and operations in our ports and waterways. These activities encompass all efforts to prevent or respond to attacks.
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Maritime Stewardship

The Coast Guard's role in protecting natural resources dates to the 1820s when Congress tasked the Revenue Marine to protect federal stocks of Florida live oak trees. These trees were deemed critical to the security of our young nation because they provided the best wood for shipbuilding. The **five primary missions** performed within the realm of Maritime Safety include **Living Marine Resources, Marine Environmental Protection, Fisheries, Aids to Navigation and Ice Operations**.

Living Marine Resources Mission:

- As the exploitation of the nation's valuable marine resources—whales, furbearing animals, and fish—increased, the Coast Guard has been given the duty to protect those resources. The Coast Guard serves as the primary agency for at-sea fisheries enforcement, and in coordination with other federal and state agencies, enforces marine resource management and protection regimes to preserve healthy stocks of fish and other living marine resources.
- In 1976, Congress passed what is now known as the Magnuson- Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. This resulted in the creation of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The Coast Guard patrols the EEZ, which extends 200 nautical miles out from the coastal baseline, to uphold U.S. sovereignty and protect precious natural resources.

Marine Environmental Protection Mission:

- The Coast Guard plays a vital role in enforcing laws intended to protect the environment by safeguarding sensitive marine habitats, mammals, and endangered species. The Coast Guard also enforces laws protecting our waters from the discharge of oil, hazardous substances, and non-indigenous invasive species. The Coast Guard accomplishes this through education and prevention; law enforcement, emergency response and containment, and disaster recovery.
- Under the National Contingency Plan, Coast Guard COTPs are the pre-designated Federal On-Scene Coordinators (FOSC) for oil and hazardous substance incidents in all coastal and some inland areas. The FOSC is the President's designated on-scene representative and, as such, is responsible for coordinating effective response operations among a diverse group of government and commercial entities in the maritime domain.

**Maritime
Stewardship
(continued)**

Fisheries Mission:

- The fisheries mission involves preventing illegal foreign fishing vessel encroachment in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone. This Coast Guard mission plays a vital role in protecting the integrity of our maritime borders and ensuring the health of United States fisheries. The Coast Guard focuses on three high-threat areas for illegal foreign incursions: the United States—Mexican border in Gulf of Mexico, the United States—Russian Maritime Boundary Line in the Bering Sea, and the eight non-contiguous Exclusive Economic Zones in the Western/Central Pacific.

Aids to Navigation Mission:

- The Coast Guard carries out numerous port and waterways management tasks and has the responsibility for providing a safe, efficient, and navigable waterway system to support domestic commerce, international trade, and military sealift requirements for national defense. The Coast Guard provides long and short- range aids to navigation; navigation schemes and standards, support for mapping and charting, tide, current, and pilot age information; vessel traffic services; domestic icebreaking to facilitate commerce; and technical assistance and advice.

Ice Operations Mission:

- The Coast Guard’s Ice Operations entails icebreaking activities in the Great Lakes, St. Lawrence Seaway, and Northeast. This facilitates the movement of bulk cargoes carried by regional commercial fleets during the winter months. In addition to domestic ice operations, the Coast Guard operates the only U.S.-controlled icebreakers capable of operations in the Polar Regions. This enables the Coast Guard to project U.S. presence and protect national interests in the Arctic and Antarctic regions. These Polar vessels are key components in re-supplying U.S. Antarctic facilities. They support the research requirements of the National Science Foundation, and protect or advance other U.S. interests in the Polar Regions.
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Learning Activity



To successfully complete this requirement you will need to list the Coast Guard's **three roles** and **eleven missions** with your supervisor.

For You and Your Supervisor

In order to meet the sign-off requirement for this lesson **YOU** must perform the following:

1. Prior to meeting with your supervisor review the contents of this lesson and organize your thoughts.
2. Present your chosen topic.

Before signing off on this requirement your **SUPERVISOR** must:

1. Make sure the member knows the Coast Guard's three roles and eleven missions.
 2. Provide the member with corrective feedback and answer any questions they may have related to this topic.
 3. Sign-off the check-off sheet on the Record of Enlisted Professional Military Education (E-PME) Performance Requirements.
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References

The following references were used in this lesson, they can be found at [CG Directives at CG-612](#):

- Coast Guard Publication 1 (CG Pub 1)
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