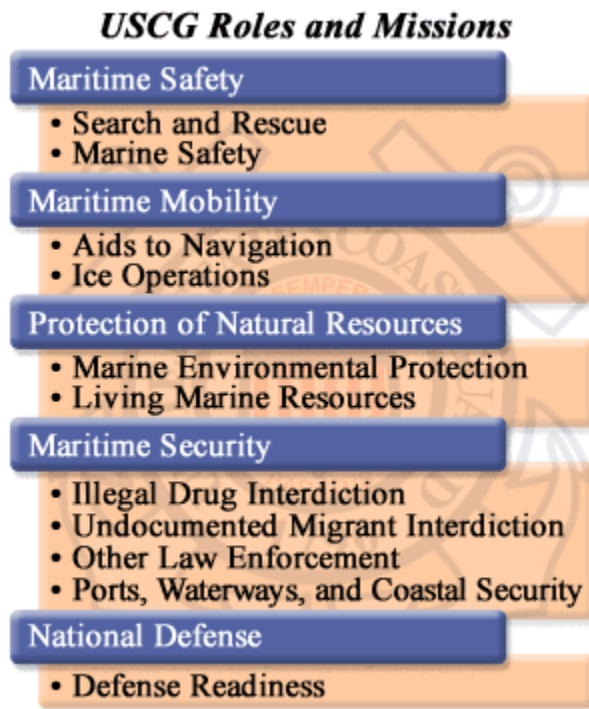


**Roles and Missions 2-3.01-K**

COMPREHEND the Coast Guard Roles and Missions as presented in the E-PME study guide.



***Five Coast Guard Roles***

From 1915, when the Coast Guard was established by law as an armed service, it has been a military, multi-mission, maritime force offering a unique blend of humanitarian, law enforcement, regulatory, diplomatic, and military capabilities, including:

- Maritime Safety
  - Maritime Mobility
  - Protection of Natural Resources
  - Maritime Security
  - National Defense.
-

***Maritime Safety***

The Coast Guard enhances the safety of maritime trade, transportation, and recreational boating through focused programs of mishap prevention, search-and-rescue, and accident investigation.

The goal is to eliminate deaths, injuries, and property damage associated with maritime transportation, fishing, and recreational boating. The Coast Guard's motto is *Semper Paratus* (Always Ready), and the service is always ready to respond to calls for assistance at sea.

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***Maritime Mobility***

The Coast Guard is a leading force for providing a safe and efficient marine transportation system. As such, USCG facilitates maritime commerce and eliminates interruptions and impediments to the efficient and economical movement of goods and people, while maximizing recreational access to and enjoyment of the water.

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***Protection of Natural Resources***

The nation's marine waters and their ecosystems are vital to the health, well-being, and economy of the United States. Our marine environment is one of the most valuable and productive natural resources on Earth and supports one-fifth of the world's fishing industry.

For these reasons, our role in protecting the nation's marine environment is of vital importance. The USCG's goal is to eliminate environmental damage and prevent destruction of our natural resources associated with maritime transportation, fishing, and recreational boating.

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***Maritime Security***

Maritime law enforcement and border control are the oldest of the Coast Guard's numerous responsibilities. The USCG's goal is to protect America's maritime borders from all intrusions by:

- Halting the flow of illegal drugs, aliens, and contraband into the United States through maritime routes.
  - Preventing illegal fishing by enforcing domestic fisheries laws and international fisheries agreements.
  - Enforcing Federal law in the maritime arena to minimize violations and legal actions.
-

## *National Defense*

The USCG defends the nation as one of the five U.S. armed services.

In the USCG's homeland security role, we enhance regional stability in support of the National Security Strategy and utilize the Coast Guard's unique and relevant maritime capabilities, to include:

- Protecting ports, the flow of commerce, and the marine transportation system from terrorism.
- Ensuring the CG can rapidly deploy and resupply our military assets by:
  - ▶ Sustaining Coast Guard units at a high state of readiness.
  - ▶ Keeping marine transportation open for the transit assets and personnel from other branches of the armed forces.
  - ▶ Coordinating efforts and intelligence with federal, state, and local agencies.

These operations require the Coast Guard to execute essential military functions in peacetime, crisis, and war.

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## *Eleven Coast Guard Missions*

The Coast Guard has eleven missions that fall within the five roles. Many Coast Guard assets and resources support one or more mission. For example, a buoy tender, which primarily performs aid to navigation duties, may participate in an oil spill containment, search and rescue case, or migrant interdiction.

The Coast Guard's ability to fulfill its five roles and eleven missions, enables us to:

- Save lives and property at sea.
- Secure U.S. maritime borders and suppress violations of the law.
- Protect our marine environment.
- Provide a safe and efficient marine transportation system.
- Defend the nation.

This makes us truly a unique instrument of national and homeland security. More than simply "guarding the coast," we perform many missions to maintain national and maritime well-being in today's world.

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***Maritime Safety***  
*Search and Rescue*

The sea is powerful and unforgiving, and mishaps occur despite our best prevention efforts. When they do, the Coast Guard has a long heritage and proud tradition of responding immediately to save lives and property in peril.

As the lead agency for maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) in U.S. waters, we coordinate the SAR efforts of sea and airborne Coast Guard units with those of other federal, state, and local responders. We also engage the world's merchant fleet to rescue mariners in distress around the globe through the Automated Mutual-Assistance Vessel Rescue system (AMVER).

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***Marine Safety***

Marine safety activities include developing commercial and recreational vessel standards, enforcing compliance, licensing commercial mariners, and educating the public. We develop operating and construction criteria for many types of vessels, from commercial ships to recreational boats.

As National Recreational Boating Safety Coordinator, the Coast Guard works to minimize the following potential casualties associated with recreational boating:

- Loss of life
  - Personal injury
  - Property damage
  - Environmental harm.
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***Maritime Mobility***  
*Aids to Navigation*

Aids to navigation activities include:

- Maintaining long- and short-range navigation aids
  - Mapping and charting
  - Supplying tide, current, and pilotage information through notices to mariners
  - Operating vessel traffic services
  - Enforcing vessel-safety and bridge-administration standards.
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***Ice Operations***

The Coast Guard operates the nation's only polar icebreakers, which enables a U.S. presence and protects national interests in the Arctic and Antarctic regions. These vessels are key factors in:

- Resupplying U.S. polar facilities
  - Supporting the research requirements of the National Science Foundation.
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***Protection of Natural Resources***

***Marine Environmental Protection***

Marine environmental protection activities include the containment of maritime pollution, control of domestic fisheries, and inspection of foreign vessels.

The Coast Guard is frequently the coordinator for oil and hazardous substance incidents in all coastal and some inland areas. It is responsible for coordinating response operations with a diverse team of government and commercial entities in emergency situations.

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***Living Marine Resources***

The Coast Guard is tasked with protecting the nation's valuable marine resources, such as whales, fur-bearing mammals, and fish, from exploitation. We serve as the primary agency for at-sea fisheries enforcement.

Our role has expanded over the last few decades to:

- Defend sensitive marine habitats, marine mammals, and endangered marine species.
  - Enforce laws protecting U.S. waters from the discharge of oil and other hazardous substances and invasive species, such as zebra mussels.
- 

***Marine Security  
Illegal Drug Interdiction***

The Coast Guard defends the U.S. seaward frontier against the importation of illegal drugs. For more than two decades, our cutters and aircraft, deployed off South America and in the transit zone, have intercepted many tons of cocaine, marijuana, and other illegal drugs that otherwise would have found their way to America's streets.

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***Undocumented Migrant Interdiction***

Coast Guard undocumented migrant interdiction operations have an important humanitarian dimension. Migrants typically take great risks and endure significant hardships in their attempts to flee their countries and enter the United States. In many cases, migrant vessels interdicted at sea are overloaded and unseaworthy, lack basic safety equipment, and are operated by inexperienced mariners.

Most undocumented migrant interdiction cases we handle actually begin as search and rescue incidents, illustrating the interweaving of our roles and missions. Between 1980 and 2000, we interdicted 290,000 migrants, mostly from Cuba, the Dominican Republic, the People's Republic of China, and Haiti.

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*Other Law  
Enforcement*

Among our remaining law-enforcement missions, the most important is fisheries protection. In 1976, Congress passed what is now known as the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

By creating an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), this legislation extended our nation's maritime border out 200 nautical miles. Since then, international fisheries agreements extended U.S. jurisdiction to areas beyond the EEZ.

Today, we patrol all these areas, focusing on boundaries such as the U.S./Russian Convention Line in the Bering Sea, to uphold U.S. sovereignty and protect precious U.S. marine resources.

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*Ports, Waterways,  
and Coastal  
Security*

In this post-9/11 era, increasingly important elements of maritime law enforcement arise in the area of Ports, Waterways, and Coastal Security.

In essence, these efforts protect the U.S. maritime domain and the U.S. Marine Transportation System against both internal and external threats and deny their use to terrorists for mounting attacks on our territory, population, and critical infrastructure. This includes preparations needed to prevent attacks and emergency response capabilities in case attacks occur.

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*National Defense  
Defense  
Readiness*

In recent years, Coast Guard cutters have conducted at-sea interception operations, foreign liaison, and other supporting warfare tasks in all key theaters. We offer unique capabilities and perform a vital, complementary role no other armed service can provide.

Unlike the other services, we reach out to other countries' maritime interests and agencies. We maintain a high state of readiness to operate as a specialized service within the Navy to be called upon if needed.

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