



COMDTINST 5420.40C  
10 AUG 2021

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 5420.40C

Subj: COMMANDANT’S EXECUTIVE DECISION MAKING (EDM) PROCESS

1. PURPOSE. To promulgate the framework for Coast Guard Executive Decision Making and the decision support role of key executive forums.
2. ACTION. All Flag Officers, Senior Executive Service (SES) civilian employees, and their staffs shall familiarize themselves and comply with the provisions of this Instruction. Internet release is authorized.
3. DIRECTIVE AFFECTED. Commandant Executive Decision Making (EDM) Process, COMDTINST 5420.40B is cancelled.
4. DISCUSSION. A properly designed decision-making framework facilitates well-informed and timely decisions made at the right level in the organization. It provides regular, repeatable and transparent processes that promote appropriate deliberation while ensuring decision-makers receive accurate, timely input from relevant parties. To ensure decisions optimize enterprise efficiency and effectiveness, cross-programmatic impacts and the concerns of affected stakeholders must be considered. Decision making is best done at multiple levels throughout the organization. As detailed below, a key role for the Commandant as the organization’s Chief Executive is to set the vision and direction for the Coast Guard. Once the Commandant’s strategic vision/direction is promulgated, subordinate leaders must align their executive decisions with this direction. Typically, executive decisions are made by those closest to the issues that are given the responsibility to lead programs or operations. For all decisions, the Judge Advocate General (CG-094), Director, Governmental and Public Affairs (CG-092), and Assistant Commandant for Resources (CG-8) shall be consulted as appropriate and early as practicable and shall be available to advise all levels with executive decision-support. Enterprise decisions may require higher level engagement and this Instruction provides avenues for ensuring those decisions are made at the appropriate organizational level.

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B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
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NON-STANDARD DISTRIBUTION:

5. DISCLAIMER. This guidance is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is it itself a rule. It is intended to provide operational guidance for Coast Guard personnel and is not intended to nor does it impose legally binding requirements on any party outside of the Coast Guard.
6. MAJOR CHANGES. This Instruction provides updates to reflect changes in the Headquarters organization and improvements in Coast Guard governance.
7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS.
  - a. The Office of Environmental Management, Commandant (CG-47), reviewed the development of this Instruction, and the general policies contained within it, and determined that this policy falls under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) categorical exclusion A3.
  - b. This Instruction will not result in any substantial change to existing environmental conditions or violation of any applicable federal, state, or local laws relating to the protection of the environment. It is the responsibility of the action proponent to evaluate all future specific actions resulting from this policy for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), other applicable environmental mandates, and the U.S. Coast Guard Environmental Planning Policy, COMDTINST 5090.1 (series).
8. DISTRIBUTION. No paper distribution will be made of this Instruction. An electronic version will be located on the following Commandant (CG-612) web sites. Internet: <https://dcms.uscg.mil/directives/> and CGPortal: <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/library/directives/SitePages/Home.aspx>.
9. RECORDS MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS. Records created as a result of this Instruction, regardless of format or media, must be maintained and dispositioned in accordance with the records retention schedules located on the Records Resource Center CGPortal site: <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/cg61/CG611/SitePages/Home.aspx>.
10. SCOPE. The EDM Process encompasses deliberation and decision support for meetings chaired by the Commandant (CCG), Vice Commandant (VCG), and other senior leaders. It includes the Leadership Council (LC), Senior Leader Synch (SLS), Principals Council (PC), Deputy Principals Council (DC), and Executive Management Councils (EMCs). The acquisition decision making process (e.g., Acquisition Review Board, and Executive Oversight Committee) is outlined in the Major Systems Acquisition Manual, COMDTINST M5000.10 (series), and is outside the scope of this Instruction. The Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution (PPBE) is a parallel process to EDM with several intersection points described both by this and Coast Guard Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution (PPBE) Process, COMDTINST 7100.1 (series).
11. ENTERPRISE DECISIONS. Enterprise decisions require CCG or VCG approval. Enterprise decisions include: changes to Coast Guard roles and missions, substantive shifts in mission strategy or concepts of operation, major organization changes and alterations to force structure, changes in Coast Guard authorities, significant modifications of mission support or

capability standards, and items which require official submission to external stakeholders or may result in significant external scrutiny. Absent these considerations, it is expected that all senior executives will align their programmatic decisions with the CCG's strategic direction. Unless all or specific authority has been withheld, senior executives have full authority to execute their programs. While the sensitivity of certain issues may require attention at the CCG/VCG level, in general, the following thresholds are considered an enterprise decision:

- Cross program funds transfers of more than 5 million dollars;
- Reallocation of over 25 FTE;
- Service-wide policy changes that will engender significant external (media, industry stakeholders, Congress, Administration) interest;
- Personnel policy change that: significantly impact or are likely to be viewed either critically or particularly unfavorable by large portions of the workforce; are not aligned with DoD (for military personnel); or, do not have key stakeholder support (e.g., MCPO-CG for enlisted personnel issues);
- Issues that impact the authorities of the Service; and
- Other issues that DCO/DCMS/Areas determine warrant CCG and/or VCG decision.

All enterprise decisions requiring CCG or VCG approval will be routed through both Deputy Commandants and will include assessments of the legal, political and budgetary impacts/risk, via endorsements, from Commandants (CG-092), (CG-094), and (CG-8).

12. RELATIONSHIP OF EDM TO THE PPBE PROCESS. Decisions carrying significant resource requirements must be informed through enterprise resource planning. The Deputy Commandant or Area Commander proposing an issue within the EDM process will consult with Commandant (CG-8), who will advise on the resourcing options/impacts of all proposals. Decisions requiring ExStage funding or Congressional reprogramming will be incorporated by Commandant (CG-8), along with all other initiatives requiring similar funding, for VCG review. Those initiatives that require out-year resources will be integrated by Commandant (CG-8) into the PPBE process. See the Coast Guard Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution (PPBE) Process, COMDTINST 7100.1 (series) for additional details.
13. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. The following outlines the roles and responsibilities of key senior leaders and EDM forums. Roles and responsibilities for core Coast Guard business functions are identified in the enclosure. Delegated responsibilities include: Strategic Mission Management to the Deputy Commandant for Operations (DCO); Mission Execution to the Atlantic Area Commander (CAA) and Pacific Area Commander (CPA); Mission Support to the Deputy Commandant for Mission Support (DCMS); and Financial Management to Commandant (CG-8).
  - a. Commandant: CCG is the Chief Executive of the United States Coast Guard. CCG's primary role is to set the organization's long-term vision and strategic direction and make final decisions regarding the future of the organization. CCG is responsible for the overall performance of the organization and for making top-level managerial decisions. In fulfilling this responsibility, CCG requires constructive updates from senior executives as

they lead their assigned programs and operations. CCG is also the organization's external voice to its most important stakeholders.

- b. Vice Commandant. VCG is the Chief Operating Officer of the United State Coast Guard. VCG's primary role is to oversee the day to day administrative and operational functions of the organization. VCG's focus is maximizing the current performance of the organization and aligning organization action with the CCG's strategic vision/direction.
- c. Leadership Council (LC). The LC is the Coast Guard's senior decision-making and advisory body and is chaired by CCG. Members are CCG, VCG, DCO, DCMS, CAA, CPA, Auxiliary National Commodore (NACO), Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard (MCPOCG), and a SES member, designated in writing by CCG. Coordination and administrative assistance to the Leadership Council are provided by VCG Staff. The LC serves as the Coast Guard Board of Directors and will meet at least twice a year.
- d. Senior Leaders Synch (SLS). The SLS is a Coast Guard senior coordinating and alignment forum, and at times a decision-making body, and is chaired by CCG or VCG. Members are CCG, VCG, DCO, DCMS, CAA, CPA and MCPOCG. The SLS meets weekly and serves as a senior leader check with CCG/VCG. The SLS provides a forum where constructive updates from senior executives on programs and operations can be provided to senior leaders. The SLS may be used as a decision making forum, particularly for strategic issues where timely decisions are needed between regularly scheduled LC meetings. Coordination and administrative assistance to the SLS are provided by VCG Staff and the Commandant (CG-8) staff.
- e. Principals Council (PC). The PC is a decision-making body, which is convened to provide senior leader governance and assist executives as they lead their assigned programs and operations to meet CCG direction. For enterprise issues as described in Paragraph 10, the PC may provide consolidated recommendations to CCG or VCG as appropriate. Generally, the PC will work in coordination with the Deputy Principals Council (DPC) (see below) to ensure key strategic issues are prioritized appropriately and organized for timely decisions, ensuring that the most important work of the Service rises to the top. The PC need not achieve full consensus to issue decisions or make recommendations. Members of the PC are DCO, DCMS, CAA, CPA, Commandant (CG-8) (non-voting member), and MCPOCG. The Chair of the PC will rotate between DCO and DCMS annually. The PC will meet monthly, and additionally as determined by the Chair. Coordination and administrative assistance to the PC are provided by Chair Staff and the Commandant (CG-8) staff.
- f. Deputy Principals Council (DPC). The DPC is a coordination and advisory body that ensures proper prioritization and collaboration on Headquarters and enterprise-wide management issues. The DPC identifies, tracks, coordinates and presents issues for PC, SLS and/or LC discussion or decision making to ensure timely and effective decision support to Service-wide strategic initiatives. Core membership includes the DCO Deputy, DCMS Deputies (DMR and DPR), Commandant (CG-8), and Deputy Area Commanders. The DPC may review and make recommendations on strategic management issues referred to the PC. As a key linkage point between strategy and budget processes, the

DPC also assists Commandant (CG-8) with coordination for the Coast Guard's PPBE processes and makes recommendations to the Investment Review Board (IRB).

14. FORMS/REPORTS. None.

15. REQUEST FOR CHANGES. Recommendations for changes or improvements to this Instruction are welcome and must be submitted in memo format via the chain of command to VCG.

/L. L. FAGAN/  
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard  
Vice Commandant

Enclosures: (1) USCG Leadership Roles and Responsibilities Matrix  
(2) EDM and Budget Process Diagrams

# USCG Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

USCG Executive Decision-Making	CCG/VCG	DCO	AREAS	DCMS	CG-8
• USCG Roles & Missions	A	C	C	C	C
• USCG Enterprise Strategies	A				
○ Mission Strategies; Concepts of Operations		R	C	C	C
○ Operational and Campaign Plans		C	R	C	I
○ Acquisition & Mission Support Strategies		C	C	R	C
○ CIP; Resource Allocation Plan; FYHSP		C	C	C	R
• USCG Organization & Force Structure	A				
○ Operational Programs; Mission Needs		R	C	C	C
○ Operational Command & Control		C	R	C	I
○ Support Programs; Support Needs		C	C	R	C
○ Organization Modification Request Process		C	C	C	R
• USCG Enterprise Accountability & External Relations	A				
○ Strategic Program/Mission Performance		R	C	C	I
○ International Affairs & Foreign Policy (DCO-I)		R	C	I	I
○ Intelligence Community		R	C	I	I
○ Joint Commands & Task Forces		C	R	C	I
○ Local Partnerships		C	R	C	I
○ Acquisition, Human Resource & Mission Support Performance		C	C	R	C
○ Joint Support Arrangements & Partnerships		C	C	R	I
○ Financial Controls & Accountability		C	C	C	R
○ Budget Defense		C	C	C	R
○ Governmental & Public Affairs (CG-092)	R	C	C	C	C

**Key:**   **A**   Accountable (includes Responsible if no other R is assigned)  
**A**   CCG/VCG overall accountability for delegated authority  
**R**   Responsible – Owner of the function; responsible for action and implementation; can be shared  
**C**   Consult – Provides input, registers objections, and influences the decision prior to the final decision or action  
**I**   Informed – Entity that needs to be informed after a decision or action is taken; may be required to take action

# USCG Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

USCG Strategic Mission Management	CCG/VCG	DCO	AREAS	DCMS	CG-8
• Strategic Assessment & FYHSP Program Evaluation	A	A	C	C	I
• Intelligence Activities & Management	A	A	C	I	I
• FYHSP Program & Strategic Planning Direction	A	A	C	C	C
• FYHSP Program Policy & Strategy Formation	A	A	C	C	I
• FYHSP Program Plans & Operational Resource Allocation	A	A	C	C	C
• FYHSP Program, Mission & Stakeholder Management	A	A	C	I	I
• FYHSP Program Performance Reporting	A	A	C	I	C
• Legislative Change Process	A	C	I	C	I

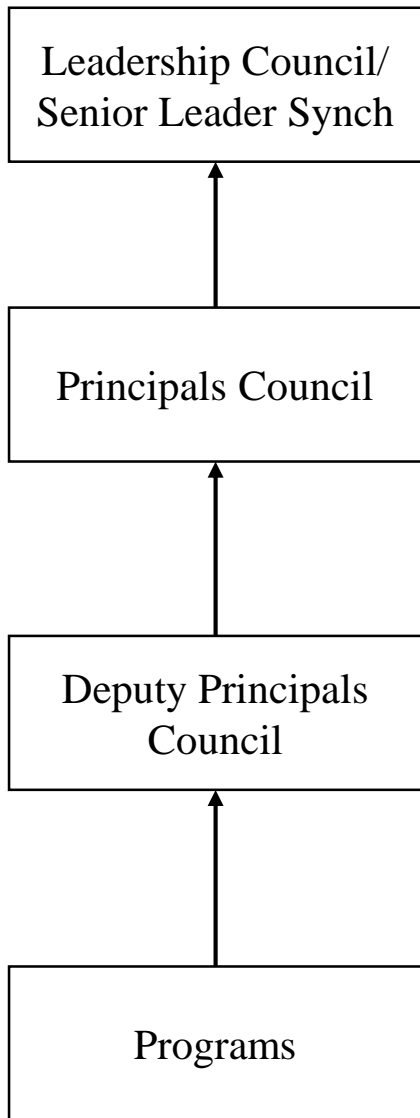
USCG Mission Execution	CCG/VCG	DCO	AREAS	DCMS	CG-8
• Operational & Tactical Assessment	A	C	A	C	I
• Operational Planning	A	C	A	C	I
• Operational Plans, Orders & Direction	A	C	A	C	I
• Operational & Tactical Command, Control & Execution	A	I	A	I	I
• Operational Reporting	A	I	A	I	I

USCG Mission Support	CCG/VCG	DCO	AREAS	DCMS	CG-8
• Human Resources	A	C	C	A	C
• Engineering & Logistics	A	C	C	A	C
• Communications, Computers & Information Technology	A	C	C	A	C
• Procurement, Acquisitions, Construction & Improvements	A	C	C	A	C
• Research, Development, Testing & Evaluation	A	C	C	A	C
• Training & Recruiting	A	C	C	A	C

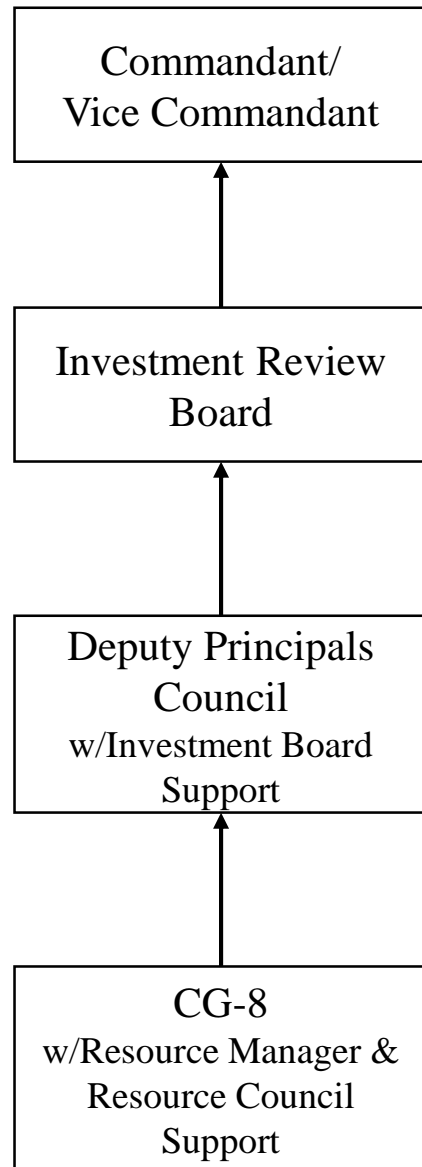
USCG Financial Management	CCG/VCG	DCO	AREAS	DCMS	CG-8
• Financial Accounting & Reporting	A	I	I	I	A
• Internal Controls	A	C	C	C	A
• Budget Development and Defense	A	C	C	C	A
• Budget Execution	A	C	C	C	A

**Key:** **A** Accountable (includes Responsible if no other R is assigned)  
**A** CCG/VCG overall accountability for delegated authority  
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### **Executive Decision Making Process for Strategy and Policy\***



### **Budget Process\*\***



\* DCO, DCMS and/or the relevant Area Commander sponsor the strategic decision making process by proposing issues for consideration.

\*\* CG-8 is the executive agent for the budget process. See the PPBE Instruction for more detailed process maps.