



Fisheries and Oceans  
Canada

Pêches et Océans  
Canada

Canadian  
Coast Guard

Garde côtière  
canadienne



Safety First, Service Always



# Canadian Coast Guard (Western Region)

Shipboard Operations, Life at Sea & Living Aboard CCG Vessels

# Overview



The Canadian Coast Guard (CCG), Western Region, encompasses the entire British Columbian coastline. It also includes Lake Winnipeg in Manitoba and the McKenzie River in the Northwest Territories. With regional headquarters in Victoria, BC, the region is responsible for more than 27,000 km of coastline. Its staff of more than 1000 work hard to deliver maritime safety, security, and protection of the marine environment.

You will learn about:

- Programs and activities that fall under the responsibility of vessels and stations in the Western Region
- Life at Sea
- Key functions and organizational structure of the shipboard team.
- Living aboard a vessel



*"We are never bored. The Coast Guard is a really, really, really great institution with fabulous ships, and terrific and interesting challenges. For anyone looking for a career filled with adventure and discovery and challenge, the Coast Guard is the place to be." Coxswain*

# Search and Rescue



- This program is about searching for and rescuing people in trouble at sea.
- In 2018 Western Region Coast Guard responded to 1,770 Marine Search and Rescue Cases.
- Our primary SAR assets include 10 lifeboat stations strategically located on the West Coast, and one in Gimli Manitoba on Lake Winnipeg. Construction is about to get underway on 4 new lifeboat stations located in Victoria, Hartley Bay, Tahsis and Port Renfrew.
- The hovercraft base is located Sea Island adjacent to Vancouver International Airport.
- CCG has several ships specifically assigned for remote SAR patrols. Four Inshore Rescue Boats operate in Nootka Sound, Kelsey Bay, Sointula, and Cortes Bay, and seasonally from May to September.
- All of these units have crew and officers trained in SAR-specific areas like rigid hull inflatable operations, rescue specialist (advanced first aid), and coastal SAR management.



# Conservation and Protection Support

The regional Marine Patrol Program (MPP) provides leading edge fisheries enforcement and ocean protection—a unique opportunity for Coast Guard crews to work with Conservation and Protection fishery officers as a cohesive unit patrolling all sorts of unusual spots along our coast.



The program focuses on monitoring fisheries in Canadian waters for compliance with legislation and protecting sea life.

*Activities include surveillance operations, arrests of violators, seizures of fishing vessels and gear.*



# Aids to Navigation



- Aids to navigation (AToN) vessels provide a valuable service to Canadians by maintaining the fixed and floating aids that mark the navigation channels. This helps to ensure safe passage of shipping, supporting commerce, industry, fishing, and pleasure vessels.
- Marking the dangers and safe navigation channels is vital for the safe navigation and the protection of the environment.

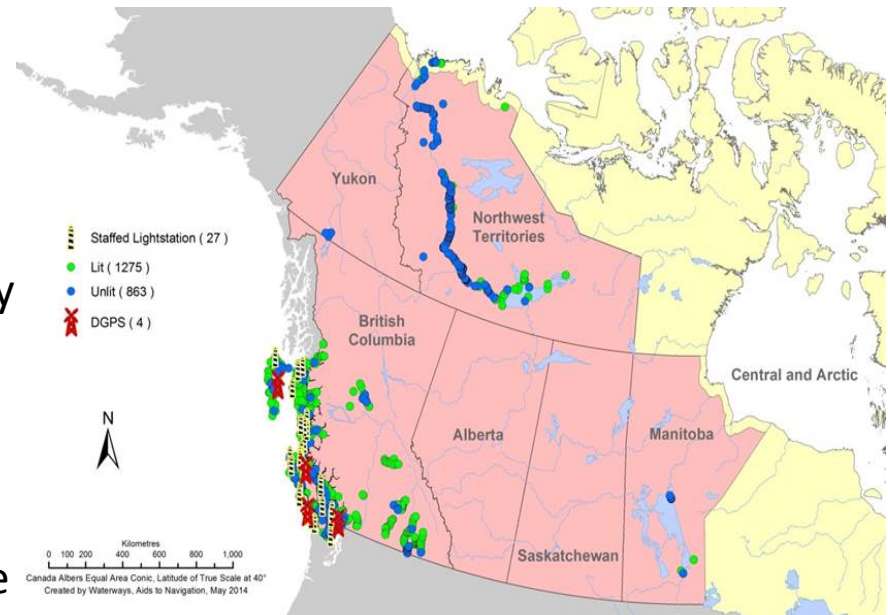


# Aids to Navigation....Continued



Coast Guard vessels engaged in AToN operations:

- Deliver cargo such as supplies, fresh water, fuel, and equipment to the 27 staffed light stations on the BC coast;
- Load and assist in deploying emergency response booms and equipment and transport them to the site of a marine pollution scenario;
- Refuel mountain-top communication sites by ship/helicopter to ensure uninterrupted radio coverage along the coast; and
- Support other government departments such as Environment Canada by placing, lifting, servicing, and repairing weather buoys and stations along the coast.
- There are 3807 aids to navigation in the Western Region that require servicing and maintenance year round.



Aids to Navigation includes floating aids (buoys) and fixed aids (beacons) and includes twenty-seven staffed light stations on the coast of BC.

# Fisheries Research



- Some Coast Guard vessels support fisheries research by carrying scientists and conducting fishing sampling.
- The ships are equipped with fish-finding hydro-acoustic equipment and complex fishing gear that enables the vessels to locate and catch minimal samples of targeted species (such as pelagic, ground fish, and shellfish).
- This program helps the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) determine fishing sustainability for commercial, recreational, and indigenous groups through an understanding of species' biomass by location and time.



# Science Research



Some of our Coast Guard ships provide platforms for scientific research including oceanographic and survey operations:

- Using autonomous and remote underwater vehicles;
- Using multi-beam acoustic surveys to make charts;
- Recovering and deploying deep sea science moorings; and
- Surveying and assessing sea life.

This work involves ships travelling throughout the waters of the Pacific Ocean Basin, the Inside Passage of BC, the Salish Sea and the Arctic. While engaged in these operations, the ships carry Coast Guard crew, scientists and dignitaries from DFO and other government agencies and universities.





# Ice Breaking



- The Coast Guard ship *Sir Wilfrid Laurier* is the Western Region's icebreaker. This vessel provides icebreaking services to the Western Canadian Arctic over the busy summer season between July and October.
- The primary task of the vessel is to support safe navigation by icebreaking and escorting commercial ships, including ships transiting the Northwest Passage.



Arctic trips remain a unique adventure for crew on this ship in Western Region. Supporting Parks Canada, the *Sir Wilfrid Laurier* helped find the lost vessels of the Franklin Expedition – the *Erebus* and the *Terror*.



# Ice Breaking ....Continued



- In addition to icebreaking, the ship is also available for search and rescue (SAR) activities and is used to maintain over 165 navigational aids in the Western Arctic.
- Additionally, she supports hydrographic work to develop charts in previously uncharted seas.



# Coast Guard Lifeboats



- Each Lifeboat Station is equipped with a Lifeboat, typically a 14.6 m (47ft) Cape-class vessel or the newer 19 m (62ft) Bay Class vessel both capable of 25 knots, and a Fast Rescue Craft capable of 40 knots.
- Coast Guard lifeboat crew comprises a Commanding Officer, an Engineering Officer and two Deckhands. The Deckhands support the officers in various ways through maintenance, logistics, and the day to day operation of the vessel.
- Two of the crew (usually the deckhands) are Rescue Specialists, trained in advance emergency response, as Search and Rescue is the primary role of the SAR Lifeboat.



# Lifeboat Stations



- Each lifeboat station is assigned a crew, who typically work a two week rotation (2 weeks on, 2 weeks off) at the station. The stations are self-contained, with a kitchen, sleeping quarters, gym facilities, workshops (for vessel maintenance), laundry, internet access and a lounge, so that working there is similar to working on a large vessel away from home.
- In the areas where they are located they often become the pride of the local community and are the face of the Coast Guard. They become involved in community activities and developing on-the-ground relationships with other government agencies and the community.



# Worksites and equipment - Life Boat Stations



# Life at Sea



- Living at sea can be exciting, for example, In 2018 Western Region Coast Guard responded to 1,770 Marine Search and Rescue Cases.
- Working together through shipboard operations can generate comradery and sometimes form lifelong friendships.
- Living at sea is to be sometimes in danger and constantly having to take that danger seriously enough to know that even though nothing happened during your last 99 watches, you still need to be awake and alert for the 100th because something can go wrong at any time.
- You need to have a serious view of the fact that people are trusting you with their lives while they sleep and you need to be on a crew that you trust with your own life while you sleep. Teamwork and trust is key.
- Often there are periods of stress and overwork followed by periods of boredom.
- At the same time, you must be lighthearted enough not to become moody or depressed easily.
- Living at sea is hard work.



# Life at Sea....Continued



- You need to be able to work well under pressure and deal with uneven sleep schedules and sometimes lack of sleep. You need to be able to wake up immediately in the middle of the night to go and handle whatever emergency arises.
- You need to be able to follow orders instantly, without question, and work well with people you might not like. This requires a genuinely respectful attitude to other people, cultures, and ideas, for you are living in confined quarters for several weeks with others. The Coast Guard supports diversity; if you can serve, you can serve in the Coast Guard.
- You need to be able to control your habits such as drugs and alcohol. The Drug and Alcohol policy is rigorously enforced so ensure you understand the policy and how it applies to your vessel or station.



# Life at Sea...Continued



- Much of the work on a ship is routine, such as cleaning duties, which occur daily.
- Engine checks, cargo checks, radio checks, fuel checks—all need to be performed at least once a day and recorded in the logbook so you should be able to do repetitive work with energy and enthusiasm.
- Spaces are cramped and there is often noise – of the sea, ice, foghorns, whistles, machinery and announcements.
- The ship underneath you is moving—maybe a little, maybe a lot—and you will have to get used to this and maybe even enjoy it.





# Life at Sea....Continued



- Some movements are abrupt-seeming, like a sudden swaying when the ship's derrick is working over one side.
- You must be aware of falling and slipping and tripping on obstructions on decks.
- You also need to be able to keep your personal living space clean and organized since on a ship you don't get much space to live in;
- You won't be able to have a lot of belongings and you need to be able to stow everything securely or else your belongings will fly around below decks if the ship needs to maneuver suddenly or if foul weather hits. Securing everything also means the ship is always ready if an emergency occurs.



Coast Guard – Our History Our Future

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=645SeJkFu7E>

# What do deck crew do?



- As a Deckhand, you are responsible for making sure the ship's deck equipment (like small boats, winches, and cables) are safe, maintained, and ready to be used at any moment. You are also involved in a wide variety of activities related to Canadian Coast Guard initiatives, like helping with search and rescue, maintaining aids to navigation, responding to environmental problems, and helping authorities with fisheries enforcement.
- Deckhands work on deck under the supervision of the Boatswain. The responsibilities of a Deckhand can vary from day to day, so no day is the same.



# What do deck crew do?



Your duties may include:

- doing routine shipboard maintenance
- conducting fire and security rounds
- steering the vessel
- performing lookout duties
- doing general maintenance work so that the deck department is clean, safe, and operational
- repairing and painting decks
- operating cargo equipment
- anchoring, berthing, and refueling the ship
- handling mooring lines and hooking up towing lines
- retrieving and launching lifeboats and fast rescue crafts
- loading, unloading, and handling cargo and supplies
- participating in fire-fighting



# Examples of the types of worksites and equipment for CCG Deck Department



**Fuel barge & workboat**



**Cargo hold with buoy**



**Wood working shop**

# The Engine Department



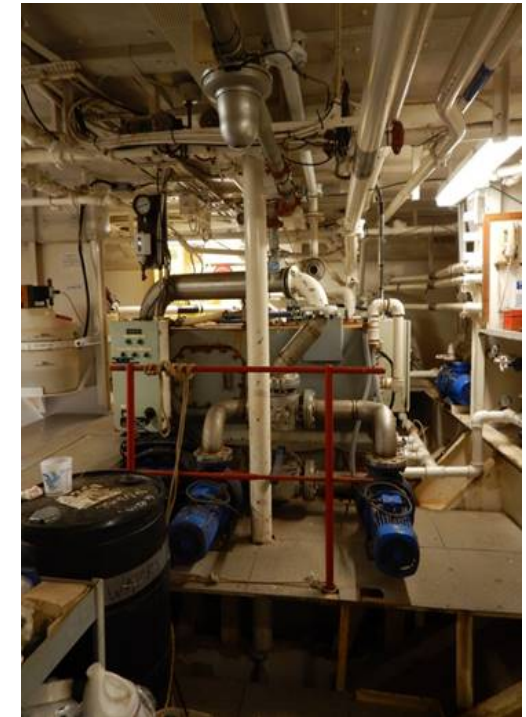
- Ships engineers and oilers have a proud tradition of maintaining our vessels and supporting the deck department and our program partners. Clear and effective communication with the deck department is of paramount importance in our day to day operation.
- The engineering department on board our vessels is responsible for the watch keeping and maintenance of all vessel maneuvering and support systems. Everything from the Main Engine (ME) to the toilets is their responsibility.



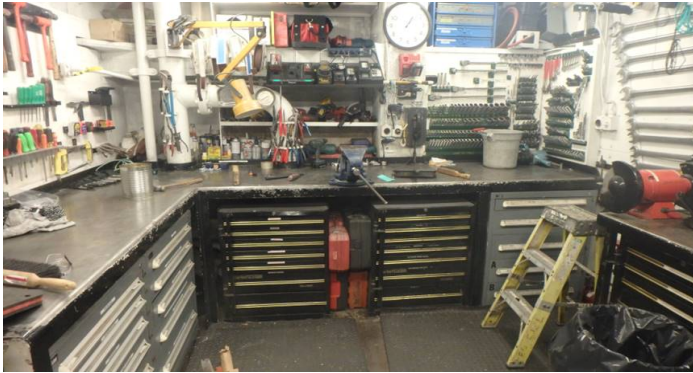
# Engine Room Assistant (Oiler) Responsibilities



- As an oiler your primary function will be to serve as the eyes and ears of the Engineer of the Watch (EOW). Small deviations in machinery operating characteristics if caught early can be addressed quickly and cost effectively limiting program down time.
- The primary responsibilities of an Engine Room Assistant include
- keeping watch in the engine room for six to twelve hours at a time
- monitoring equipment, checking gauges, and recording readings
- keeping an engine room log
- helping the chief engineer in the start-up and shut-down of engine room equipment
- cleaning and caring for equipment, machinery, and machinery spaces
- maintaining and repairing vessel machinery and tanks
- loading and stowing spare parts and supplies



# Engine Room Worksites and Equipment



**Workshop**



**Control Room**



**Engine Room**



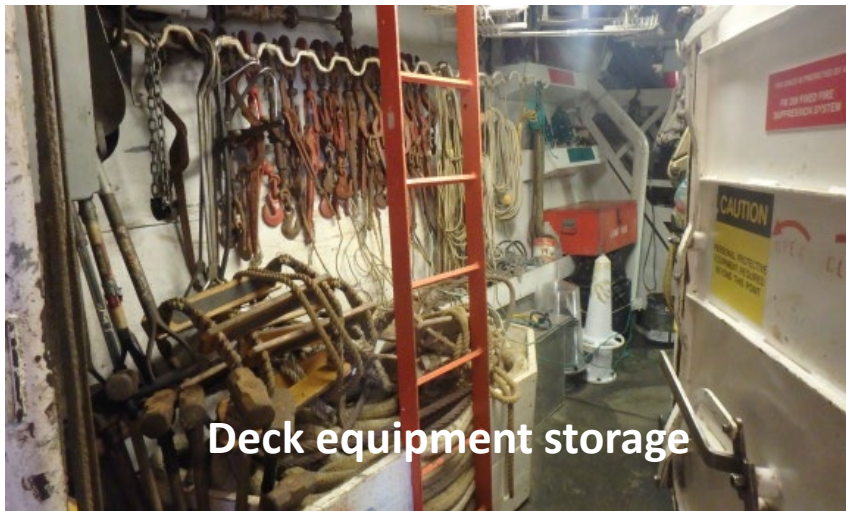
**Sewage compartment**

# Is this career right for me?



These qualities and interests are essential for this career:

- enjoy team work
- be in good physical condition
- have an aptitude for manual work
- display resourcefulness and initiative
- be able to work irregular schedules
- have a taste for adventure and travel





# Living Aboard



- One or two people may occupy cabins.
- The Commanding Officer, in conjunction with the Department Head, will decide on these arrangements.
- Our aim is to put members of the same sex together in multi-berth cabins.
- Toilets and showers may be in the cabin on larger vessels, or outside the cabin, or on another deck depending on the class of vessel.
- On smaller vessels cabins may be shared with mixed gender where the occupants are on opposite watches. In this case you must be prepared to not return to your cabin while you are on watch.



# Meals and Snacks



- On the large patrolling vessels all meals are prepared by the Cooks and served in the ship's mess(es). Generally, persons on watch (Ship's Crew or other program people on watch) or relieving the watch, have priority in the serving line.
- On some vessels the seating arrangements are informal, although some tables or seats may be designated and/or labeled for the Commanding Officer, certain Ship's Officers and senior staff. On some ships, there will be two messes - one for the Ship's Officers, and one for the Ship's Crew.
- At shore stations meal preparation and clean-up is a shared responsibility.
- There are usually snacks available for a night snack. If you have specific dietary needs or cravings bring your own supplies; however, no allotted refrigerator space will be available.



# Keeping things Clean and Tidy!



- A laundry facility is available aboard the vessels/stations but, is very limited. Depending on the type of vessel, there may be as few as one washer and one dryer for the entire crew.
- Larger vessels with a larger crew have a greater number of washers and dryers.
- There are strict federal and provincial regulatory procedures in place regarding the disposal of garbage aboard ships. It is very important that garbage is stowed and disposed of in the correct manner and place. Whether the ship is in port or underway at sea, never throw any disposable materials over the ship's side.
- Each vessel will vary in their ability to recycle. It is important to check with your supervisor or shipmates regarding the procedures for the disposal of garbage.



# Keep in Touch



## Canadian Coast Guard – Web page

<http://www.ccg-gcc.gc.ca/eng/CCG/Home>

## Canadian Coast Guard – Twitter

<https://twitter.com/CoastGuardCAN>

## Canadian Coast Guard – Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/CanadianCoastGuard>

## Canadian Coast Guard – Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/coastguardcan/>

## Canadian Coast Guard – YouTube Channel

The CCG YouTube Channel is where you can watch numerous videos about different aspects of the CCG. New videos are uploaded regularly.

[https://www.youtube.com/user/CCGrecruitmentGCC/videos?disable\\_polymer=1](https://www.youtube.com/user/CCGrecruitmentGCC/videos?disable_polymer=1)

