



# U.S. Coast Guard Legal Internship/Externship Program

**Application Deadlines:**  
**Summer Internship: February 15th**  
**Fall Externship: May 15th**  
**Spring Externship: October 15th**

**What to Expect:** Interns will work alongside active duty Judge Advocates and civilian attorneys within the Coast Guard legal community. The program provides an excellent opportunity to learn about the U.S. Coast Guard and its legal community, while gaining insight on its Direct Commission Lawyer process.

Interns must complete a security background check and are required to spend a minimum of 10 weeks interning at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington D.C. or U.S. Coast Guard legal field offices throughout the country.

Interns may receive academic credit if supported by his/her law school. Interns are supervised by a practicing attorney and will be heavily involved with substantive legal work in one or more of the below practice areas.

**Locations:** Charleston, SC; Boston, MA; Portsmouth, VA; Norfolk, VA; Miami, FL; New Orleans, LA; Cleveland, OH; Alameda, CA; New London, CT; Cape May, NJ; Seattle, WA; Honolulu, HI; or Juneau, AK). Openings at field offices other than Washington, DC, are not guaranteed and subject to office availability.

## Practice Areas:

- Military Justice (Criminal Law)
- Maritime and International Law
- Claims and Litigation
- Cyber Law
- Intelligence and Information Law
- Procurement Law
- General (Fiscal, Employment, Ethics, Real Property, Administrative) Law
- Legislation
- Member Advocacy and Legal Assistance

**Qualifications:** The program prefers law students who may be interested in pursuing a career as an attorney in the military (either as a Judge Advocate or civilian attorney), but all are encouraged to apply and will be considered. All interns must be U.S. citizens currently enrolled in an ABA accredited JD program. Applying 1Ls must be permitted by their respective JD program to work during the academic semester.

**To Apply:** Please attach and email your Intern Application (as one document) to our email distribution list: CoastGuardDCL@uscg.mil. Please title the email "Coast GuardLegal Internship Application." The application must include the following:

- Cover Letter:
  - 1) The cover letter must include your preferred legal office location. If you are interested in several locations, please list them in rank order.
  - 2) If applying to intern at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington D.C., please specify your first, second, and third choice of practice area.
- Resume
- Unofficial Transcript (If a 1L, you may send in separately after 1L fall semester grades are released)
- Letter of Recommendation from a law professor.
- A legal writing sample not to exceed 10 pages

Connect with us!



Learn More

<https://www.uscg.mil/resources/legal/>

Questions?

[CoastGuardDCL@uscg.mil](mailto:CoastGuardDCL@uscg.mil)

# Coast Guard Headquarters

## Legal Offices

1. **Office of Maritime and International Law:** As the nation's only armed force with domestic law-enforcement authority, the Coast Guard is involved in enforcing federal law in the areas of drug interdiction, immigration, marine environmental protection, marine safety, fisheries, maritime security, and general federal laws applicable at sea. The Office of Maritime and International Law (CG-LMI) plays a prominent role in the development and implementation of Coast Guard policy in these areas, and in providing real-time advice to Coast Guard operational commanders. The Office of Maritime and International Law also leads Coast Guard efforts in the international legal community as a fully participating member of the U.S. delegation to the International Maritime Organization.
  - a. **Prevention Law Division:** The prevention law team is responsible for supporting commands in the prevention of personnel casualties and property losses, minimizing security risks, and protecting the marine environment. These attorneys also work with policy to create and support international and domestic legal frameworks for preventing, preparing, and responding to incidents.
  - b. **Environmental Law Division:** Coast Guard attorneys advise on the agency's own compliance with environmental laws and provide analyses of environmental impacts of deepwater port permits, bridge permits, the acquisition and homeporting of vessels (e.g., Polar Security Cutters and Offshore Patrol Cutters), the transfer of historic lighthouses, the regulation of waterway traffic, and the management and cleanup of federal property. These attorneys also advise on criminal violations of marine pollution statutes and Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) cases, especially where it minimizes future liability related to transactions involving potentially contaminated property.
  - c. **Response Law Division:** Attorneys in the Response Law Division (RLD) provide around the clock support to seven of the eleven Coast Guard missions. Duty attorneys provide real time legal advice on Coast Guard authorities, jurisdiction in the maritime environment, and develop cases for prosecution. RLD attorneys serve as Coast Guard representatives to the

## U.S. Coast Guard Legal Program

Maritime Operational Threat Response Plan and aid in developing a coordinated interagency response to maritime cases. To further support Coast Guard operations, several Coast Guard attorneys serve as full-time Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys in key areas around the United States. Additionally, attorneys at field units stand rotational duty schedules to provide around the clock support to Operational Commanders and units throughout their area of responsibility.

- 2. Office of Information and Intelligence Law:** The Office of Information and Intelligence Law (CG-LII) is responsible for advising on the collection, storage, and sharing of government information; Coast Guard intelligence activities; cyber security and operations; telecommunications policy; the development and use of information technology; data management, and the use of artificial intelligence to inform operations. The Office also administers the Coast Guard's Intelligence Oversight program, ensuring compliance with applicable laws, Presidential Directives, and Intelligence Community Directives.
- 3. Coast Guard Cyber Command Legal Office:** Coast Guard Cyber Command (CGCYBER) attorneys advise the Coast Guard's operational cyberspace unit on all aspects of the command's efforts to defend Coast Guard networks, protect the Marine Transportation System (MTS), and operate in cyberspace. CGCYBER attorneys support the defense of Coast Guard networks. The CGCYBER Legal Office also advises the CGCYBER Assessment and Authorization Department and reviews documentation for interconnections to the network, enabling the flow of critical information while ensuring appropriate safeguards.
- 4. Office of Military Justice:** The Office of Military Justice supports and trains field judge advocates, including at the Office of the Chief Prosecutor, on all military justice issues that arise. It is responsible for creating, maintaining, and interpreting evolving military justice policy adapted to the mandates in the Manual for Courts Martial. It also works extensively with the Department of Defense and the other Services to develop and execute military justice initiatives, including representation at the voting and working groups serving on the Joint Service Committee for Military Justice. Judge advocates assigned as appellate government counsel brief and argue cases before the Coast Guard Court of Criminal Appeals (CGCCA) and the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces (CAAF). It also has two embedded attorneys supporting the Coast Guard Investigative Service.

## U.S. Coast Guard Legal Program

5. **Defense Services Division:** The Defense Services Division is responsible for providing defense counsel, representation, and consultation across the Coast Guard to members facing courts-martial and adverse administrative proceedings. Coast Guard judge advocates are embedded in Navy Defense Service Offices and provide legal advice to service members in the Coast Guard and Navy and represent clients in courts-martial and administrative separation hearings. Judge advocate appellate defense counsel provide legal advice and representation at the appellate level alongside the Navy and Marine Corps Appellate Defense Division.
6. **Office of Claims and Litigation:** The Office of Claims and Litigation (CG-LCL), in support of its partners from Department of Justice (DoJ) and various United States Attorney offices, defends and asserts the Coast Guard's legal interests in a panoply of civil cases related to its internal operations and its 11 statutory missions.
7. **Office of General Law:** The mission of the General Law practice area is to provide legal advice in the areas of Fiscal Law, Standards of Federal Conduct/Ethics Law, Civilian Employment and Labor Law, Military Personnel Law, and Administrative Law. The attorneys in the practice area are responsible for reviewing and commenting on legal authorities, delegations, advising on major incident investigations, providing agency positions to the Department of Homeland Security Board of Correction for Military Records, and reviewing administrative investigations. The Office of General Law is also principally responsible for advising the Coast Guard's Office of Congressional Affairs on matters related to Congressional Oversight, and works closely with the Department of Homeland Security's Office of General Counsel on matters related to Congressional investigations and nominations.
8. **Office of Regulations and Administrative Law:** The Coast Guard is charged with developing and enforcing regulations to ensure the safety of marine navigation, protect the environment, conduct search and rescue, enforce laws and treaties, and maintain marine security. Coast Guard attorneys draft new regulations based on those mandates and provide advice to field commanders on the implementation of all existing regulations and their enforcement and applicability. The Office of Regulations and Administrative Law (LRA) manages the Coast Guard regulatory agenda; oversees regulatory initiatives; works with attorneys supporting district local field regulations; provides advice about the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA); and responds to rulemaking-related recommendations and complaints filed by the public.

## U.S. Coast Guard Legal Program

- 9. Coast Guard Court of Criminal Appeals:** The Coast Guard Court of Criminal Appeals consists of several members (minimum 3), including two full time civilian judges. The Court reviews cases with a sentence that includes death, a punitive discharge, dismissal, or confinement for two years or more (automatic appeals); cases appealed by the accused (non-automatic appeals); interlocutory appeals by the Government; interlocutory petitions by a victim; and other petitions for extraordinary relief. The Court has the statutory authority to determine whether the findings of guilty and the sentence are correct in law and fact for all courts-martial reviewed under Article 66, Uniform Code of Military Justice, and to take corrective action if error has occurred. Such action includes setting aside or modifying the findings and the sentence, ordering a rehearing, and dismissing charges and specifications. Unless reversed by a higher court, such action is binding on all parties, including all officials of the United States. The court's published opinions are binding precedent for the conduct of courts-martial in the Coast Guard.

