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COMDTINST 5350.24C  
MARCH 14, 2006

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 5350.24C

Subj: COAST GUARD MENTORING PROGRAM

Ref: (a) The Coast Guard Individual Development Plan, COMDTINST 5357.1A

1. PURPOSE. This Instruction describes the Coast Guard’s Mentoring Program.
2. ACTION. Area and district commanders, commanders of maintenance and logistic commands, commanding officers of headquarters units, sectors and integrated support commands, assistant commandants for directorates, Judge Advocate General, and special staff offices at Headquarters shall ensure the contents of this Instruction are given the widest distribution and use of the Coast Guard’s Mentoring Program is strongly encouraged. Internet release authorized.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. Coast Guard Mentoring Program, COMDTINST 5350.24B, is cancelled.
4. BACKGROUND.
  - a. Mentoring is a traditional method for orienting and training those new to the Coast Guard, as well as a valuable means for supporting the development - even accelerating the professional growth – of experienced employees, middle managers and executives. Individuals who share knowledge, experiences, and skills to benefit someone else provide valuable leadership. Mentoring is one of the Coast Guard’s 28 leadership competencies, and is found within the Leading Others category of the Leadership Framework.
  - b. All work force members (including active duty, reservists, civilian employees, and Auxiliarists), regardless of responsibility level, can benefit from mentoring any time during a career. Just as we need to be mentored in order to be continually learning, we also learn through teaching

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others. Ultimately, the Coast Guard improves as an organization through the performance improvements of our people.

- c. Research, as well as the Coast Guard's experience since establishing a formal mentoring program in 1991, confirms that mentoring increases productivity and career satisfaction among mentors and those whom they mentor. In addition to strengthening performance and increasing retention, mentoring directly contributes to the career planning and personal growth objectives of the Individual Development Plan (IDP). Recent updates to the mentoring program, contained in this instruction, were made in concert with revisions to the IDP program (see reference (a) for details regarding IDPs).

5. DISCUSSION.

a. Definitions.

- (1) Mentor. A person at a higher level within an organization or profession who provides counsel and career guidance. Some organizations have formal mentoring systems, while most informal mentoring relationships develop over time. A mentor relationship is one where the outcome of the relationship is expected to benefit all parties in the relationship for personal growth, career development, lifestyle enhancement, spiritual fulfillment, goal achievement, and other areas mutually designated by the mentor and partner.
- (2) Mentee (also referred to as protégé). The role that a less experienced employee assumes when working with a mentor. The role requires and assumes a willingness to actively work with and to learn from the experience and wisdom of the mentor.
- (3) Mentoring Process. A developmental process in which a more experienced employee commits to working and learning together with a less experienced employee for the purpose of professional development. The mentoring process includes a series of phases in which the mentor's leadership of the process is adapted to the developing strengths and changing needs of the mentee. The result of an effective mentoring process is a self-confident and competent professional who is also prepared to mentor others.
- (4) Mentoring Relationship. The developmental relationship of a mentor and mentee that is characterized by confidentiality, trust, caring, and mutual support and challenge for growth. The mentoring relationship creates the necessary context of safety and confidence for the mentor and mentee to take the risks of trying new work strategies and of learning in front of each other. This context is necessary for accelerated professional growth.
- (5) Formal Mentoring. A relationship which has an agreed to beginning and end, a method for no fault termination, a formal matching of the mentor and mentee, and agreed to goals, objectives and/or checkpoints.
- (6) Informal Mentoring. This partnership usually occurs when one person (the mentee) seeks another for career advice or to be their career guide. It can also occur when a person (the

mentor) reaches out to someone they know could benefit from their experience. These relationships tend to grow over a long period of time and are effective and rewarding.

- (7) Situational Mentoring. Situational mentoring is the right help at the right time provided by someone when a mentee needs guidance and advice. It is usually short term addressing an immediate situation but can transition to a more long-term connection.
- (8) Supervisory Mentoring. Mentoring is an inherent responsibility of leadership and the Coast Guard expects that supervisors will mentor their subordinates. The Individual Development Plan outlines expectations for supervisory coaching and feedback. Most frequently, this mentoring is informal, related to day-to-day guidance about the current job. As leaders, supervisors should also encourage outside mentoring partnerships, informal and formal, and allow their employees the time to work on them. Additional mentoring supplements employee development when supervisors are not subject matter experts in every area of interest to their employees. It can also provide a neutral resource to the employee who feels awkward talking openly and honestly with their boss if the issue is difficulty on the job or the desire to explore job changes.

b. Principle Elements of Mentoring Program.

- (1) Coast Guard Mentoring Guidance web site (via <http://www.uscg.mil/leadership/>) provides information and guidance on mentoring as well as linked access to the other program elements. Revisions, additions and changes to the mentoring program are announced using this web site.
- (2) On-Line Mentoring Training Course can be accessed from the Coast Guard Mentoring Guidance web site or directly at <http://learning.uscg.mil/mentoring/>. This course consists of three parts: a general introduction to mentoring, a mentor orientation, and tips for protégés (mentees). Once completed, the course can be used as an on-line reference, providing both mentors and mentees with guidance, suggestions and activities intended to foster productive mentoring relationships.
- (3) The Leadership, Mentoring and Professional Development Course is a one-week class offered ten to fourteen times a year, regionally, in a roadshow format. An ALCOAST is published annually in June soliciting host units and providing a point of contact for scheduling. Units hosting this course are responsible for encouraging participation by all Coast Guard units and Auxiliary flotillas within their local geographic region. Additional information concerning this course can be found on the Coast Guard Mentoring Guidance web site.
- (4) The Coast Guard e-Mentoring System can be accessed from the Coast Guard Mentoring Guidance web site. We are committed to using technology to efficiently deliver mentoring services to the field. The present e-Mentoring System provides a dynamic database in which people can sign up to be or search for mentors. This additional means of finding a mentor is especially valuable for individuals who cannot find someone within their local workplace. Most likely, these mentoring partnerships will take place over telephone and e-mail. In

addition to the database, the e-Mentoring System supports mentors and mentees by creating a mentoring agreement and providing just-in-time instructions and automated notifications for key activities. This web site also contains a wealth of valuable resources, such as mentor and mentee guides, an e-learning module, assessments on characteristics and skills for mentors, assessments on characteristics and learning needs for mentees, a mentoring process overview, an activity timeline, and frequently asked questions. These resources are available on-line to everyone regardless of whether the member/employee enrolls in the data base.

(5) Local Mentoring Programs at the unit level are the foundation of mentoring in the Coast Guard. Sponsorship programs, first tour programs, junior officer development programs, civilian orientation programs and other locally designed and managed programs are an integral part of organizational mentoring. Local mentoring initiatives ensure that Coast Guard mentoring takes place within the parameters of organizational purpose while meeting the development needs of the individual.

c. Supervisor Role. Supervisors play an important role in mentoring. They help to define purpose and to establish organizational goals for both mentors and mentees. Ultimately, the success of a mentoring partnership is determined by how well the mentee performs at work and the supervisor's evaluation of his/her performance. All mentoring relationships have underlying organizational purposes which give the partnership purpose—career planning, employee development, succession planning to name a few.

## 6. RESPONSIBILITIES.

- a. All Coast Guard active duty, reservists, civilian employees, and Auxiliarists are highly encouraged to use the mentoring program as a method for increasing job satisfaction, professional development and career advancement. Each member is ultimately responsible for their own professional development and career advancement; participation in mentoring is voluntary.
- b. Retirees frequently have the time and interest to devote to mentoring relationships, it is simply a matter of asking for their assistance. Their unique perspectives and extensive experience make them a rich source of information and insights. Many retirees remain very current about the Coast Guard through affiliation with professional organizations such as the Chief Petty Officers Association, Chief Warrant Officers Association, spouses clubs, and National Retiree Council. Units and individuals can use these organizations, in addition to local contacts, to seek retirees willing to serve as mentors.
- c. Mentees need to be concerned about planning their careers and getting maximum benefit from the energy and time they devote to the Coast Guard. They should think about what they need to learn for their current position and what they want to do next, setting goals and objectives applicable to the unit, the Coast Guard, and themselves. It is the mentee's responsibility to initiate contact with the mentor, to work with the mentor to develop a mentoring plan, to follow-up and to do the things agreed to in the plan, to review that plan to determine the value of the mentoring partnership, and to discuss changes or modifications to the agreement with the mentor.

- d. Mentors are responsible for providing guidance to their mentees based upon the mentees learning needs and development areas. Mentors may act as a resource, advisor, teacher, coach, model, sponsor, consultant or guide. Mentors should assist the mentees in establishing the basis by which they will work together, help to clarify the goals of the mentoring partnership and to set benchmarks or objectives, and to help the mentee grow.
  - e. Supervisors shall ensure their subordinates are aware of the Coast Guard's mentoring program and have reasonable access to the same.
  - f. Commanders are highly encouraged to develop and maintain local mentoring programs in conjunction with the use of the centrally available elements. Commanders are responsible for scheduling the Leadership, Mentoring and Professional Development course and for assigning participants.
  - g. Career Development Advisors (CDA) receive training and program information on the Coast Guard's Mentoring Program. CDAs will include introductory level training on the mentoring program in conjunction with other leadership and professional development training.
  - h. The Leadership Development Center (LDC) conducts the Leadership, Mentoring and Professional Development course, in the road-show format, a minimum of 10 times per year. The content of this course shall be updated by the LDC as needed.
  - i. The Office of Leadership and Professional Development (CG-133) is the program manager for Coast Guard Mentoring Programs and is responsible for the program elements. CG-133 will review, revise and update program elements as necessary and will promote and track usage.
7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT and IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS. Environmental considerations were examined in the development of this Instruction and have been determined to be not applicable.
8. FORMS/REPORTS. None.

Sally Brice-O'Hara /s/  
Director of Reserve and Training