

Application & Accession Guide

Second-Year Law Student & Direct Commission Lawyer Programs

How to Apply

1. Contact the Coast Guard Legal Program (CGJAG)

Contact the CGJAG Accessions Manager at CoastGuardDCL@uscg.mil to be introduced to a Coast Guard recruiter.

Visit <https://www.uscg.mil/Resources/Legal/> for general information about the legal program, direct commission programs, and application deadlines. Visit <https://www.gocoastguard.com/connect> to identify your closest Coast Guard Recruiting Office.

2. Determine Application Deadline

★ It takes several months to complete all steps in the application process. You should connect with a recruiting office at least two to three months in advance of the application deadline to begin the application process. Application deadlines typically fall semi-annually in February and August.

3. Contact a Recruiter

You must work with your local Recruiting Office, regardless of whether you are a current Coast Guard member, a civilian, or a member of another branch of the Armed Forces. The CGJAG Accessions Manager can help you get connected.

4. Recruiter Screening

Your recruiter will conduct a screening to ensure you meet eligibility requirements. The screening process will validate that you meet the specific set of criteria (academic, financial, character, dependency, etc.) for your program. Your local recruiter will determine if you may be eligible to apply for any waivers based on your individual circumstances.

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Eligibility Criteria

- *Age:*
 - Law school graduate and 3L applicants: Minimum 21, Maximum 41, as of 30 September of the fiscal year in which the selection panel convenes
 - 2L applicants: Minimum 21, Maximum 39, as of 30 September of the fiscal year in which the selection panel convenes.
- *Education:*
 - Licensed attorney applicants: Graduate of an American Bar Association (ABA) accredited law school
 - Graduates of non-ABA accredited law schools may apply if
 1. Admitted to practice before the bar of the highest court of any State, the District of Columbia, or U.S. Territory;
 2. Have experience practicing law in one or more areas of law applicable to the Coast Guard; and
 3. Possesses military or other government experience indicative of success as a Coast Guard officer.
 - 3L applicants: Third-year student in a law school accredited by the ABA
 - 2L applicants: Second-year student in a law school accredited by the ABA
- *Licensure:* Judge advocates must be admitted to practice before the bar of the highest court of any State, the District of Columbia, or U.S. Territory.
 - Law school graduates: must provide proof of bar admission prior to commissioning.
 - 2L and 3L applicants: must apply for admission to the bar and sit for the first available bar examination after graduating law school.
- *Citizenship:* Must be a U.S. citizen.
- *Medical Requirements:* Must meet commissioning physical standards, including normal color vision.
 - Coast Guard judge advocates must meet maximum weight or abdominal circumference standards. After graduating the Direct Commission Officer

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course, judge advocates are not required to complete an annual or semiannual fitness test.

- *Prior Military Service*: No more than 10 years of non-Coast Guard active-duty (or 14 years cumulative) military service. Members currently in another military service (or Reserve) must have an approved DD368 (conditional release).

Visit <https://www.gocoastguard.com/get-started/eligibility-requirements> for more information.

5. Complete Application Package

Your recruiter will provide the Officer Program Application form and checklist associated with your program of interest. Complete all application forms and assemble all application material.

Application Package

Components of the application package include:

- *Resume*: maximum of 2 pages
- *Personal Narrative*: maximum of 2 pages, single-spaced, signed by the applicant, 12-point font, Times New Roman
- *Letters of Recommendation*: maximum of 2 pages and maximum of 3 total letters, signed by the author, addressed to “USCG Officer Selection Panel”
- *All Official College and Law School Transcripts*: must include all institutions, earned credits, and semester hours, including Joint Service Transcripts
- *College Diploma(s) or Official Letter* from degree granting institution proving conferment of degree prior to commissioning date
- *Personal Awards and Recognized Achievements*: 1 award per page, maximum 5 pages (certifications; academic, athletic, leadership, service, etc. awards; public recognition; letters of appreciation, etc.)
- *Proof of Bar Membership* (licensed applicants only)
- *Legal Writing Sample*: maximum of 10 single-spaced pages
- *Commanding Officer’s Endorsement*: maximum 2 pages, signed, New Page Memorandum format, content compliant with 7.B.2. of the Coast Guard Recruiting Manual (COMDTINST M1100.2 (series)) (current Coast Guard members only)

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- *Officer and/or Enlisted Evaluations/FITREPs for last 3 years prior to panel (current or prior military service only)*

Applicants will work with a Coast Guard recruiter to complete all other application requirements.

6. Submit Application Package

Submit your application and supporting documents to your recruiter by the application deadline.

7. Medical/Physical Screening

Meeting accession height and weight standards and passing a commissioning physical are required as part of the eligibility screening process. Your recruiter will assist with scheduling the physical exam.

If you are currently serving in the military, your physical must be completed with a military treatment facility (MTF). All civilian applicants will receive their physical through a local Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS).

- ★ Your recruiter will provide you with a comprehensive questionnaire to examine your medical history and submit to MEPS. If you answer “yes” to any questions, more documentation will likely be necessary. To expedite the process, it’s important to start gathering medical documents early.

8. Interview

Once your application is complete and your recruiter has ascertained program eligibility, you will be scheduled for an interview with three Coast Guard officers who will provide a recommendation to the selection panel on your potential to become a Coast Guard officer. Recruiters coordinate interview boards with local units. At least one member of your interview panel will be a Coast Guard judge advocate.

9. Recruiter Review

Your recruiter will conduct a final review of your application for completeness, incorporate the interview recommendation, and submit the application for consideration by the selection panel.

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10. Selection Panel

The selection panel consists of Coast Guard officers who will review your application package, including your interviewers' recommendation, and make a selection decision.

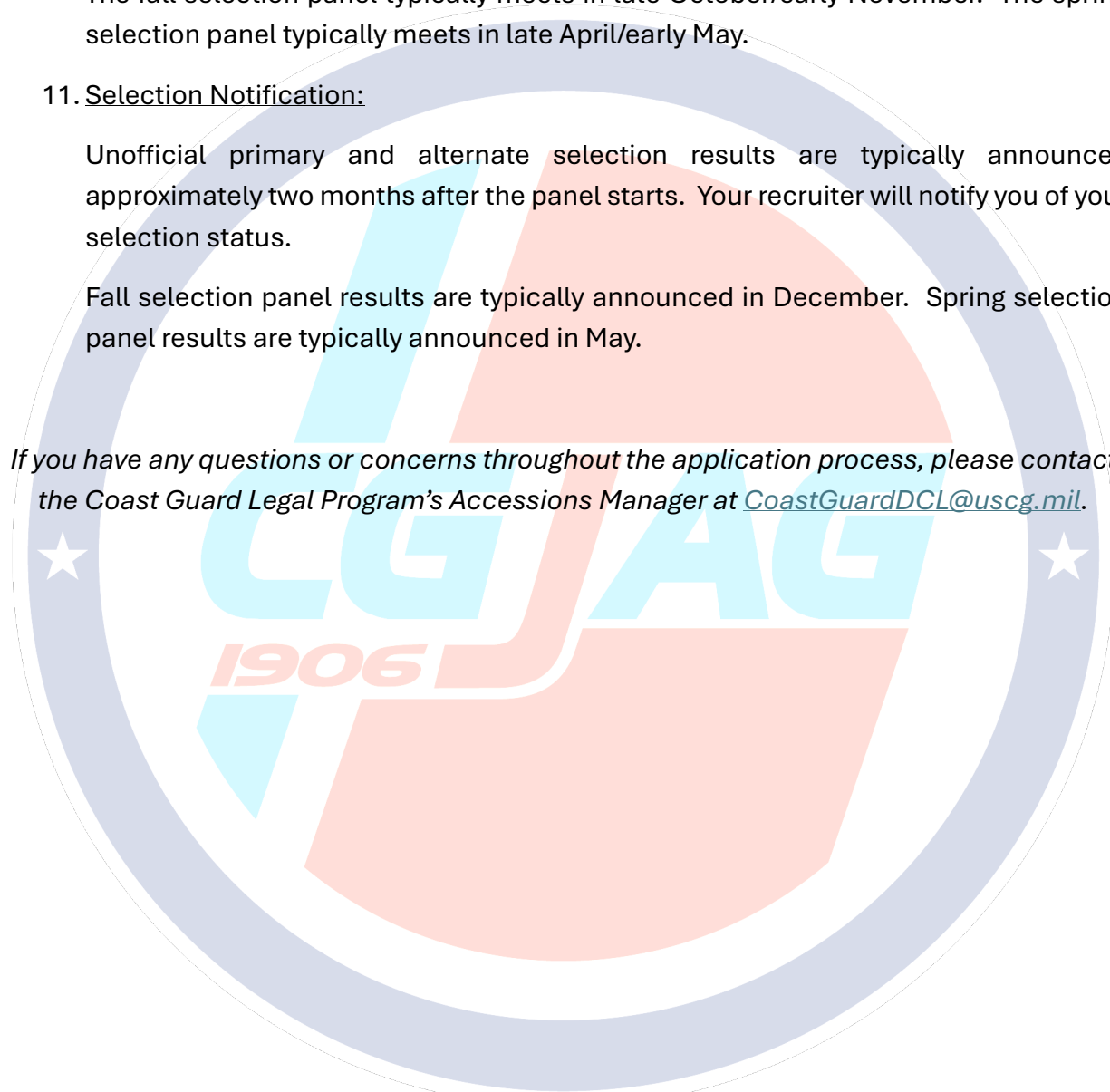
The fall selection panel typically meets in late October/early November. The spring selection panel typically meets in late April/early May.

11. Selection Notification:

Unofficial primary and alternate selection results are typically announced approximately two months after the panel starts. Your recruiter will notify you of your selection status.

Fall selection panel results are typically announced in December. Spring selection panel results are typically announced in May.

If you have any questions or concerns throughout the application process, please contact the Coast Guard Legal Program's Accessions Manager at CoastGuardDCL@uscg.mil.



Accession Pipeline

1. Accession Information

If selected, you will receive information about onboarding, commissioning, and assignments.

2. Assignment

Licensed attorney and 3L applicants:

Around August to September for spring selectees and around March to May for fall selectees, you will submit your preferred assignments list and receive your initial legal assignment.

2L applicants:

During your 3L year, you will submit your preferred assignments list and receive your initial legal assignment for post-graduation.

The billet selection process is a collaborative process designed to consider the needs of both the member and the service. That said, the Coast Guard is a military organization, so the needs of the service are paramount when determining assignments. Most legal billets are 2-3 years in length.

3. Commissioning

Licensed attorney and 3L selectees:

Spring panel selectees typically commission around December of that year. Fall panel selectees typically commission around May to July of the following year. You will commission as a Lieutenant (O-3). Your four-year active duty time will begin shortly after.

2L applicants:

Spring panel selectees will commission around December of that year. Fall panel selectees will commission around May to July of the following year. You will commission as a Lieutenant (O-3) and be transferred to the Inactive Status List (ISL) until graduating from law school. Your four-year active duty agreement will begin after you graduate law school.

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4. Permanent Change of Station (PSC) Move

The Coast Guard's accessions team will counsel you on scheduling your PCS move, including any paperwork needed to execute your PCS move to your new duty station. You will set up your Household Goods move and travel to your new unit.

5. Reporting to Your First Unit

After your active duty agreement begins, you will report to your unit and start your entitlements, including basic allowance for housing.

6. Direct Commission Officer (DCO) Course

After reporting to your unit, you will receive orders to attend the 4-week DCO Course at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut. The course includes instruction on Coast Guard leadership principals, organizational structure, and practical assignments including writing assignments and public speaking. DCO attendees will complete a basic swim test and fitness test including push-ups, sit-ups, a 1.5 mile run, and 12-minute swim test. You will receive a Pre-Reporting Guide from the school staff with more information. Following DCO school, you will return to your duty station.

★ Licensed attorney and 3L spring panel selectees typically attend the January or March DCO course the following year. Fall panel selectees and 2L selectees typically attend the August DCO course.

7. Naval Justice School (NJS) – Basic Lawyer Course (BLC)

After graduating from the DCO course and returning to your unit, you'll receive orders to Newport, Rhode Island, for the 10-week BLC at NJS alongside your Navy and Marine Corps counterparts. If you're assigned to a military justice billet, you will also participate in a 2-week Military Justice Orientation Course (MJOC) immediately after the BLC.

You will typically attend the first available BLC, offered from May to July or August to November, after graduating from DCO.

8. Operational Familiarization Tour

You will also participate in an operational familiarization tour—1 to 2 weeks onboard a Coast Guard cutter—to gain hands-on exposure to Coast Guard operations.