

# America's Coast Guard



## Commandant's Guiding Principles

2018–2022



U.S. Coast Guard



## About this document

This document shares the Commandant's Guiding Principles. Each principle is interconnected with the other, and they collectively reinforce the foundation of trust with the Nation we serve. Complemented by our Core Values of Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty, the Guiding Principles will inform our Service's priorities, which will be released in the near future.



# U.S. Coast Guard

# THE COMMANDANT OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD



It is my distinct privilege to serve you and the American public as the 26th Commandant of the Coast Guard. My guiding principles below will ensure our Service remains best positioned to “*Stand the Watch*” and serve a Nation whose economic prosperity, national security, and global influence are inextricably linked to the maritime domain. Our service is strong, the total workforce highly capable, and the demand for Coast Guard services never greater. As I assume the watch, our heading will remain steady but we will look to pick up speed building on *Service to Nation, Commitment to Excellence, and Duty to People*. Our approach to *Duty to People* will be reframed through the lens of building and optimizing a “mission ready total workforce,” more closely tying the development and support of our people, and their families, to service readiness.



These guiding principles frame my direction and will support the Department of Homeland Security, the Secretary of Defense and Combatant Commanders, and other national and global maritime interests.

## READY

We will be prepared to serve and protect the American people and our national interests.

## RELEVANT

We will be a professional and agile armed force, law enforcer, regulator, and maritime first responder on which our partners confidently rely to address the Nation’s increasingly complex maritime challenges.

## RESPONSIVE

We will employ our bias for action to excel in mission execution as we protect and defend the homeland.

Our Coast Guard is strong, and that is a testament to you. Thank you for the dedication, hard work, and sacrifice you and your families make daily to successfully accomplish all of our missions. I am incredibly proud of this great organization and humbly honored to serve alongside you as we build on past success and lead our Coast Guard into the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl L. Schultz".

Karl L. Schultz  
Commandant



# We are **READY**

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*With shared  
commitment, we  
will develop  
and sustain a  
mission ready  
total workforce.*

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*Semper Paratus* (Always Ready) is far more than a motto, it is our core purpose. Today's complex maritime operating environment demands nothing less. The Coast Guard has a duty to train, support, and empower our total workforce, so in return our members can ready themselves to successfully perform frontline operations, or provide world class support to such operations. With shared commitment, we will develop and sustain a "mission ready total workforce."

Every active duty, reserve, civilian and auxiliary member plays an integral role in mission execution, and our collective efforts must deliver enduring value and sustain a Service culture worthy of our Nation's trust and confidence. This starts with our own readiness, seeking mastery of craft, and above all upholding our Core Values of *Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty*.

Time and effort taking care of yourself mentally and physically, developing healthy habits that enhance both your mind and your physical well-being, while sustaining a strong moral character and adherence to ethical principles are key attributes each of us must embrace. The Service will help those who need assistance, and their families, while simultaneously ensuring our Core Values are upheld.

We are committed to broadening diversity, striving to be a Coast Guard representative of the American public we serve. A diverse workforce fosters new ideas and enables an inclusive environment critical to mission success. Our bias for action must also focus inward, protecting against violations of our Core Values. This includes all forms of sexual assault and harassment, which breach trust in teams, erode unit cohesion, and degrade individual and unit readiness.

We will seek the best people, modern technology, resilient infrastructure, and capable assets available to meet the needs of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Nation.

**We are committed to broadening diversity, striving to be a Coast Guard representative of the American public we serve.**

Maintaining service readiness in the face of complex threats and increasing technological sophistication in the maritime domain requires modern capable assets and the sufficient resources to operate and maintain them. Our personnel and support structures must also evolve to recruit, train, and sustain a 21st century Coast Guard that conducts and supports front-line operations, including regulatory functions, that protect national interests.

We will strive to be an employer of choice for those who embrace our Core Values and the noble concept of public service in the world's best Coast Guard!





# We are RELEVANT

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*When we work together, we rise above challenges that alone could not be overcome.*

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The Coast Guard fulfills civil and military responsibilities in every element of the maritime domain, protecting America's security, prosperity, and national interests. In a department dedicated to securing our homeland, the interdependence of the legitimate flow of commerce and security is clear. Employing our unique authorities, broad jurisdiction, and expansive partnerships, we will tirelessly pursue excellence and focus on *unity of effort*, selflessly collaborating with other DHS components to strengthen the Nation's homeland security enterprise. We embrace the Department's mission statement: *With honor and integrity, we will safeguard the American people, our homeland, and our values.* Simultaneously, we will uphold our vital support to the Department of Defense (DoD) and leverage our position as a military service to effectively bind national defense and homeland security efforts.

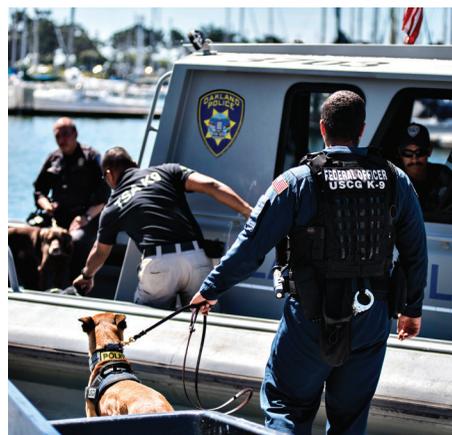
While our Armed Forces partners in DoD address a multitude of national security challenges overseas, which we will support when needed, we will continue to take a lead role in combatting transnational crime in the Western Hemisphere—pushing out our borders, building partner nation capability,

and seizing mutual security opportunities. In the high latitude Polar Regions, especially the Arctic, the Coast Guard will project sovereignty, protect our sub-sea rights, be prepared for increased levels of human activity, support the enhanced understanding of the region's science, and counterbalance competitors' presence.

## We will bolster public trust in the Coast Guard.

Domestically, the Coast Guard is the Nation's maritime first responder for both natural and manmade disasters as the historic 2017 hurricane season showed. For our vital Maritime Transportation System (MTS), wherein 95% of our Nation's commerce occurs with an annual economic impact of \$4.6 trillion, we will enable economic prosperity by ensuring the safe movement of vessels on our waterways, provide common sense regulatory oversight for maritime and waterfront facility security in our Nation's seaports, and position the Coast Guard as a leader for cyber security across the MTS.

We will bolster public trust in the Coast Guard by embracing a collaborative approach that will extend through the interagency to our robust network of international, state, local, tribal and territorial partners, including maritime stakeholders. When we work together, we rise above challenges that alone could not be overcome. We shall remain a Service trusted, respected, and valued by our fellow citizens.





We are  
**RESPONSIVE**

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*We will always  
be poised  
and prepared  
to answer  
departmental  
and national  
demands.*

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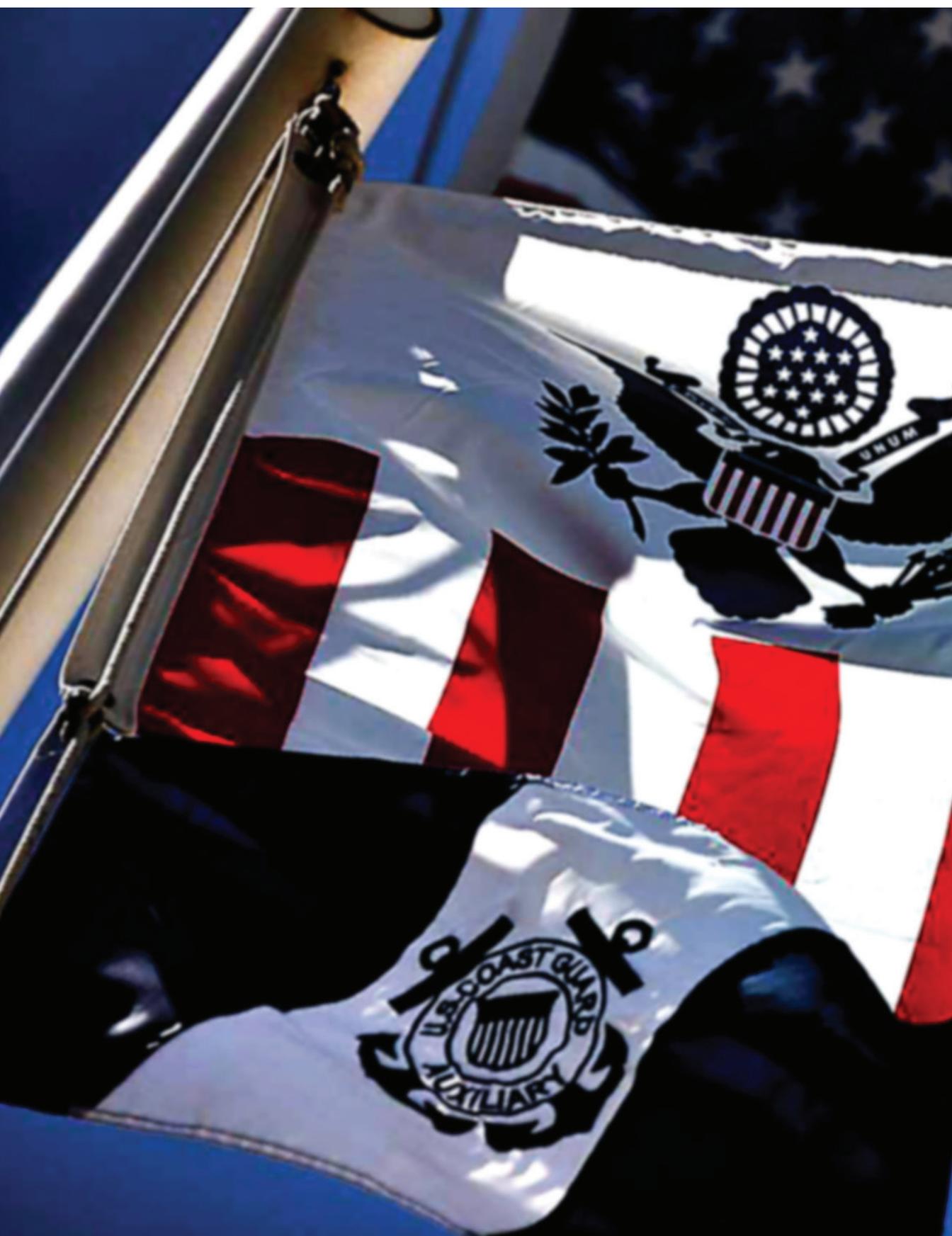
Our *bias for action* and propensity to exercise *on-scene initiative* are ingrained in our Service's character and reflected daily in the multi-mission performance of our highly adaptive and capable Coast Guard men and women. We save lives, enforce maritime law, facilitate commerce, restore ports, and safeguard and defend America's maritime borders. We thwart threats before they manifest by being ever vigilant in our *Prevention* activities, and our *Response* capabilities will combat disasters and contingencies when they occur. We will always be poised and prepared to answer departmental and national demands.

To be responsive across the Coast Guard enterprise, our support and mission enablers must accelerate service delivery to the operational frontlines, and our operators must deliver key services to the American public and other stakeholders and interests we serve. We lead through leaders, empowering operational commanders to make decisions, act innovatively, and accept prudent risk that enables operational outcomes, both in crisis and steady state conditions.

We will identify enterprise risks and opportunities, and our empowered leaders will evaluate and mitigate risk where they can, and then act decisively to accomplish the mission, advance our service, and safeguard our fellow citizens.

**We save lives, enforce maritime law, facilitate commerce, restore ports, safeguard and defend America's maritime borders.**







# COAST GUARD CORE VALUES

## HONOR

Integrity is our standard. We demonstrate uncompromising ethical conduct and moral behavior in all of our personal and organizational actions. We are loyal and accountable to the public trust.

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## RESPECT

We value our diverse workforce. We treat each other and those we serve with fairness, dignity, respect, and compassion. We encourage individual opportunity and growth. We encourage creativity through empowerment. We work as a team.

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## DEVOTION TO DUTY

We are professionals, military and civilian, who seek responsibility and accept accountability. We are committed to successfully achieving our organizational goals. We exist to serve. We serve with pride.

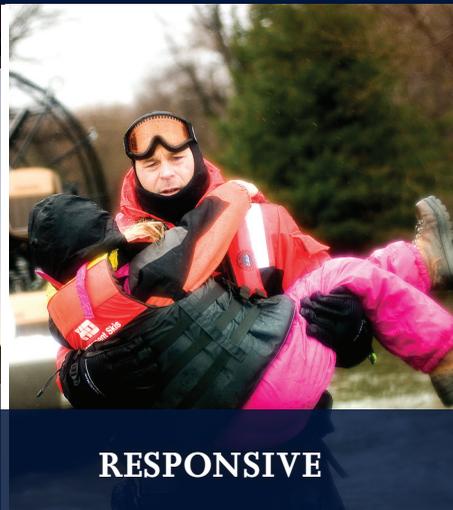
[www.uscg.mil/alwaysready](http://www.uscg.mil/alwaysready)



**READY**



**RELEVANT**



**RESPONSIVE**



**U.S. Coast Guard**



*With honor and integrity, we will safeguard the American people, our homeland, and our values.*



*Semper Paratus.  
Honor, Respect, and  
Devotion to Duty.*