

General information for USCG licenses to carry passenger, the applications can be downloaded from this site

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USCG approved Master 100 Gross Ton License classes

The USCG Masters License allows the holder to operate inspected vessels as well as uninspected vessels. Any vessel that is certified (authorized) by the USCG to carry more than 6 paying passengers plus crew must have a Captain who holds a Masters license. Ferry boats, harbor tours boats, whale watch boats are examples of inspected vessels.

What are the USCG Requirements for the Masters License?

There are **4 different Masters Licenses** a mariner may qualify for such as the Master Inland or Master Near Coastal. Both the amount of sea service time and the size vessels you have been on will influence the license you are eligible for. Masters licenses are tonnage rated at 25 GT (gross tons), 50 GT, or 100 GT. The tonnage you are awarded is determined by the size vessels you've gained experience on in the last 3 years – it's called "recency experience." You are not required to advance through the different licenses one at a time. If you meet the USCG requirements for the master 100GT Near Coastal, you'll get that license as your first license. The 4 types of up to 100GT Masters licenses are listed below along with the requirements:

1. Master Inland: 360 days underway experience since age 13; 90 of those 360 days in the last 3 years. Completion of approved Course and Test.

2. Master Inland/OUPV (6 Pak) "Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessels": 360 days underway experience since age 13; 90 of those 360 days in the last 3 years; 90 of those 360 days outside the boundary lines. Completion of approved Course and Test.

3. Master Inland/Mate N.C.: 360 days underway experience since age 13; 90 days of those 360 days in the last 3 years; 180 of those 360 days outside the boundary lines. Completion of approved Course and Test.

4. Master Near Coastal: 720 days underway experience since age 13; 90 of those 360 days in the last 3 years; 360 of those 720 days outside the boundary lines. Completion of approved Course and Test.

* For each license above, at least one half of the required service time must be acquired since the age of 16 years.

Additional requirements:

- Minimum Age – 19 years old
- Physical Exam, Drug Test, Eye Exam, Color Blind Test
- CPR/First Aid Card
- US Citizenship
- Character reference letters
- Completed USCG application package

USCG OUPV (6-PAK) License Classes

What is the OUPV License?

The USCG "Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessels" License allows the holder to Captain uninspected vessels up to 100 gross tons (about 75-90 feet long). Most pleasure vessels are in the uninspected vessel category due to the materials and method of construction. As such, these vessels are limited to 6 paying passengers plus crew - hence the term "6-pak". The OUPV License is issued in two forms:

OUPV Inland License - Requires at least 360 days experience in the operation of vessels. 90 of the 360 days must be in the last 3 years. Experience gained prior to the age of 13 will not be counted. Half of the required service must be acquired since the age of 16.

This license is good on vessels to 100 gross tons.

- This license is restricted to operation within the Boundary Lines (as described in the USCG application package) excluding the Great Lakes. This license is good on uninspected vessels to 100 gross tons.
- This license can be upgraded to OUPV Near Coastal once you have achieved 90 days experience outside the Boundary Lines.

OUPV Near Coastal - This license also requires at least 360 days experience in the operation of vessels, 90 of which must be gained outside the Boundary Lines.

90 of the 360 days must be in the last 3 years. Experience gained prior to the age of 13 will not be counted. Half of the required service must be acquired since the age of 16. This license is good on vessels to 100 gross tons and out to 100 nautical miles. **NOTE:** Experience can be counted on your own vessel. A letter and proof of ownership are required. Experience on other persons' vessels can also be counted however; a letter from the owner must accompany the application verifying experience claimed and vessel details.

What are the USCG 6-Pak requirements?

The primary requirements are:

- Age 18 or over
- 360 days underway experience
- 90 of those days in the last 3 years
- Physical, drug test and eye exam
- Valid CPR/First Aid card
- Completion of the USCG exam

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In depth explanation of requirements for a Captain's License (Merchant Marine License)

The USCG "Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessels" License allows the holder to Captain uninspected vessels up to 100 gross tons (about 75-90 feet long). Most pleasure vessels are in the uninspected vessel category due to the materials and method of construction. As such, these vessels are limited to 6 paying passengers plus crew - hence the term "6-pak". The OUPV License is issued in two forms:

OUPV Inland License - Requires at least 360 days experience in the operation of vessels. 90 of the 360 days must be in the last 3 years. Experience gained prior to the age of 13 will not be counted. Half of the required service must be acquired since the age of 16.

This license is good on vessels to 100 gross tons.

This license is restricted to operation within the Boundary Lines (as described in the USCG application package) excluding the Great Lakes. This license is good on

uninspected vessels to 100 gross tons.

This license can be upgraded to a OUPV Near Coastal once you have achieved 90 days experience outside the Boundary Lines.

OUPV Near Coastal - This license also requires at least 360 days experience in the operation of vessels, 90 of which must be gained outside the Boundary Lines.

90 of the 360 days must be in the last 3 years. Experience gained prior to the age of 13 will not be counted. Half of the required service must be acquired since the age of 16. This license is good on vessels to 100 gross tons and out to 100 nautical miles. NOTE: Experience can be counted on your own vessel. A letter and proof of ownership are required. Experience on other persons' vessels can also be counted however, a letter from the owner must accompany the application verifying experience claimed and vessel details.

What are the USCG 6-Pak requirements?

The primary requirements for a Coast Guard Application are:

- **Application Form** - Complete required sections for an original license.
- Three character references must be included.
- Application valid for one year from receipt.
- **Physical Exam Form** - must be completely filled out. An incomplete form will delay your application.
- Not meeting a vision, hearing, or general physical condition requirements does not automatically disqualify the applicant.
- **Drug Test** - All applicants must be certified "Drug Free" by:
 - having a physician submit a completed Drug Free form after a SAMHSA approved drug test or
 - submitting a letter stating the applicant is currently enrolled in a Coast Guard required random drug testing program.
- **Sea Service Form** - You must tabulate your experience in operating your own vessels on the Sea Service Form. If necessary use added copies to account for service on more than four vessels.
- One day of service consists of a minimum of four hours underway, not at the dock. You can claim only one day in a 24 hour day.
- **Documentation of Sea Service** - If sea time is documented on your own vessel, use state registration, documentation certificate, bill of sale, or insurance papers. Service on vessels not owned by you must be supported by letters in the form of the supplemental Small Boat Experience Letter.
- **Proof of Age and Citizenship** - Must be verified by one of the following:
 - Birth Certificate (original or certified copy)
 - Passport (original or certified copy)
 - Baptismal Certificate (issued within a year of birth)
 - Certificate of Naturalization (original only)
 - Proper documentation for name change
- **Proof of Social Security Number** - You must submit an original or duplicate, not a copy.
- **CPR / First Aid Card(s)** - A certificate dated within 12 months of your application date from one of the following courses:

- American Red Cross
- American Heart Association
- Coast Guard Approved Course
- **Certificate of Completion from an approved class....or take the USCG exam!**

Licensing Requirements

Uninspected Licenses

Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessels

Twelve months service (360 8hr Days or 240 12hr Days) on deck on vessels operating on the oceans, or the navigable waters of the United States including the Great Lakes.

Master/Mate of Un-inspected Fishing Vessels

Master:

- Four years of total service on ocean or near coastal routes. Service on Great Lakes of inland waters may substitute for up to two years of the required service. One year of the required service must have been as licensed master, as unlicensed master, or as licensed mate or equivalent supervisory position while holding a license as master, mate, operator of uninspected towing vessels, or operator of uninspected passenger vessels.
- To qualify for a license of not more than 500 gross tons, at least two more years of the required service, including the one-year as master, mate or the equivalent, must have been on vessels of over 50 tons.
- To qualify for a license of not more than 1600 gross tons, at least two years of the required service, including the one-year as master, mate or equivalent, must have been on vessels of over 100 gross tons.
- To qualify for a license of over 1600 gross tons, but not more than 500 gross tons, the vessels tonnage upon which the four years of required service was obtained will be used to compute the tonnage. The license is limited to the maximum tonnage on which at least 25 percent of the required service was obtained, or 150 percent of the maximum tonnage on which at least 50 percent of the service was obtained, whichever is higher. Limitations are in multiples of 1000 gross tons, using the next higher figure when an intermediate tonnage is calculated. A license as master of authorizing service on vessels of over 1600 gross tons also requires one year as master, mate or equivalent on vessels over 100 gross tons.
- The tonnage limitation on this license may be raised using one of the following methods, but can not exceed 5000 gross tons, using the multiples of 100 gross tons, using the next higher figure when an intermediate tonnage is calculated.

Tonnage Limitations for Master of Uninspected Fishing Industry Vessels

- Three months service as master on a vessel results in a limitation in that capacity equal to the tonnage of that vessel rounded up to the next multiple of 100 gross tons;

- Six months service as master on a vessel results in a limitation in that capacity equal to 150% of the tonnage of that vessel;
- Six months service as master on vessels over 1600 gross tons results in raising the limitation to 5000 gross tons;
- Six months service as mate on vessels over 1600 gross tons results in raising the limitation for master to the tonnage on which at least 50 percent of the service is obtained;
- Two years as a deck hand on a vessel while holding a license as master results in a limitation on the master's license equal to 150% of the tonnage of that vessel up to 5000 gross tons; or,
- One year of service as deck hand on a vessel while holding a license as master results in a limitation on the master's license equal to the tonnage of that vessel.

Mate:

- An applicant for a license as mate of uninspected fishing industry vessels must have three years of total service on ocean or near coastal routes. Service on Great Lakes or inland waters may substitute for up to 18 months of the required service.
- To qualify for a license of not more than 500 gross tons, at least one year of the required service must have been on vessels of over 50 gross tons.
- To qualify for a license of not more than 1600 gross tons, at least one year of the required service must have been on vessels of over 100 gross tons.
- To qualify for a license of over 1600 gross tons, but not more than 5000 gross tons, the vessel tonnage upon which the three years of required service was obtained will be used to compute the tonnage. The license is limited to the maximum tonnage on which at least 25 percent of the required service was obtained, or 150 percent of the maximum tonnage on which at least 50 percent of the service was obtained, whichever is higher. Limitations are in multiples of 100 gross tons, using the next higher figure when an intermediate tonnage is calculated.
- The tonnage limitation on this license may be raised using the following methods, but cannot exceed 5000 gross tons. Limitations are in next higher figure when an intermediate tonnage is calculated.

Tonnage limitations for mate of uninspected fishing industry vessels

- Three months service as mate on a vessel results in a limitation in that capacity equal to the tonnage of that vessel rounded up to the next multiple of 1000 gross tons;
- Six months service as master or mate on a vessel results in a limitation in that capacity equal to 150% of the tonnage of that vessel;
- Six months service as mate on vessels over 1600 gross tons results in raising the limitation to 5000 gross tons;
- One year of service as deckhand on vessels over 1600 gross tons while holding a license as mate, or equivalent, results in raising the limitation to 5000 gross tons.
- Two years service as a deckhand on a vessel while holding a license a mate results in a limitation on the mate's license equal to 150% of the tonnage of that vessel up to 5000 gross tons; or,
- One year of service as deckhand on a vessel while holding a license as mate results in a limitation on the mate's license equal to the tonnage of that vessel.

Master/Mate of Uninspected Towing Vessels

Licenses are issued as operator or second-class operator of uninspected towing vessels. These licenses do not authorize service aboard uninspected towing vessels on a foreign voyage nor on those of more than 200 gross tons in oceans or near coastal service.

- **Oceans:** Three years of service including the following:
 - Two years on deck of a vessel of 26 feet or over in length;
 - One year on deck on a towing vessel; and,
 - Three months of service in the of service in each particular geographic area for which application is make; or,
- **Near Coastal:** Three years of service on towing vessels including the following:
 - One Year on deck, with at least six months of training or duty in the wheelhouse of the towing vessel; and,
 - Three months of service in each particular geographic area for which application is made;
- **Local or Inland:**
 - For a license endorsed for a limited local area, 18 months service on deck on a towing vessel with in the local area, including at least three months of training or duty in the Wheelhouse of the towing vessel

Inspected Licenses

Master/Mate of not more of 100 GT Master:

- Two years total service in the deck department of steam or motor, sail or auxiliary sail vessels on ocean or near coastal waters. Service on Great Lakes and inland waters may substitute for up to one year of the required service.
- In order to obtain an endorsement on this license for sail or auxiliary sail vessels, the applicant must submit evidence of 12 months of service on sail or auxiliary sail vessels. The required 12 months of service may have been obtained prior to issuance of the license.

Master/Mate of not more of 200 GT Master:

- Two years total service on ocean or near coastal waters. Service on Great Lakes and inland waters may substitute for up one year of the required service. One year of the required service must have been as a master, mate or equivalent supervisory position while holding a license a master, as mate or as operator of uninspected passenger vessels; or,
- One year of total service as a licensed operator or second-class operator of ocean or near coastal uninspected towing vessels. Completion of a limited examination is also required.

Mate:

- Twelve months total service in the deck department of ocean or near coastal steam or motor, ail or auxiliary sail vessels. Service on the Great Lakes and inland waters may substitute for up to six months of the required service; or,
- Three months total service in the deck department of steam or motor vessels operating on ocean, near coastal, great lakes or inland waters while holding a license as master of inland steam or motor, sail or auxiliary sail vessels of not more than 200 gross tons.
- The holder of a license as operator of uninspected passenger vessels may obtain this license by successfully completing an examination on rules and regulations for small passenger vessels.
- In order to obtain an endorsement on this license for sail or auxiliary sail vessels, the applicant must submit evidence of six months of deck services on sail or auxiliary sail vessels.
- A License as master of near coastal steam or motor vessels may be endorsed as mate of sail or auxiliary sail vessels upon presentation of three months or service on sail or auxiliary sail vessels.
- In order to obtain a tonnage endorsement of over 100 gross tons, the applicant must complete the additional examination topics indicated in subpart I of this part.

Master/Mate of not more of 1600 GT**Master:**

- Four Years total service on ocean or near coastal waters. Service on Great Lakes and inland waters may substitute for up to two years required service. Two years of the required service must be on vessels of over 100 gross tons. Two years as a master, mate, or equivalent supervisory position while holding a license as master, mate operator of uninspected towing vessels, or operator of uninspected passenger vessels. One equivalent supervisory position must have been on vessels of over 100 gross tons; or,
- An applicant holding a license as chief mate or second mate of oceans or near coastal steam or motor vessels of over 1600 gross tons is eligible for this license upon completion of a limited examination.

Mate upon oceans:

- Three years total service in the deck department of oceans or near coastal steam or motor, sail, or auxiliary sail vessels. Service on Great Lakes up to 18 months of the required service. One Year of the required service must have been on vessels of over 100 gross tons. One year of the required service must have been as a master, mate or equivalent supervisory position while holding a license as master, mate, operator of uninspected towing vessels, or operator of uninspected passenger vessels. Six months of the required service as master, mate, or equivalent supervisory position must have been on vessels of over 100 gross tons; or,
- Three years total service in the deck department on ocean or near coastal steam or motor, sail or auxiliary sail vessels of over 200 gross tons. Six months of the required service must have been as able seaman.

Mate Near Coastal:

- The minimum service required to qualify an applicant for a license as mate of near coastal steam or motor vessels of not more than 1600 gross tons is two years total service in the deck department of ocean or near coastal steam or motor, sail, or auxiliary sail vessels. Service on the great Lakes and inland waters may substitute for up to one year of the required services must have been on vessels of over 100 gross tons. Six months of the required service must have been as able seaman, boatswain, quartermaster, or equivalent position on vessels over 100 gross tons while holding a certificate as able seaman.

Master/Mate of not more of 500 GT Master:

- Three years total service on ocean or near coastal water. Service on Great Lakes and inland waters may substitute for up to 18 months of the required service must have been as a master, mate, or equivalent supervisory position while holding a license as master, mate or operator of uninspected passenger vessels. One year of the required service as master, mate, or equivalent supervisory position must have been on vessels of over 50 gross tons.

Mate Upon Oceans:

- An applicant holding a license as operator of uninspected towing vessels authorizing service on ocean or near coastal waters is eligible for this license after six months of service as operator of uninspected towing vessels on ocean or near coastal waters and completion of a limited examination. This requires three and one-half years of service. Two years of this service must have been served while holding a license as operator, second-class operator, or mate.

Mate Near Coastal

- Two years total service in the deck department of ocean or near coastal steam or motor, sail, or auxiliary sail vessels, Service on Great Lakes and inland waters may substitute for up to one year of the required service. One year of the required service must have been on vessels of over 500 gross tons. Three months of the required service must have been as able seaman, boatswain, quartermaster, or equivalent position on vessels of over 50 gross tons while holding a certificate as able seaman.

Master/Mate Unlimited**Master Unlimited**

- One year of service as chief mate on ocean steam or motor vessels; or,
- One year of service on ocean steam or motor vessels while holding a license as chief mate of ocean steam or motor while holding a license as chief mate of ocean steam or motor vessels as follows:
 - A minimum of six months of service as chief mate; and,

- Service as officer in charge of a navigational watch accepted on a two-for-one basis (12 months as second or third mate equals six months of creditable service).

Chief Mate Unlimited

- One year of service as officer in charge of a navigational watch on ocean steam or motor vessels while holding a license as second mate.

Second Mate Unlimited

- One year of service as officer in charge of a navigational watch on ocean steam or motor vessels while holding a license as third mate; or,
- While holding a license as third mate of ocean steam or motor vessels of any gross tons, 12 months of service on deck as follows:
 - A minimum of six months service as officer in charge of a deck watch on ocean steam or motor vessels; in combination with,
 - Service on ocean steam or motor vessels as boatswain, able seaman, or quartermaster while holding a certificate as able seaman, which may be accepted on a two-for-one basis to a maximum allowable substitution of six months (12 months of service equals 6 months of creditable service).

Third Mate Unlimited

- Three years of service in the deck department on ocean steam or motor vessels, six months of which shall have been as able seaman, boatswain, or quartermaster, while holding a certificate as able seaman. Experience gained in the engine department on vessels of appropriate tonnage may be creditable for up to three months of the service requirements for this license; or,
- Graduation from the US Merchant Marine Academy (deck curriculum), or
- Graduation from the US Coast Guard Academy as underway officer in charge of a navigational watch; or,
- Graduation from US Naval Academy and qualification as an underway officer in charge of a navigational watch; or,
- Graduation from the deck class of a maritime academy approved by and conducted under rules prescribed by the Maritime Administrator and listed in part 310 CRF 46, except the deck class of the Great Lakes Maritime Academy; or,
- Satisfactory completion of three-year apprentice mate training program approved by the Commandant.
- Graduation from the deck class of the Great Lakes Maritime Academy will qualify the graduate to be examined for a license as third mate of any gross tons.
- While holding a license as master of ocean or near coastal steam or motor vessels of not more than 1,600 gross tons, one year of service as master on vessels of over 200 gross tons operating on ocean or near coastal waters will qualify the applicant for a license as third mate of ocean or near coastal steam or motor vessels of any gross tons.

The test consists of four parts covering five subjects:

Rules of the Road:

- Questions include:
- Right-of-way rules, lights, day shapes, fog and maneuvering signals.
- Navigation General: Questions include: tides, buoys, weather, compass use.
- Plotting: This part of the test uses a chart to plot problems such as set and drift, dead reckoning, and bearing fixes.
- Deck General and Deck Safety: Questions include: fire fighting, ship handling, ship construction, towing, lines, knots, and the Code of Federal Regulations.