

Final Rule: Cybersecurity in the Marine Transportation System Questions

**** In response to questions received from affected stakeholders, and to provide information while future guidance is considered, the Coast Guard is announcing the publication of the Cybersecurity in the MTS final rule Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). The questions below are representative of those submitted by stakeholders and may have been re-worded or combined with others for clarity and organization of topics. They have been grouped under the relevant regulatory cite or the relevant regulatory cite is provided. Nothing in these FAQs represent regulations themselves but support the published regulations. If you have a question that is not reflected here, or you have questions regarding the information presented in the FAQs, please reach out to the Coast Guard at MTSCyberRule@uscg.mil****

General (Last Updated 01/09/2026)

Will the Coast Guard accept and review the submission of a cyber plan in accordance with the final rule right now?

- **Plans are not being approved yet:** The Coast Guard is not currently approving plans for these regulations. We are currently developing review and approval procedures to ensure consistent application of standards for the maritime industry.
- **Previously submitted plans:** If a plan has already been submitted, it will be securely retained until the review and approval process is finalized.

Who is responsible for ensuring cybersecurity training under the final rule?

- The owner or operator of an MTSA regulated facility or vessel is ultimately responsible for ensuring that all required personnel received cybersecurity training relevant to the Cybersecurity plan and procedures of that regulated facility or vessel and in accordance with 33 CFR 101.650(d).
- Under 33 CFR 101.625(d), the Cybersecurity Officer (CySO), who acts on behalf of the owner/operator, has the responsibility to ensure adequate cybersecurity training of personnel.

How do I demonstrate compliance with training requirements (101.650(d)) before having an approved cybersecurity plan (effective January 2026)?

- On October 9, 2025, the Coast Guard published CG-5PC Policy Letter 01-25: Cybersecurity Training for Personnel with Access to Information Technology or Operational Technology Systems. Please refer to the Policy Letter for further

clarification on this topic. It can be found here: [Cybersecurity Training Policy Letter-5-PC 01-25.pdf](#)

Does the Coast Guard intend to release guidance clarifying how compliance with cybersecurity requirements will be inspected or enforced?

- The USCG is determining the best way forward to meet stakeholder needs.

Should MTSA facilities/vessels without Operational Technology (OT) be exempt from these cybersecurity regulations?

- No. MTSA regulation implies Transportation Security Incident (TSI) risk regardless of OT presence.
- All regulated entities must conduct the cybersecurity assessment.
- **After** assessment, waivers or equivalence determinations can be requested if warranted.

What is the appeals process for cybersecurity deficiencies?

- First, request reconsideration from the cognizant Captain of the Port (COTP).
- If unresolved, appeals are handled in accordance with 33 CFR 101.420.

101.605(a)

Are Maritime Academies under the Maritime Administration (MARAD) required to adopt the new Coast Guard cybersecurity regulations?

- Applicability depends on whether their operations meet MTSA-regulated entity criteria.
- The rule doesn't expand MTSA applicability but adds cybersecurity requirements to the existing framework.
- If they operate vessels under 33 CFR Part 104 or facilities under 33 CFR Part 105, they *may* be subject to the requirements.
- If a vessel already has a Vessel Security Plan (VSP) and complies with MTSA, it will likely need to comply with the new cybersecurity provision.
- Consult the MARAD/USCG Memorandum of Understanding for further guidance.

101.620 - Owner or operator (Last Updated 07/22/2025)

101.620(b)(3)

Are there specific licensing or certification requirements for the CySO?

- No. For details about CySO requirements, see 33 CFR 101.625(e).

101.625 - Cybersecurity Officer (Last Updated 07/22/2025)

101.625(a)

May a company outsource their CySO to a third-party company?

- Yes. CySO requirements may be met through third-party services.

101.625(b)

Are there any limits to how many vessels/terminals can fall under a CySO?

- No. For details, see 33 CFR 101.625(b).

101.625(d)(6)

What are the cybersecurity inspection expectations?

- **Timing:** Inspections can be combined with other inspections or separate.
- **Format:** In-person review, like existing facility/vessel inspections.
- **CySO Remote Participation:** The CySO may be able to participate remotely at the discretion of the COTP or OCMI.

101.630 - Cybersecurity Plan (Last Updated 07/22/2025)

101.630

What IT/OT systems should be considered in complying with these regulations?

- **Purpose:** The Cybersecurity assessment must identify IT/OT that impact maritime operations or could lead to a TSI. It is not limited to FSP/VSP identified assets.

- **Approach:** Owners/operators should take a holistic approach to include all necessary systems.
- **Questions:** Direct specific IT/OT questions to MTSCyberRule@uscg.mil.

101.630

Can similar vessels share one Cyber Plan?

- Yes, owners/operators may submit one Cybersecurity Plan for two or more U.S.-flagged vessels with similar operations.
- The Plan must address any specific cybersecurity risk differences between individual vessels.

101.630(a)

Can the cybersecurity plan be combined with the Vessel Security Plan (VSP) or FSP, and harmonized?

- Yes. For details, see 33 CFR 101.630(a).

101.630(a), (c), (e), (f)

What is the purpose of Audits vs. Assessments?

- **Cybersecurity Plan (CSP) Audits:**
 - Internal verification to ensure CSP/assessment validity or identify amendments.
 - Required annually, or more often with changes (owner/operator, cyber measures).
 - CSP amendments may necessitate separate FSP/VSP amendments if related topics or impacted measures become outdated.
- **Cybersecurity Assessment:**
 - Vital for CSP development: complete assessment first, then tailor plan to identified vulnerabilities.
 - Plan effectiveness rooted in accurate/comprehensive assessment.
 - Not static; threats evolve rapidly, so regular assessment and plan updates are recommended.

101.630(d)

Does the CSP renewal have to align with the current FSP/VSP schedule?

- **Owner/operator Choice:** That decision is left to the company about whether to request alignment of submission dates.
- **CSP Schedule:** Initial approval date sets the CSP's 5-year schedule.
- **Alignment:** On request, the Coast Guard will work with submitters to align approval dates, where able, between the FSP/VSP and their CSP.

101.635 - Drills and exercises (Last Updated 07/22/2025)

101.635(b), (c)

Cybersecurity Drills (bi-annual) vs. Exercises (annual): What's the difference?

- **Cybersecurity Drill:** Tests individual aspects of the cybersecurity plan.
- **Cybersecurity Exercise:** Exercises are a full test of the cybersecurity program.

101.635(a), (b), (c)

Can more than one facility/vessel get credit for the same cybersecurity drill and exercise?

- Yes, an owner/operator **may** conduct a drill that spans more than one facility/vessel simultaneously.
- However, all requirements per 33 CFR 101.635 **must be met for each specific facility/vessel** involved.
- The same scenario may be used for multiple facilities at different times, provided it remains applicable to each.
- Each successive drill should test a different part of the security plan, as feasible.

101.635(a), (b), (c)

Can IT phishing tests or simulated cyber incidents count as drills?

- Yes, phishing awareness emails, such as simulated link-click response can potentially count as drills.
- However, they should not be the only types of drills conducted.
- Drills should vary the elements of the plan tested over time.

- Real-world events can also serve as drills/exercises.

101.635

Can cybersecurity drills and exercises be combined with physical security drills and exercises?

- **Yes**, cybersecurity drills and annual exercises can be combined with existing MTSA-required physical security drills/exercises.
- For combined exercises, the scenario must:
- Fully test both the Cybersecurity Plan (CSP) and the Physical Security Plan (FSP/VSP/OCS FSP).
- Meet all requirements of each respective regulatory provision.

101.650 - Cybersecurity measures (Last Updated 01/09/2026)

101.650(d)

What cybersecurity training requirements will be mandated for personnel in maritime operations?

- On October 9, 2025, the Coast Guard published CG-5PC Policy Letter 01-25: Cybersecurity Training for Personnel with Access to Information Technology or Operational Technology Systems. Please refer to the Policy Letter for further clarification on this topic. It can be found here: [Cybersecurity Training Policy Letter-5-PC_01-25.pdf](#)

101.650(d)

What defines "access" for IT/OT cybersecurity training?

- On October 9, 2025, the Coast Guard published CG-5PC Policy Letter 01-25: Cybersecurity Training for Personnel with Access to Information Technology or Operational Technology Systems. Please refer to the Policy Letter for further clarification on this topic. It can be found here: [Cybersecurity Training Policy Letter-5-PC_01-25.pdf](#)

101.650(d)(2)

What defines "Key Personnel"?

- On October 9, 2025, the Coast Guard published CG-5PC Policy Letter 01-25: Cybersecurity Training for Personnel with Access to Information Technology or Operational Technology Systems. Please refer to the Policy Letter for further clarification on this topic. It can be found here: [Cybersecurity Training Policy Letter-5-PC 01-25.pdf](#)

101.650(e)(1)

What are the expected frequency of mandatory cyber assessments/audits?

- **Cybersecurity Assessments:**
 - **Initial:** No later than July 16, 2027.
 - **Frequency:** Annually thereafter.
 - **Sooner if:** Change in ownership.
 - **Purpose:** Inform plan development/maintenance by identifying risks and vulnerabilities.
 - **Note:** Assessment must be conducted *before* developing the Cybersecurity Plan.
- **Cybersecurity Audits (Internal):**
 - **Frequency:** At least annually.
 - **More frequently if:** Change in owner/operator, or modifications to cybersecurity measures (per 33 CFR 101.630(f)).
 - **Purpose:** Identify issues or changes since the last audit and initiate Cybersecurity Plan (CSP) amendments.

101.650(e)(1)

Can a fleet of vessels with identical IT/OT footprint be covered by a single Cybersecurity Assessment (CSA)?

- Yes, however, if there is any deviation on one or more vessels, a Cybersecurity Assessment (CSA) is **required for each individual vessel**, addressing its unique IT/OT footprint.

101.650(g)

Does the Coast Guard have capabilities and resources that can aid companies in their response to cyber incidents?

- Yes, the USCG can provide guidance and assistance.
- **Resources:**
 - Sector Marine Transportation System Specialist -Cyber (MTSS-C), stationed in local COTP Zones.
 - U.S. Coast Guard's Cyber Protection Team (CPT).
 - Coast Guard Maritime Industry Cybersecurity Resource Website: [Coast Guard Maritime Industry Cybersecurity Resource Website](#)
- **How to Request Assistance:**
 - During an NRC report.
 - Directly through the Sector Command Center.
 - Through the MTSS-C.
 - Via email: maritimecyber@uscg.mil.

101.660 - Cybersecurity compliance documentation (Last Updated 07/22/2025)

Can TSA CIP/CAP compliance fulfill new cybersecurity requirements?

- If regulatory overlap exists, entities may identify where requirements are being simultaneously satisfied and bring this to the attention of the Coast Guard during submission or inspection.

Part 160 – Ports and Waterways Safety – General (Last Updated 07/22/2025)

"Cyber incident" (160.202) vs. 101.615 definitions?

- The use of the term "cyber incident" in the definition of "hazardous condition" in 33 CFR 160.202 **is treated the same** as the definition of "cyber incident" in 33 CFR 101.615.

Do foreign vessels have to report cyber incidents via ENOA and to NRC/COTP?

- **Yes, hazardous conditions** (now including cyber incidents) must be reported on the Notice of Arrival (NOA) per 33 CFR 160.206.
- **Immediate notification** to the nearest COTP or OCMI is required for any hazardous condition (33 CFR 160.216).