

**E-PME**  *Enlisted*  
**PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION**

Discharges 3.C.04

**Learning Objective(s):** **EXPLAIN** the different types of discharges.

**Why You Need to Know This**

A discharge is a formal separation from military service and is given when a member of the Armed Forces is released from their obligation to serve. There are several types of discharges from the Coast Guard. Each type of discharge has a specific implication and can have an impact on post-service opportunities, such as educational and other veterans' benefits and job prospects. Upon completion of this lesson you will have an understanding of the different types of discharges and how each one can affect you after you leave the service.

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**Topic Covered**

This section will cover the following topics:

- Types of Discharge
- Formal Reason for Discharge
- Discharge Requirements
- Post-Service Impacts

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.

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## **Types of Discharges**

The type of discharge a service member may receive is based on their reason for leaving the service, information contained in their military record (DD-214), along with other conditions.

There are **five different types of discharges for characterized separations** and **one for uncharacterized separations**, these include:

- Honorable Discharge - Separation with honor
- General Discharge - Separation with honorable conditions
- Discharge Under Other Than Honorable Conditions - Separation under conditions other than honorable
- Bad Conduct Discharge - Separation under conditions other than honorable.
- Dishonorable Discharge - Separation with dishonor
- Uncharacterized Discharge - Separation for those members with less than 180 days in service

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## **Formal Reasons For Separation From the Service**

There are 14 formal reasons a service member may be discharged from the military, these include:

- Expiration of enlistment
  - Service obligation fulfilled
  - Convenience of the Government
  - Dependency or hardship.
  - Minority (age)
  - Disability
  - Unsuitability
  - Security
  - Misconduct
  - Court-martial sentence
  - Entry-level separation (uncharacterized discharge)
  - For the good of the service
  - Care of newborn children.
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## **Discharge Requirements**

An **Honorable Discharge** may result under the following circumstances or conditions:

- Member has shown proper military behavior and proficient performance of duty with due consideration for the member's age, length of service, grade, and general aptitude.
- Member has, since June 1983, maintained a minimum characteristic average of 2.5 in each factor over the period of enlistment.
- Special Considerations; in any case in which a general discharge or a discharge other than honorable conditions is warranted for one of the following reasons set forth above, the Service may award the member an honorable or general discharge, as appropriate, under these conditions if the member:
  - During the current or previous enlistment, period of obligated service, or any voluntary or involuntary extensions he/she has earned a Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Coast Guard Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Air Medal, Coast Guard Commendation Medal, Gold Life Saving Medal, Silver Life Saving Medal or any other Armed Forces award equivalent to any of these decorations. In each case, the member's military record shall be fully considered in connection with action taken.
  - Is discharged for disability incurred in the line of duty and resulting from action against an enemy.
  - Is discharged while undergoing recruit training
  - Is deemed deserving of such a discharge by the Commandant.

A **General Discharge** may result under the following circumstances or conditions:

- The member has been identified as a user, possessor, or distributor of illegal drugs or paraphernalia.
- The member has tampered with drug urinalysis samples, supplies, or documentation.
- Member has, since June 1983, maintained a minimum characteristic average of less than 2.5 in each factor over the period of enlistment.
- When Commander (CGPC –epm-1) directs issuing a general discharge based on the individual's overall military record or the severity of the incident(s) which results in discharge.

**Discharge  
Requirements  
(continued)**

A **Discharge Other Than Honorable Conditions** may result under the following circumstances and/or conditions:

- Member poses or has created a security risk.
- An administrative discharge board approves a recommendation for such a discharge;
  - Such a discharge will be issued in lieu of trial by court-martial only if the Commandant determines an administrative discharge will best serve the interests of both the Service and the member.

A **Bad Conduct Discharge** may result under the following circumstances and/or conditions:

- When issued as a result of an approved sentence of a general or special court-martial.

A **Dishonorable Discharge** may result under the following circumstances and/or conditions:

- Only as a result of an approved sentence of a general court-martial.

An **Uncharacterized Discharge** may result under the following circumstances and/or conditions:

- Fewer than 180 days of active service and demonstrated poor proficiency, conduct, aptitude or unsuitability for further service, exhibited minor pre-existing medical issues not of a disabling nature which do not meet the medical/physical procurement standards.
  - An uncharacterized discharge is used for most recruit separations, except for disability, prior service members entering recruit training, or in cases when another type of discharge may be appropriate.
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## Post-Service Impacts

An other than honorable separation from the Coast Guard could affect a member's ability to:

- Receive local, state or federal veteran's benefits
  - Re-enlist in military service
  - Acquire a government job
  - Acquire a security clearance
  - Acquire employment with companies who receive government contracts
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## Learning Activity



To successfully complete this requirement you will need to discuss the difference between each discharge and its related benefits or lack of benefits to your supervisor.

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## 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. Discuss your chosen topic.

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

1. Make sure the member knows the difference between each type of discharge and its related benefits or lack of benefits.
  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](#):

- COMDTINST M1000.6 (series)
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