



# U.S. COAST GUARD



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#### NEW OFFICER SPECIALTY FRAMEWORK

As many of you know, I sponsored a review of our Officer Corps Management System (OCMS) to ensure that it aligned with, and was responsive to, present and future Service needs. As a result, we have changed the first tour assignment policy for ensigns graduating from the Coast Guard Academy and Officer Candidate School, and quantified our need for entry-level officers with technical degrees. Better aligning and coordinating our Academy throughput requirements and the requirements of other officer accession programs. Included in this effort was an extensive examination of our existing Officer Corps Specialty structure and the flows and composition of officers within this structure, which necessitated the tracking of over 75 different specialties for a 6,400 officer corps. Frankly, this complex system – which grew into the legacy Officer Billet Code (OBC) system – has outlived its usefulness.

Thus, working with program managers representing all officer communities and CGPC-OPM, we developed a new Officer Specialty Framework with 13 specialties and 37 sub-specialties, which will provide senior leadership a foundation that better aligns officer specialties with mission performance requirements. This new framework, approved by the Commandant for implementation in 2008-2009, will be applied to all officer positions in the Personnel Allowance List (PAL) and eventually each officer. The new framework can be viewed in the attached word document.

The new framework reflects the evolution of the officer corps from one consisting primarily of generalists into an officer corps of specialists and broadened specialists. The OCMS study clearly demonstrated that our Officer Corps consists principally of specialists and broadened specialists, with only a small number of generalists (5 %). In fact, the new framework validates/legitimizes the way in which the Coast Guard is managing its Officer Corps.

To clarify, a specialty is an area of expertise, defined by a set of competencies, and possessing an authorized billet structure capable of sustaining a viable population of career specialists who have requisite work experience, education, training, certification, or license. A sub-specialty is a focused area of expertise within a specialty. Officers may acquire multiple sub-specialties during the course of their careers. A generalist is one who acquires general knowledge and skills in multiple areas of Coast Guard work, through education, training and/or service experience, but not in any one specialty or sub-specialty. A broadened specialist is one who possesses in-depth knowledge and skills in two or more specialties or sub-specialties.

Let me assure you that each officer will fit somewhere within this framework, which will include a mechanism for each officer to provide input on how he or she is designated. This new framework is not an end-state but rather a starting point that will change over time as the needs of the Service change. Admittedly, much work lies ahead as we continue to interpret and incorporate the full effects of Sectors, Deepwater, Vertical Integration, and changes in our

## Logistics System.

This effort is the first step in building a foundation for the officer section of our Competency Management System and the follow-on Officer Specialty Management System which is currently in draft. Ultimately, the OCMS project and its related research will shape the management tools required to enhance the adaptability and flexibility of our officer corps – a unique strength among all the armed forces. Further information on Officer Specialty implementation will be provided by future messages and Flag Voices and will be incorporated into the Coast Guard Personnel Manual.

[Click here for new framework](#)

Regards,

*RADM Kenneth T. Venuto*  
Ken Venuto

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