THE COMMANDANT OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20593-7000

JUN 17 2026

ACTION ORDER 26-02 – FIGHT: HOW WE OPERATE

1. This is a time of historic consequence. Our nation faces evolving challenges, including adversary threats to our sovereignty, our prosperity, and our way of life. The maritime domain is more complex, contested, and vital to American prosperity and security than at any other time in the past century. Technology is rapidly advancing, challenging assumptions about the strategic context and how we operate. Forged and honed over the past 236 years, the Coast Guard today includes Active, Reserve, Civilian, and Auxiliary personnel who rely on a blend of authorities, capabilities, and relationships to form a highly agile, capable, and responsive force. At all times a military service, we are part of the Department of Homeland Security that protects the nation and member of the joint force that defends it. Now we are called more than ever to deliver proven value to the American people.

2. The Commandant's Intent (Jan 2026) established my vision for the Service: we must **Ready**, **Fight**, **Navigate**. *(available at: https://www.uscg.mil/alwaysready)*

3. This order explains **Fight**—how and where we conduct the full range of statutory missions to deliver results. Drawn from doctrine and our storied history, it establishes the foundation and actions for an operating model built on the readiness of our force and focused on achieving four paramount mission objectives across four operational domains that make up the U.S. homeland. We must ready the Service and then execute decisive operations across these four regions to meet the challenges of today and into the future.

4. We conduct our statutory missions to achieve the following four paramount national outcomes:
   - We save lives.
   - We control, secure, and defend the U.S. border and maritime approaches far at sea.
   - We ensure the safe and secure flow of commerce that relies on our ports, waterways, shipping, and merchant mariners—vital to America's economic prosperity and national security, and to rebuilding the nation's maritime might.
   - We respond to crisis or contingencies that may come with little or no warning.

5. We conduct these missions in the U.S. homeland and its approaches far at sea across four major operational domains. National demands will require us to periodically operate elsewhere, such as the Antarctic. However, our paramount focus will remain:
   - In the U.S. mainland, from the inland navigable waterways and Great Lakes, along the U.S. border and its approaches, throughout the Caribbean and western hemisphere, including the two U.S. territories in the Caribbean.
   - In Alaska and its approaches, including the Arctic.
   - In Hawai'i and the three U.S. territories across the Pacific and their approaches, including remote areas of U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone in Oceania.
   - In cyberspace, which converges the physical realm with the logical and digital realms.

6. In doctrine we describe our forces as a Maritime Trident (Shore-based Forces, Maritime Patrol Forces, Deployable Specialized Forces), organized and operating under the authority and direction of the Commandant as both the Service Chief and senior operational commander through subordinate commanders exercising military command and control at each echelon:

- Areas and subordinate District, Sector, and other unit commanders;
- Cyber Command and subordinate commands;
- Force Readiness Command and subordinate commands;
- Operational Logistics Command and subordinate commands;
- Academy; and,
- Specialized commands under Headquarters direction and technical control.

7. Each commander has a dual responsibility for ensuring the readiness of the force and successfully employing the force in operations. We ensure our forces are ready for assigned missions by organizing, training, and equipping them and presenting ready forces for operational employment, whether led by our commanders exercising organic Service authorities or under combatant commanders exercising military authority. We direct and oversee operational execution through a mission command concept and proven principles of operations. That begins with legal authority and mission objectives, established command and control, clear commander's intent, and disciplined initiative at every level to the tactical edge.

8. We are always operating to execute missions in response to national requirements, which involves overlapping and competing demands for limited capacity. Daily ongoing operations are combined with response to incidents or contingencies that may occur simultaneously. This requires continuous balance of the readiness of our operating forces against prioritized employment of the same forces to meet the highest priority mission requirements. From the Commandant and the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard to each commander and senior enlisted leader at every level, we first ensure that our forces are organized, trained, equipped and ready—today and well into the future. We then command and lead our forces to conduct disciplined operations with warranted risk to enable our crews to get the mission done and safely return.

9. We are transforming the Coast Guard organizational construct and operating model to best achieve this. We have already made significant changes in the Headquarters structure, including establishing the Chief of Staff, clarifying the authority and role of the Deputy Commandant for Operations, and establishing the Deputy Commandant for Personnel and Deputy Commandant for Systems. These changes are streamlining and accelerating senior decision-making with improved delegated authority that will enable us to better support people and systems as we grow the force by 15,000 men and women. We will preserve Area, District, and Sector Commands as major organizational echelons necessary to how we operate, but with targeted changes to improve unified action and eliminate redundancies. We are establishing Coast Guard Special Missions Command to unify command for Coast Guard readiness and employment of our Deployable Specialized Forces. We are shifting responsibility for our cryptologic operations and military space operational coordination to Coast Guard Cyber Command. We will continue to advance innovation through rapid prototyping of new technology, autonomy, and artificial intelligence to improve our ability to successfully conduct missions.

10. I am directing the following additional actions to be completed within 120 days:
    - The Vice Commandant will develop and present for my approval mission command doctrine. Reinforcing mission command is essential to our ability to be agile, capable, and responsive to mission requirements and operate as part of the joint force.
    - The Vice Commandant will develop and promulgate a Readiness Framework — establishing common definitions, measures, and reporting standards and process across the force to enable commanders and the Chiefs to see, understand, and communicate the status of operational readiness across the force starting at the individual, crew, and unit to the Service level, then take action to address readiness challenges.
    - The Deputy Commandant for Operations, as the Service operational integrator and capabilities advocate, will submit a plan to mature the Assistant Commandant for Intelligence (CG-2) and the Assistant Commandants for Operations and Policy (CG-3/5) with particular focus on assuring awareness of operations worldwide, facilitating operational planning for large-scale incidents and contingencies, and generating and issuing operational policy.
    - Working with the Area Commanders, the Deputy Commandant for Operations will submit plans for my approval to designate the Area Deputy Commanders as Coast Guard Forces Southern Approaches (Atlantic Area) and Coast Guard Forces Arctic (Pacific Area) under the existing Area organizations. The plans shall identify options and make recommendations to clarify and unify authorities, responsibilities, and internal and external relationships for each of these two key domains. These major "Coast Guard Forces" constructs within each Area command will drive unified action across overlapping areas of responsibility in the Western Hemisphere and the Arctic, and improve planning and coordination relationships with combatant commanders.
    - Working with the Area Commanders, the Deputy Commandant for Operations will submit a plan for my decision to transform the existing Expeditionary Cutter Squadron (currently known as PATFORSWA) to conduct Coast Guard missions through expeditionary cutter squadron operations in the southern maritime approaches of the Western Hemisphere and in the Pacific.
    - The Deputy Commandant for Systems will submit a plan for my decision to shift command of all Coast Guard Bases to cognizant District Commanders and establish Area Logistics Staffs, with Operational Logistics Command retaining technical oversight and coordination. The Deputy Commandant for Personnel shall initiate the process to establish a Coast Guard logistics specialty. This will better unify enabling capabilities of the Bases underneath the District commanders who, reporting to the Area commanders, have primary responsibility for readiness of their forces.
    - The Deputy Commandant for Operations, working with the Director of Reserve/Assistant Commandant for Reserve will review lessons learned from recent operations and the Summer 2026 operations and make recommendations for my review regarding how to improve readiness and employment of our Reserve forces for Coast Guard operations to best achieve outcomes across our operational domains.
    - The Deputy Commandant for Operations and the Auxiliary National Commodore, working with Area Commanders, will review lessons learned from recent operations and the Summer 2026 operations and make recommendations for my review regarding how to improve readiness and employment of our Auxiliary forces for Coast Guard operations to best achieve outcomes across our operational domains.

- The Deputy Commandant for Personnel will prepare and execute a plan to focus leadership training at all levels to ensure performance objectives include comprehension of fundamentals of readiness, mission command, and disciplined initiative.

11. Our crews conduct missions in a dangerous and unforgiving maritime environment, often against those who would do them harm. At the same time, we always uphold the sacred trust of the American people we serve while conducting operations. This has been clear since the original Letter of Instruction issued by Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton to the first officers of the Revenue Marine at the birth of our Service. Alexander Hamilton wrote:

> [A]lways keep in mind that [your] countrymen are free men and, as such, are impatient of everything that bears the least mark of a domineering spirit…[Refrain, therefore,] with the most guarded circumspection, from whatever has the semblance of haughtiness, rudeness, or insult… [E]ndeavor to overcome difficulties, if any are experienced, by a cool and temperate perseverance in [your] duty—by address and moderation, rather than vehemence and violence.

These words still inspire. As Coast Guard men and women (Active, Reserve, Civilian, Auxiliary), we will operate as a crew to continue to deliver mission outcomes and proven value to the American people. Semper Paratus.

KEVIN E. LUNDAY
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
Commandant