

**PUBLICATION OF
DIRECTIVES: COMMANDANT
INSTRUCTION (CI), ALCOAST
AND ALCOAST
COMMANDANT NOTICES
(ACN)**



**COMDTINST 5215.6I
March 2022**

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



Commandant
United States Coast Guard

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COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 5215.6I

Subj: PUBLICATION OF DIRECTIVES: COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION (CI), ALCOAST
AND ALCOAST COMMANDANT NOTICES (ACN)

Ref: (a) 14 U.S.C. § 505 – Functions and powers vested in the Commandant
(b) DHS Directives System Directive 112-01, Rev. 01, September 9, 2011
(c) Coast Guard Accessible Systems and Technology Program (ASTP); Section 508,
COMDTINST 5230.60 (series)
(d) The Plain Writing Act of 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-274, 124 Stat. 2861 (codified at 5
U.S.C. § 301 note)

1. PURPOSE. This Instruction establishes policy for the administration and publication of Coast Guard Directives in accordance with Reference (a). Specifically, this Instruction provides policy for the publication of a Commandant Instruction (CI), ALCOAST and ALCOAST Commandant Notice (ACN). Additionally, this Instruction outlines the Coast Guard Headquarters interface with the U.S. Department of Defense Issuance (DoDI) review process and describes the Coast Guard role on the Joint (Multi) Service Directives Working Group.
2. ACTION. All Coast Guard unit commanders, commanding officers, officers-in-charge, deputy/assistant commandants, and chiefs of headquarters staff elements must comply with the policies contained.
3. AUTHORIZED RELEASE. Internet release is authorized.
4. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. The Coast Guard Directives System, COMDTINST M5215.6H is hereby cancelled.
5. DISCUSSION. Published policy contained in all Directives must remain current and be managed in compliance with the Government Accountability Office *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, more commonly referred to as the Green Book. In FY21 and FY22, an extensive Directives review by Commandant (CG-6) was undertaken to address serious deficiencies of obsolescence in published policy. Moving forward, Sponsors of Directives must actively manage their publications to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars and avoid waste. Shorter and more concise policy Instructions with hyperlinks to electronically maintained SOPs are strongly encouraged as they are less complex to update. This Instruction also focuses on *policy* and provides less guidance on procedure, which

changes more frequently. Directives related SOP's and templates are located on Directives and Publications Division, Commandant (CG-612) portal site CG-61 - Directives (uscg.mil). As Directives are no longer hardcopy, nor mailed out, the use of a Standard Distribution List (SDL) matrix on each Instruction is no longer necessary.

6. 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 the Coast Guard.

7. MAJOR CHANGES. There will no longer be new Commandant Instruction Manuals (CIM) published; instead all USCG policies will be CI's, regardless of page length. All Instructions will be automatically assigned a 10-year expiration date and must be validated at 5 years using the Directives, Publications, and Forms Validation, CG-5215A. An ACN must not exceed 10 percent of the original parent Instruction, and the CI must be rewritten after 5 ACNs. If an ACN exceeds 10 percent of the parent Instruction, a revision of the CI must be issued. Commands/units do not need to maintain their own independent library of Directives as the Coast Guard Headquarters-based library is retrievable on the Coast Guard Portal at <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/library/directives/SitePages/directives.aspx>. The site incorporates suggestions from CG Ideas at Work, and allows viewing by Directive Type, Publication Date, Security Class, and SSIC. It will also allow visitors to sort by Directive Number, Title, Sponsor, and Effective Date. The Commandant Notice (CN), and the Commandant Change Notice (CCN) are discontinued. For promulgation, a standard ALCOAST, MyCG announcement, or customizable email distribution list is acceptable. Each quarter (at a minimum), a comprehensive ALCOAST with new or updated Directives will be released.

8. SCOPE AND AUTHORITIES. This Instruction applies to Coast Guard Directives only and does not provide guidance on Directives published by any other Federal Department or Agency. Requirements and best practices are provided for effective Directives management, including administering, maintaining, automating, and implementing Section 508 compliance on all Coast Guard Directives. It is recommended the reader become familiar with the Directives and publications that are listed here in numerical series order:
 - Communications Manual, COMDTINST M2000.3 (series);
 - U.S. Coast Guard Heraldry, COMDTINST M5200.14 (series);
 - Records & Information Management Program Roles and Responsibilities, COMDTINST 5212.12 (series);
 - Coast Guard Forms Management Program (FMP), COMDTINST 5213.9 (series);
 - The Coast Guard Correspondence Manual, COMDTINST M5216.4 (series);
 - Coast Guard Organizational Manual, COMDTINST M5400.7 (series);
 - Classified Information Management Program, COMDTINST M5510.23 (series); Publishing of Printed and Bound Materials for the Coast Guard, COMDTINST 5604.1 (series);
 - Coast Guard External Affairs Manual, COMDTINST M5700.13A (series); and,
 - Standard Subject Identification Codes (SSIC) located at:

<https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/cg61/CG611/SitePages/Home.aspx> .

9. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS.

- a. 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. No further environmental analysis is necessary in accordance with the U.S. Coast Guard Environmental Planning Policy, COMDINST 5090.1 (series).
- 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).

10. DIRECTIVES COORDINATION AND UNIT INSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT. At a directorate or command/unit level, the executive administrator or officer will serve as the primary point of contact regarding Instructions. A director or commanding officer may also choose to assign this responsibility as a collateral duty and appoint a Directives Coordinator. Directives coordinator guidance is provided by Commandant (CG-612). The Directives Library located at <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/library/directives/SitePages/directives.aspx> is the sole authoritative source for U.S. Coast Guard policy. Units must maintain unit-specific policies at the unit level and ensure currency of information contained therein.

11. DISTRIBUTION. A paper distribution will not be made of this Instruction. An electronic version will be located on the following Commandant (CG-612) web sites. Internet: <https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-C4IT-CG-6/The-Office-of-Information-Management-CG-61/About-CG-Directives-System> and CGPortal: <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/library/directives/SitePages/home.aspx> .

12. RECORDS MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS. Records created as a result of this Instruction, regardless of format or media, must be managed in accordance with the records retention schedule located on the Records Resource Center CGPortal site: <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/cg61/CG611/SitePages/Home.aspx> .

13. DEFINITION OF A DIRECTIVE. In accordance with DHS Directives System 112-01 Reference (b), Directives “briefly and broadly articulate and build on DHS policy statements, policies, missions, programs, activities or business practices of a continuing nature that are required or authorized by statute, rulemaking, the President, or the Secretary to initiate, govern, or regulate actions or conduct by DHS personnel.” Coast Guard Directives must align with this intent, while ensuring integration with other Federal Agencies and Departments that operate within its multi-mission role. Directives in the Coast Guard are designed to establish or clarify an existing policy, establish or change

organization structure and related roles and responsibilities, establish new delegation authority, establish changes to policy, or establish a new form or reporting requirement. Directives are policy documents and are not process centric. Processes and procedures should be placed into an SOP or Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTP), Portal Page, or Job Aid. Programs must ensure the servicing legal office reviews these process and procedural documents. Directives are organized by Standard Subject Identification Codes, which categorize records using a numbered structure.

14. TYPES OF DIRECTIVES. The following are types of Directives published or reviewed by the Coast Guard.

- a. Commandant Instruction (CI). A CI focuses on policy and not on procedure. It expires 10 years after publication unless republication occurs. As a best practice, CIs should not exceed 200 pages, as longer instructions become more difficult to update. This helps to ensure the content stays current and makes them simpler to republish. When developing a new publication, select a meaningful, concise title (try to use 10 words or less), and do not use standalone acronyms (acronyms must first be identified within the body of the text). Do not use terms such as “policy,” “instruction,” “guidance,” “handbook,” “pamphlet,” “catalog,” “guide,” or “book,” etc., as a descriptor in the title of the publication (i.e. Coast Guard Reserve Policy Board) is permitted. Additionally, there is no need to identify “Coast Guard or United States Coast Guard” in the title since this is a USCG publication. Use of the word “Manual” in the title is discontinued unless used specifically to identify a previous widely recognized publication and therefore changing the title could cause confusion. The subjects of Directives are written in all capitalizations and use the templates provided on the Directives reference portal page.
- b. Commandant Instruction Manuals (CIM). Now discontinued by this revised Instruction and replaced with the CI. Legacy CIMs will remain unchanged until they expire or are updated, at which time they will be converted to CIs. The SSIC portion of the Directive number will typically remain the same unless changed by the Sponsor.
- c. Commandant Change Notice (CCN). Now discontinued by this revised Instruction and replaced with the ALCOAST Commandant Notice (ACN). Legacy CCN’s will continue to be a part of existing Directives until the Instruction is revised.
- d. ALCOAST Commandant Notice (ACN). An ACN is a type of General Message used to announce a permanent change to an existing CI. Changes at one time must not exceed 10 percent of the original Directive based on page count (e.g. 5 pages of change for a 50 page instruction). A maximum of 5 ACNs will be allowed per published CI over the course of the 10-year lifecycle. In aggregate changes must not exceed 50 percent of the original Instruction. The Sponsor must incorporate the changes into the CI before the ACN is promulgated. An ACN is a permanent change to the Directive and will expire when the CI expires or is republished in its entirety.
- e. ALCOAST. An ALCOAST is a type of General Message used to communicate urgent updates or temporary policy changes affecting health, life, or safety.

ALCOASTs are used to communicate Policy Promulgation, Equal Opportunity Notices, White House Notifications, Flag Half Mast Notifications, and Appropriations-related information. To the greatest extent possible, Sponsors should utilize alternative communications for newsworthy announcements such as reminders, observances, and other general notifications. A comprehensive ALCOAST with new or updated Directives will be released quarterly.

- f. Joint (Multi) Service Directives. Another military service may provide their Directives to the Coast Guard during that service's concurrent clearance process. Commandant (CG-612) then initiates concurrent clearance for the Coast Guard; a COMDTINST number is issued and a Coast Guard Sponsor is assigned. Once the originator publishes the Directive, a copy will be retained in the Coast Guard Directives Library until updated or cancelled by the originating military service. *Note*, a Joint (Multi) Service Directive is equivalent to a Commandant Instruction however they may not always apply to all services. On the origination cover page each applicable service will have a corresponding identification (e.g. COMDINST XXXX.XX) if it applies to their service.
 - g. DoD Instructions (DoDI) and DoD Directives (DoDD). Collectively, these Directives are referred to as DoD Issuances. The Coast Guard has a review role but does not publish these Issuances. A COMDINST number is not provided, and the DoD Issuance is not retained in the Coast Guard Directives library.
15. CLASSIFICATION OF DIRECTIVES. Most instructions published by the Coast Guard are unclassified, however there may be a need for a higher level of classification. Please contact the Directives and Publications Division, Commandant (CG-612) for specific guidance on publishing and retaining these Instructions.
 16. SIGNING AUTHORITY. Signing Authority for all types of Directives from the Commandant falls under the authority as designated to the Assistant Commandants, Directors, or other Senior Level Designees. Please contact the Directives and Publications Division, Commandant (CG-612) at HQS-SMB-Directives@uscg.mil for specific guidance on an individual Directive.
 17. PRE-PUBLISHING PROCESS. Contact the Directives and Publications Division, Commandant (CG-612) for pre-publication guidance and visit <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/library/directives/SitePages/Home.aspx> for a process guide, templates, samples, and checklists as you start to write or rewrite your Instruction. All Instructions, ACNs, and ALCOAST messages must follow the templates published by Commandant (CG-612).
 18. CONCURRENT CLEARANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF ROUTING. Ensure that the draft Directive is conceptually pre-approved by the signing authority or an individual authorized to sign by direction. Submit a semi-final draft copy to the Directives and Publications Division, Commandant (CG-612) for review and approval "before" routing for concurrent clearance. Commandant (CG-612) will be the first and last stop in the concurrent clearance process. Concurrence from designated "must clear" offices must

be gained by the Sponsor before the Directive can enter the final publication process. After receiving written concurrence via email or in the USCG Task Management System (TMS) from each must-clear office, Directives must be returned to Commandant (CG-612) for final coordination, documentation, and publication, as appropriate. Documentation of clearance must be provided as evidence of the completed clearance for audit purposes and cannot be older than 8 months. If all “must clear” offices have not concurred within 8 months a waiver request may be submitted by the signing authority to Commandant (CG-612) requesting additional time with justification (not to exceed 90 days). Failure to obtain all concurrences within 8 months, or to obtain a waiver, will result in the Directive having to begin the concurrent clearance process from the beginning. In order to be compliant with financial audit standards, non-responses do not count as concurrence. It is the responsibility of the Sponsor to obtain concurrence from all Directives, offices, and programs that have equities in the Directive, in addition to those on the “must clear” list below. For example, if the Directive affects resources, Commandant (CG-8) must review (HQS-SMB-CG-8-SP@uscg.mil), or if the Directive affects training or has an Inspection, Assessment, and Audit (AIA) nexus, FORCECOM must review (HQS-DG-LST-CG-FORCECOM-SP@uscg.mil) or if the Directive affects intelligence operations, Commandant (CG-2) must review (HQS-DG-LST-CG-2-ECI-SP@uscg.mil) .

a. Must clear offices for CI and ACN are as follows:

Office of Civilian Workforce Relations, Commandant (CG-124),

HQS-SMB-CG124ALC@uscg.mil

Office of Environmental Management, Commandant (CG-47),

HQS-SMB-CG-47-POLICYREVIEW@uscg.mil

Office of Privacy Management, Commandant (CG-6P),

HQS-DG-M-CG-61-PII@uscg.mil

Office of General Law, Commandant (CG-LGL),

HQS-SMB-CG-LGL@uscg.mil

Note, For revised CIs, originating offices must also maintain a track changes, word document copy of the revised instruction for Commandant (CG-LGL) version comparison. For new CIs, a word version of the Instruction is required.

Then, after all comments are adjudicated and concurrent clearances are obtained:

Directives and Publications, Commandant (CG-612),

HQS-SMB-DIRECTIVES@uscg.mil

b. Must clear offices for ALCOAST messages are as follows:

Office of Civilian Workforce Relations, Commandant (CG-124)

HQS-SMB-CG124ALC@uscg.mil

Office of Privacy, Commandant (CG-6P)
HQS-DG-M-CG-61-PII@uscg.mil

Office of General Law, Commandant (CG-LGL)
HQS-SMB-CG-LGL@uscg.mil

Then, after all comments are adjudicated and concurrent clearances are obtained:

Directives and Publications, Commandant (CG-612),
HQS-SMB-ALCOAST@uscg.mil

- c. Must clear for DoD Issuances are as follows: Directive content first comes to the Coast Guard Directives and Publications Division, Commandant (CG-612) who will identify the appropriate Coast Guard Subject Matter Expert for review. The review does not go through full concurrent clearance. These issuances are identified by DoD as either collateral (informational) or primary (signature required). If a signature is required, a DoD Issuance Coordination Response Form, DD818 must be signed by the Coast Guard signing authority; comments may be provided using the Consolidated DoD Issuance Comment Matrix Form, DD818-1. The review must be returned to Commandant (CG-612) to coordinate and document final response.
- d. Must clear for the Joint (Multi) Service Directives are as follows: Proposed Directive content first comes to the Coast Guard Directives and Publications, Commandant (CG-612) who will issue an appropriate Coast Guard COMDTINST number and identify the appropriate Coast Guard Sponsor staff/directorate for review and collaboration with the Joint (Multi) Service Subject Matter Expert. The assigned Coast Guard Sponsor will then place the Directive into concurrent clearance (as if they were the originator and original writer) in accordance with the must clear offices listed in paragraph 18.a. above. Also see paragraph 14.f. above for description of Joint (Multi) Service Directives. The signature requirements may vary by branch of service and Directive. The review must be returned to Commandant (CG-612) to coordinate and document final response.

19. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

- a. Directive Sponsor. The Directives Sponsor is responsible for reviewing each owned Instruction at a minimum of every 5 years and republishing at a minimum of every 10 years. It is best practice for the Directives Sponsor to review their CIs and CIMs every two years to determine the need to update or cancel. The Sponsor must also manage their Directive(s) in accordance with the records retention schedule located on the Records Resource Center CGPortal site:
<https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/cg61/CG611/SitePages/Home.aspx> .
- b. Directives Coordinator. As described in paragraph 10 above, the executive administrator or officer will serve as the primary point of contact regarding Instructions. However, Sponsors may assign a Directives Coordinator. This designation must be provided to Commandant (CG-612) for coordination purposes. The

Sponsor and/or assigned Directives Coordinator must become familiar with this Instruction and review a required Directives Coordinator Brief. The brief may be found on CGPortal at <https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/library/directives/SitePages/home.aspx> .

- c. Directives and Publications Division, Commandant (CG-612). Commandant (CG-612) is the primary publication authority for Directives in the Coast Guard, and the coordinator of DoD and Joint Directive reviews. Oversight includes compliance of publications, correspondence, templates, and Section 508, and other compliance requirements. The central publication repository (library) for Coast Guard Directives is maintained by Commandant (CG-612).
20. FINAL PUBLICATION REQUIREMENTS. After concurrence is obtained, the Directive needs to be prepared for publication. Commandant (CG-612) will provide guidance on the steps for publication via email once a Directive has been cleared and prepared for signature. Signature must be obtained within 60 days of final Commandant (CG-612) approval. If signature is not obtained within 60 days a waiver of 30 days may be submitted by the signing authority to Commandant (CG-612). Failure to obtain signature within 60 days, or to obtain a waiver, will result in the Directive having to begin the concurrent clearance process from the beginning. References (c) and (d) must be consulted for guidance on writing style and accessibility with the objective of clear, concise, and understandable policy. *Note*, All final electronic content to include Directives, processes and procedures must be Section 508 compliant before publication to enhance accessibility to Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) for people with disabilities.
 21. CANCELLING A DIRECTIVE. A CI or CIM may be cancelled at any time using Directives Publications, and Forms Validation, CG-5215A. Otherwise, the previous version of the Instruction must be cancelled in the *Directives Affected* paragraph within the Letter of Promulgation (LOP).
 22. TRANSFERRING A DIRECTIVE. Anytime a reorganization occurs or policy responsibilities transfer, a Sponsor must identify the relevant Directives that must also be transferred. Directives, Publications and Forms Validation, CG-5215A is used to transfer a Directive. The Sponsor should complete the form with the receiving office for transfer processing.
 23. VALIDATING A DIRECTIVE. A CI must be reviewed as valid or in need of update, using Directives, Publications, and Forms Validation CG-5215A, by the fifth anniversary of publication and should be sent to hqs-smb-directives@uscg.mil . A Directive that has been assessed as needing an update and is not in concurrent clearance by the fifth anniversary of publication shall be cancelled.
 24. DIRECTIVE LIFECYCLE. All Directives will be assigned a 10-year expiration from the date of original publication. A Directive that is not in concurrent clearance by the tenth anniversary of publication shall be cancelled.
 25. POLICY DISCUSSION ON MODERNIZING EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS. Units are not required to retain a complete set of all Directives as all unclassified Directives are

retrievable from the Directives Library on CG Portal. Coast Guard policy does not mandate the use of an individual ALCOAST or ACN for Directive promulgation and alternative methods of announcement may be appropriate. Coast Guard leadership and the Directives Coordinator must consider the best method of socialization for their policy and use the most centralized, streamlined, and efficient communication tools available. Important and newsworthy announcements previously issued via an ALCOAST may take place via MyCG or General Messages if the message is internet releasable in alignment with the Coast Guard External Affairs Manual, COMDTINST M5700.13 (series) and the Communications Manual COMDTINST M2000.3 (series).

26. FORMS. The forms referenced in this Instruction are listed in Appendix A and are available on the Coast Guard Standard Workstation or on the Internet: www.dcms.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-C4IT-CG-6/The-Office-of-Information-Management-CG-61/Forms-Management/ . When Directives are written, associated forms must be reviewed for currency and should be hyperlinked rather than pasted into the body of the Instruction unless necessary. Additional information on forms may be obtained from the Forms Management Program Office at USCG.Forms@uscg.mil .
27. REPORTS. Coast Guard Directives are subject to audit in compliance with the United States Government Accountability Office Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government, GAO-14-704G.
28. SECTION 508. This Instruction was created to adhere to Accessibility guidelines and standards as promulgated by the U.S. Access Board. If changes are needed, please communicate with the Coast Guard Section 508 Program Management Office at Section.508@uscg.mil .
29. REQUEST FOR CHANGES. Units and individuals may formally recommend changes through the chain of command using the Coast Guard memorandum. Comments and suggestions from users of this Instruction are welcomed. All such correspondence may be emailed to Commandant (CG-612) at HQS-SMB-Directives@uscg.mil.

/DAVID M. DERMANELIAN/
Rear Admiral, U. S. Coast Guard
ASSISTANT COMMANDANT FOR C4IT (CG-6)

Appendix A. List of Directives Forms

Appendix A. List of Directives Forms

Coast Guard Forms

(Retrieve latest version at cg.portal.uscg.mil/pages/main.aspx)

Directives, Publications, and Forms Validation, CG-5215A

Department of Defense (DoD) Forms

(Retrieve latest version from www.esd.whs.mil/Directives/forms/)

DoD Issuance Coordination Response Form, DD818

Consolidated DoD Issuance Comment Matrix, DD818-1