

Overview of Opportunities in the Maritime Industry

Thank you for your interest in working as a civilian mariner!

The U.S. Merchant Marine is an industry with rewarding opportunities for secure employment, professional development, and a way of life entirely different from the “9-to-5.” This overview will give you a quick snapshot of the industry and the opportunities we offer within it.

The industry is made up of several sectors:

- Large “deep sea” vessels sail from coastal ports to all parts of the globe.
- Tugboats perform ship assist work in harbors and haul barges along the coastlines.
- Offshore Supply Vessels (OSVs) support oilfield exploration and development.

Larger vessels have a deck department responsible for navigation and operations, an engine department, and a steward’s department. Tugs and other small vessels may combine these duties. Currently, the Workboat Academy focuses on the deck department.

A ship’s deck department is made up of two or more deck ratings (Ordinary Seafarers and Able Bodied Seafarers), one to three mates, and a captain. A deck rating handles lines, maintains the ship’s topsides, and may stand a lookout watch. The mate is in charge of a 4- or 6-hour navigational watch. The captain is responsible for the overall management and safety of the ship. All have additional duties, which vary with the size and work of the vessel.

There are several paths to the top as a deck officer. You can:

1. Work your way up from the bottom, starting as an Ordinary Seafarer (OS) and advance with sea time, study, and licensing exams. To move from OS to Captain (Unlimited) takes at least 10 years.
2. Attend a State Maritime Academy. Graduates of the academies earn a bachelor’s degree and an officer’s license as a 3rd Mate Unlimited (for any motor vessel on any waters). Advancing from Cadet to Captain (Unlimited) takes about 10 years.
3. Attend the Workboat Academy Program. Our two-year Apprenticeship program provides well-qualified candidates with the courses they need, plus hands-on watchkeeping experience, sea time, and paid work aboard a Partner Company’s vessel. Graduates receive a license as mate aboard vessels of up to 500 or 1600 Tons (depending on vessel tonnage). Graduates may, after sailing as a Mate 360 days, be eligible for a 500/1600 Ton Captain’s license.

For the right candidate, the Program offers an excellent learning opportunity – and the prospect of well-paid employment after the program. We are proud of the fact that over 90% of our graduates remain employed at the Partner Company with which they trained and that we have a retention rate over 90% in the Maritime Industry.

Contact us today to see if the Workboat Academy Program would be a good fit for you!

We hope to help you get underway on your career as a Merchant Mariner.

Sincerely,

Marja van Pietersom
Director
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