



Coast Guard Ombudsman Program



FACT SHEET

Health, Safety and Work-Life (HSWL) Directorate, Office of Work-Life

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What is the Coast Guard Ombudsman Program?

The Coast Guard Ombudsman Program is a command program intended to improve communication between the command and the Coast Guard family members. Coast Guard ombudsmen are official volunteers of the command, designated by the Commanding Officer (CO)/Officer-in-Charge (OIC) to provide information and referral resources and act as advocates for family members.

The CO is responsible for the health and safety of all personnel in the command. The morale and mission readiness of Coast Guard personnel relates directly to the health and well-being of their families. The Ombudsman Program allows the Coast Guard to tap one of its greatest resources, Coast Guard spouses, and establish a link between the command and families necessary to:

- Provide the command with a better understanding of the welfare of the command/unit's families.
- Ensure Coast Guard families have the information needed to meet the challenges of a military lifestyle.
- Help families when issues or emergent situations arise and ease the sacrifices families must make in order to allow personnel to carry out Coast Guard missions.

Role and Responsibilities of an Ombudsman

The ombudsman is an official member of the unit's command staff, a resource for the unit's families, and the primary link and communicator of information between families and the command. All ombudsmen have the following major responsibilities in common:

- Command Representative – acting as an official representative of the command.
- Communications Link – functioning as a communication link between the command and families.
- Resource and Referral Specialist – providing resources and referrals to assist unit families.
- Crisis Response – responding to crisis within and/or affecting the command.

Unit families should have a clear understanding of the ombudsman's role. The following are NOT responsibilities of the ombudsman:

- Organizing social events for the unit.
- Loaning money.
- Providing temporary lodging.
- Providing childcare.
- Providing counseling.
- Acting as the sponsor to incoming families.

Why provide the services?

When challenges arise at home, an ombudsman can refer families to the best possible place for help or professional guidance, thereby resolving issues before they require command attention. Without the services of command ombudsmen, a significant commitment of command resources and person-hours would be necessary; having to divert command resources to this service could negatively affect the command mission. In calendar year 2016, the estimated value of having Coast Guard Ombudsmen was \$508,000.¹

References/Websites/SocialMedia:

Coast Guard Ombudsman Program, COMDTINST 1750.4 (series)

Office of Work-Life Programs: www.uscg.mil/ombudsman/

Ombudsman Registry: www.cgombudsmanregistry.org

HSWL Mobile Application: Available for iOS in the Apple store and Android in Google Play

¹ The Coast Guard equates the value of volunteer hours at the GS-7, Step 5 Base level of \$19.20/hr. (From the US Office of Personnel Management, 2017 General Schedule (Base) Table).