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Fisheries & Tourism Fact Sheet Series: Want to Get Your Captain's License?

Maine Sea Grant

Lobster Institute

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FISHERIES & TOURISM

FACT SHEET SERIES



Want to get your captain's license?

Are you interested in taking passengers for hire aboard your fishing boat or another vessel? Here are some facts about captain's licenses that can assist you in your decision.

Any person who operates a vessel that carries one or more paying passengers is required to have a valid U.S. Coast Guard captain's license, also known as a Merchant Mariner Credential.

There are several grades of captain's licenses and endorsements that a person may earn depending on their experience and the activity that they want to perform:

Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessel (OUPV)

This basic license, also known as a "six-pack" license, is appropriate for those who wish to operate an uninspected passenger vessel carrying six or fewer passengers. It requires 360 days at sea and a series of U.S. Coast Guard examinations. At least 90 days of sea time must be within the last three years.



Catherine Schmitt

Master, 100 Tons License

An upgrade from the "six-pack," this license allows a captain to carry more than six passengers on inspected vessels that weigh up to 100 tons. Requirements include 720 days at sea with 90 days at sea within the last three years. A **Near Coastal sublicense** is needed along the coast of Maine.

An *auxiliary sail* endorsement and an *assistance towing* endorsement are available for qualified Master, 100 Tons license holders. The auxiliary sail endorsement requires 360 days at sea on sail- or auxiliary-sail vessels. The assistance towing endorsement requires a separate exam and is only intended for assisting disabled vessels as a fee-for-service.

Both the "six-pack" license and the Master, 100 Tons license are valid for five years.

Requirements

Applications for a Merchant Mariner Credential (captain's license) are submitted to U.S. Coast Guard Regional Examination Centers (for Maine applicants, the nearest center is in Boston). Tests for the "six-pack" license and the Master, 100 Tons license consist of four sections: (1) Rules of the Road, which covers Coast Guard navigation rules and regulations; (2) Deck/General Safety Exam; (3) Navigation General Exam; and (4) the Navigation Plotting Exam.

The applicant has the option of taking the tests at a U.S. Coast Guard Exam Center or through an approved

course that administers its own exams. These courses provide an opportunity to review all relevant material prior to taking the exams, and they are offered in Maine as well as online. A Master, 100 tons course typically schedules 80 hours of class time and typically costs \$1,000-\$1,200.

Applicants for a captain's license must meet the following requirements:

- ▶ A signed and completed application.
- ▶ Proof that the applicant holds or has applied for a Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC).
- ▶ Evidence the applicant has passed a drug test.
- ▶ Documentation and evidence of the applicant's sea time or vessel experience.
- ▶ Documentation of having passed a physical including a hearing and eye exam.
- ▶ Consented to the Coast Guard check of his/her national driving record for any offenses.
- ▶ Proof of CPR certification.
- ▶ Documented proof of U.S. citizenship.
- ▶ Proof of having taken an oath that he/she will faithfully and honestly perform all duties required by law and obey all lawful orders of superior officers.

More Information

The National Maritime Center provides guidance and forms to apply for all Merchant Mariner's Credentials including a list of approved courses and schools, uscg.mil/nmc/default.asp or 888.427.5662. ■

This fact sheet is part of a series intended to provide resources for fishermen and aquaculture farmers who seek to augment their earnings through tourism. More information, including the legal research upon which these fact sheets are based, can be found at seagrant.umaine.edu/fisheries-tourism.

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