

External Relationships 2-4.01-K

KNOW the relationship between the Coast Guard and the following as presented in the E-PME Study Guide:

- President
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of Defense



External Relationships

For more than 210 years, the Coast Guard has served the nation as one of the five armed forces; however, it is the only armed force that operates outside of the Department of Defense.

President

As an armed force, the USCG's Commander-in-Chief is the President of the United States.

***Department of
Homeland Security
(DHS)***

On March 1, 2003, the Coast Guard moved to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) from the Department of Transportation. In the DHS, the Coast Guard remains intact and reports directly to the Secretary. As the nation's "*maritime first responder*," the Coast Guard serves as a crucial and responsive element of the Department of Homeland Security.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is comprised of five major divisions or directorates and various critical agencies. The major divisions are:

- Border & Transportation Security
- Emergency Preparedness & Response
- Science & Technology
- Information Analysis & Infrastructure Protection
- Management

One of the critical agencies in the Department is the Coast Guard. The Commandant of the Coast Guard reports directly to the Secretary of Homeland Security.

***(DHS)Border and
Transportation
Security***

The USCG also works closely with the Under Secretary of Border and Transportation Security and maintains its existing independent identity as a military service.

Upon declaration of war or when the President so directs, the Coast Guard operates as an element of the Department of Defense, consistent with existing law.

Maritime “First Responder” (DHS)

The USCG’s trained crews react to a wide variety of maritime disasters, such as plane crashes, groundings, bridge and waterway accidents, and other maritime casualties.

The Coast Guard’s specially trained National Strike Force teams around the nation provide a flexible and adaptive resource of the Department of Homeland Security. They:

- Deploy swiftly to clean up oil spills and hazardous materials
- Provide assistance during natural disasters such as hurricanes and flooding
- Work hand in hand with EPA, FEMA, state, local, and other key agencies to save lives and protect property

In addition, commercial, tanker, passenger, and merchant vessels are all subject to increased security measures enforced by the Coast Guard.

Department of Defense

Throughout its history, the Coast Guard has had a unique relationship with the Navy.

By statute, the Coast Guard is an armed force, operating in the joint arena at any time and functioning as a specialized service under the Navy in time of war or when directed by the President.
