



U.S. Committee on the Marine Transportation System
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MILITARY TO MARINER EXECUTIVE ORDER 13860 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

On Monday, March 4, President Trump signed Executive Order (EO) 13860 on Supporting the Transition of Active Duty Service Members and Military Veterans into the Merchant Marine¹. This EO brings attention to the vital importance of the U.S. Merchant Marine for national security, safety, and prosperity, and aims to more easily facilitate the transition of active duty service members into the U.S. maritime industry.

Hiring veterans makes good business sense. Federal Departments and agencies have been working diligently for several years to support Veterans transitioning from active duty service to civilian employment, and ensure that applicable mariner-related experience and training are appropriately credited towards a merchant mariner credential (MMC). The U.S. Merchant Marine and the maritime industry in general will benefit greatly from the skills and experience of sea-going service members and other Veterans.

1. How significant is President Trump’s Executive Order?

“As our strategic competitors expand their global footprint, the United States must retain its ability to project and sustain forces globally. This capability requires a sufficient corps of credentialed merchant mariners available to crew the necessary sealift fleet. Attracting additional trained and credentialed mariners, particularly from active duty service members and military veterans, will support United States national security requirements and provide meaningful, well-paying jobs to United States veterans.” – EO 13860 Section 1

This EO directs the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security to reduce the barriers or hurdles that stand in the way of military service members interested in earning merchant marine credentials. Those barriers include:

- (a) substantial military training in career fields relevant to the Merchant Marine that is not currently certified by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) for merchant mariner credentialing;
- (b) fees for obtaining Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) cards and MMCs; and
- (c) difficulty in documenting past sea experience for the purpose of earning MMCs above entry level.

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-supporting-transition-active-duty-service-members-military-veterans-merchant-marine/>

2. Who does this Executive Order apply to?

The EO states that all “applicable services” to include any of the “armed forces,” as defined in 10 USC §101(a)(4)(A), which are Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and USCG, are eligible for this program.

3. When will the EO go into effect?

This order went into effect at its signing. For Sec 3(i), within one year of March 4, 2019, all military training and experience within applicable services that may qualify for credit toward merchant mariner credentialing will be submitted to the USCG National Maritime Center (NMC) for consideration to meet mariner credentialing requirements. (The 2017 National Defense Authorization Act required all services to submit a report on military courses applicable to the MMC, which is already published and available².) For Sec 3(iv) notwithstanding that there are internal processes toward implementation that need to be reviewed, members of the applicable services who request certification of sea service should receive it within one month of release from active duty. For Sec 3 (ii) Waiver of Fees (iii) TWIC card payments and (v) development of Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) programs are tasks that the responsible parties will continue progress towards.

4. Which Department or official is responsible for implementing this Executive Order?

The Departments of Defense and Homeland Security are tasked with the implementation of the EO in support of merchant mariner credentialing and maintenance of those credentials. The U.S. Committee on the Marine Transportation System (CMTS) is directed to report annually on the implementation of the EO and to pursue innovative ways to support merchant mariner credentialing, including through its Military to Mariner Initiative.

5. How does this order fit into overall efforts to recruit and retain merchant mariners that is already underway?

In 2014, the CMTS (www.CMTS.gov) formed the Military to Mariner Task Force to help coordinate Federal efforts to facilitate the transition from military service to civilian employment in the U.S. Merchant Marine, and other positions within the U.S. Marine Transportation System. The military sea service agencies have been very proactive to address many of the challenges of transitioning sea service personnel to the U.S. Merchant Marine. The Task Force members have committed time and resources to:

- crosswalk military ship-board training and qualifications to mariner credential requirements;
- assign permanent staff to the Navy and USCG COOL projects;
- align all related military occupational specialties and ratings in the Army, Navy, and USCG to the applicable USCG maritime licenses and established policies to help active duty personnel cover associated costs through the COOL programs;

² <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Portals/9/NMC/pdfs/courses/courses.pdf>

- make available to Sailors “best sources” training opportunities³ through Navy COOL, in partnership with Military Sealift Command (MSC); these courses can be used for gap/delta training to help prepare Sailors for USCG credentials;
- enable USCG Academy graduates to receive a 100 Ton Master-Near Coastal Credential upon graduation;
- increase the number of service training courses approved for MMCs; and
- identify ways to recruit, train, and retain Merchant Mariners to support both national Defense and Federal mission accomplishment.

Please visit <https://www.cmts.gov/topics/m2m> for more information about the CMTS Military to Mariner initiative.

6. How many additional merchant mariners do you hope to attract with the help of this Executive Order?

The Maritime Workforce Working Group Report⁴ to Congress estimates that an additional 1,800 mariners are needed to support the U.S. Flag Fleet during times of national emergency. While service members and Veterans will not completely fill this gap, it will help offset the staffing needs of the U.S. maritime industry. The USCG NMC manually tracks how many Veterans are applying for MMCs; approximately 1% of applicants have some level of military connection.

It is not possible to estimate how many more merchant mariners will be attracted to the industry by this EO, but anecdotally many stakeholders have expressed their support. As the applicable services continue to enhance their transition support activities related to the military to mariner initiative, while eliminating the previous roadblocks, we anticipate that personnel with sea service experience will recognize the opportunities of the merchant marine.

7. What is a TWIC® card and is there an opportunity to have it paid for?

The Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC®) is required for workers who need access to secure areas of the nation’s maritime facilities and vessels, and involves an applicant background check. Obtaining a TWIC® is the first step in acquiring a MMC. TWIC® applications are serviced through the credentialing authority, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). For more information and to apply for a TWIC, please visit the TWIC® page⁵ at the TSA website.

Certain current service members can have a TWIC® paid for by their respective services through the Voluntary Credentialing Programs, which can be accessed through the COOL sites to verify applicability. The Navy provides reimbursement of TWIC® fees for eligible Active Duty and Reserve Enlisted Sailors. The Army Transportation School pays for TWIC® cards for all eligible Army mariners. The USCG expects to reimburse TWIC® fees paid by its Enlisted service members and is finalizing policy to include methods for submitting an application to the USCG’s

³ https://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=104790

⁴ <https://www.maritime.dot.gov/outreach/maritime-workforce-working-group-mwwg>

⁵ <https://www.tsa.gov/for-industry/twic>

Voluntary Credentialing Office in order to obtain preapproval of reimbursement for the TWIC® fees.

Certain maritime industries pay for TWIC® cards and renewal fees for their employees, but this is dependent on the employer.

8. I am an active duty service member or Veteran. What resources are available to me to get a Merchant Mariner Credential?

The USCG NMC⁶ is the authoritative organization for the issuance of the MMC. Getting a MMC is a multi-step process, and the NMC strives to provide mariners with the resources needed to successfully meet their requirements and receive a credential. NMC even has a convenient Live Chat, where mariners can securely connect with the NMC staff members with questions.

One of the most robust resources is the Navy COOL⁷, a step by step resource mapping skills, training, and credentials needed to meet certain mariner qualifications, and even where GI Bill benefits can be used to meet those requirements. A similarly robust USCG COOL⁸ program is now publicly available, with potential credential funding in 2020. The Department of Labor's (DOL) My Next Move⁹ and O*Net¹⁰ also provide crosswalks and ability to identify employment opportunities fitting a Veteran's experience and interests.

Certain MMCs, for example, those in the Deck and Engineering Departments, require applicants to complete training and complete USCG-administered tests. Other merchant mariner credentials such as USCG Certificates of Registry, require applicants to present evidence to the USCG of competency or certification by another organization. Suffice it say that if you worked on a surface or subsurface vessel in the deck, engineering/electrical/electronics, operations, navigation, culinary, logistics, administration, communications, or information technology/computer network management field, your experience may qualify you for an advanced or specialized MMC, or it may help you earn it more quickly. Additionally, selected employers such as MSC seek mariners with special skills, such as small boat operation, or very strong swimming ability, for collateral duty responsibilities such as Surface Rescue Swimmer.

8. I am a maritime employer and would like to hire more Veterans. What resources are available to me?

DOL's Veterans' Employment & Training Service (VETS) website at www.VETERANS.gov contains a variety of employer resources, including an Employer Guide to Hire Veterans¹¹ that highlights the growing number of resources for companies wishing to hire and retain Veterans. There are links on VETERANS.gov where you can post a job and receive one-on-one assistance from Regional Veterans' Employment Coordinators. DOL recently launched the HIRE Vets

⁶ https://www.dco.uscg.mil/national_maritime_center/

⁷ <https://www.cool.navy.mil/usn/index.htm>

⁸ <https://www.cool.uscg.mil/>

⁹ <https://www.mynextmove.org/vets/>

¹⁰ <https://www.onetcenter.org/crosswalks.html>

¹¹ https://www.cmts.gov/downloads/Employer_Guide_to_Hire_Veterans_March_2018.pdf

Medallion Program¹² that provides national level recognition for employers who hire, retain, and support veterans. Transitioning Service Members and Veterans search the list of HIRE Vets Medallion Program recipients to focus their job searches.

Employers can post available openings on VETERANS.gov and the American Maritime Partnership's MilitarytoMaritime.org website.

9. I represent a maritime training center and would like to encourage more Veterans to participate in my programs. How can I make it easier for Veterans to use GI Bill benefits to enroll in my courses?

For a Veteran to use their GI Bill benefits at an educational institution, the program/course must be approved through a State Approving Agency (SAA). SAA's are the entity authorized by the Veteran's Administration to provide approval, oversight, training, and outreach activities, to ensure the quality of programs of education and proper administration of GI Bill benefits. Find your SAA at <http://nasaa-vetseducation.com/Contacts.aspx>.

SAA approval is in addition to course approval by the USCG NMC. Visit the USCG NMC Training and Assessment webpage¹³ for more information.

10. I am a private sector individual and would like to lend my expertise to this Military to Mariner discussion. Where can I contribute?

The Merchant Mariner Personnel Advisory Committee¹⁴ (MERPAC), a USCG Federal Advisory Committee, has an open and ongoing Task Statement related to supporting the progress made by military services towards meeting the goals on the use of Military Education, Training, and Assessment for STCW and National Mariner Endorsements. MERPAC welcomes participation and input from non-Federal stakeholders in informing USCG decision making on merchant mariner issues.

¹² <https://www.hirevets.gov/>

¹³ https://www.dco.uscg.mil/nmc/training_assessments/

¹⁴ <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Prevention-Policy-CG-5P/Commercial-Regulations-standards-CG-5PS/Office-of-Merchant-Mariner-Credentialing/MERPAC/>