Careers Afloat

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need sea time before I can get started?

No. Your first credentials (TWIC and MMC) don't require sea time. You'll begin logging sea time once you start working aboard vessels.

How long does it take?

Your first credentials can often be completed in a matter of weeks. Advanced credentials are earned over time as you gain training and sea time.

Do I have to go to a four-year college?

No. Many maritime careers begin with credentials, paid training, apprenticeships, or two-year degree programs. You can continue your education and credentials throughout your career.

What kinds of jobs can I get?

Vessel operations careers include ferries, tugboats, research vessels, commercial fishing, passenger vessels, cargo ships, shipyards, and more.

Where can I learn more?

Scan the QR code below or visit our website at **nwmaritime.org/blue-schools** to learn more.

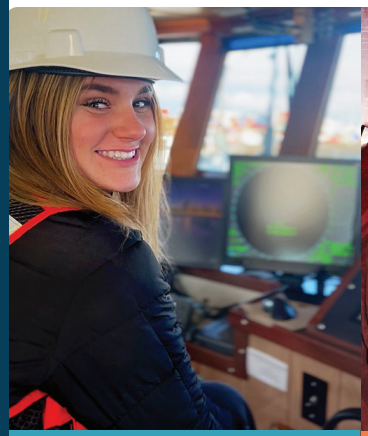
Blue Schools INITIATIVE
COMMUNITIES, CAREERS & THE SEA

Ready to get started?

Blue Schools Initiative is a project of Northwest Maritime.

Blue Schools INITIATIVE
COMMUNITIES, CAREERS & THE SEA

Start here.



VESSEL OPERATIONS



MARINE CONSTRUCTION



MARINE RESOURCES

MARITIME CREDENTIALS

Getting started is easier than you think.

nwmaritime.org/blue-schools

Getting Started

Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC®)

Your security badge to access secure ports and vessels.

Shows you're a professional mariner, qualified to work on U.S. vessels.

Entry MMC
Merchant Mariner Credential, OS/Wiper

You can earn these credentials while still in high school, or shortly after graduation, depending on the program.

What you'll need:

- ✔ Proof of identity and citizenship
- ✔ Medical exam and drug test
- ✔ Background check
- ✔ Application fees

Total Cost*: $600-800

**Some employers will help cover these costs.*



Building Your Career

Basic Safety Training

Firefighting, survival, first aid, CPR, and emergency response. ***Can happen simultaneously as you gain sea time.***

Cost: $1500-1800

Work on Boats and Build Sea Time

Documented days on the water count toward upgraded credentials and more job opportunities.

DECK ROUTE

AB
Able Bodied Seafarer

Stand watch, handle lines, steer, and support navigation.

Cost: $1500-2000
180 days sea time
USCG assessments

CAPTAIN

ENGINE ROUTE

QMED
Qualified Member of the Engineering Department

Operate, maintain, and repair a vessel's machinery.

Cost: $1500-2000
180 days sea time
USCG assessments

ENGINEER

Employers also value:

Curiosity | Positivity | Punctuality | Teamwork | Communication | Problem-solving

Now you've become eligible for many entry-level jobs and can start building sea time.

Then continue building sea time and experience to earn officer licenses and expand your payscale.