

WATERWAYS COMMERCE CUTTER



Acquisition
Directorate



The Coast Guard's inland tender fleet currently consists of three ship types, one per aids to navigation mission set. These types are, clockwise from left: inland construction tenders, river buoy tenders, and inland buoy tender. The Waterways Commerce Cutter Program is recapitalizing the capability provided by the inland tender fleet.



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Coast Guard's inland tender fleet protects vital infrastructure and facilitates the free flow of commerce along the nation's marine highways, protecting American jobs and contributing to America's economic and energy security. The current fleet consists of 18 river buoy tenders, 13 inland construction tenders and three inland buoy tenders. These cutters allow the Coast Guard to establish, maintain and repair aids to navigation (ATON) in dynamic waters largely inaccessible by larger and geographically displaced ATON units. The inland tenders also provide some of the same capabilities as the Coast Guard's oceangoing cutter fleet, enabling them to quickly and effectively respond to emergencies such as environmental incidents and severe weather events.

However, the current inland tender fleet has an average age of more than 55 years and is in a state of obsolescence. Fleet maintenance costs are rising, and the vast majority of the inland tenders do not support mixed-gender berthing. To replace the capability these tenders provide, the Coast Guard established the Waterways Commerce Cutter (WCC) Program, which has conducted market research, engineering trade studies and design analysis, including development of indicative designs.

Based on this analysis, the program has determined that three WCC variants will best meet mission

needs. All three variants will be monohull vessels, meaning self-propelled ships instead of tug and barge configurations. The river buoy tender and inland construction tender variants will be acquired on one contract; these variants are expected to be common except for hull length, working deck layouts and deck equipment, including the crane. The program released the draft request for proposal (RFP) for these variants in July 2020 and anticipates releasing the final RFP in 2021, with contract award in 2022.

The inland buoy tender will be acquired separately from the other two variants. The Coast Guard is finalizing the plan for acquiring these tenders.

The Coast Guard plans to acquire 16 river buoy tenders, 11 inland construction tenders, and three inland buoy tenders. The new ships will have greater endurance, speed and deck load capacity than their predecessors. The ships will also feature improved habitability and will accommodate mixed-gender crews.

The WCC Program is working under an accelerated program schedule to reach initial operational capability by 2025 and full operational capability by 2030.



For updates on the **WCC Program**, visit the program's website at <https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Acquisitions-CG-9/Programs/Surface-Programs/WCC/>

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Mission execution begins *here*.