

**PAY FOR IRREGULAR OR  
INTERMITTENT DUTY  
INVOLVING PHYSICAL  
HARDSHIP OR HAZARD**



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COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 12550.11A

Subj: PAY FOR IRREGULAR OR INTERMITTENT DUTY INVOLVING PHYSICAL  
HARDSHIP OR HAZARD

- Ref:
- (a) Coast Guard Occupational Medicine Manual, COMDTINST M6260.32 (series)
  - (b) 5 U.S.C. §5545 (d), Night, Standby, Irregular and Hazardous Duty Differential
  - (c) 5 CFR 550.903(a), Establishment of hazard pay differentials
  - (d) Environmental Differentials Paid for Exposure to Various Degrees of Hazards, Physical Hardships, and Working Conditions of an Unusual Nature Under the Federal Wage System, COMDTINST M12531.11 (series)
  - (e) 5 CFR 550.902, Definitions
  - (f) 5 CFR 550 Appendix A to Subpart I of Part 550, Schedule of Pay Differentials Authorized for Hazardous Duty Under Subpart I
  - (g) 5 CFR 550.904, Authorization of hazard pay differential
  - (h) 5 CFR 550.905, Payment of hazard pay differential
  - (i) 5 CFR 550.907, Relationship to additional pay payable under other statutes
  - (j) 5 U.S.C. §5547, Limitation of premium pay
  - (k) 5 U.S.C. §5307, Limitation of certain payments
  - (l) 5 CFR 550.906, Termination of hazard pay differential
  - (m) 5 CFR 550.903, Establishment of hazard pay differentials

1. PURPOSE. This Instruction provides Coast Guard policy and instruction for the payment of differentials for irregular or intermittent duty involving unusual physical hardship or hazard to General Schedule (GS) employees.
2. ACTION. All Coast Guard unit commanders, commanding officers, officers-in-charge, deputy/assistant commandants, chief of headquarter directorates must comply with the policies contained.
3. AUTHORIZED RELEASE. Internet release is authorized.
4. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. Pay for Irregular or Intermittent Duty Involving Physical Hardship or Hazard, COMDTINST M12550.11 is hereby cancelled.

5. BACKGROUND.

- a. One objective of the Coast Guard's Occupational Health and Safety Program is to provide safety and health of its civilian personnel by elimination or reduction to the lowest possible level all physical hardships or hazards. Guidelines for carrying out this responsibility are contained in Reference (a).
- b. When efforts to comply with published guidelines do not overcome the physical hardship or hazard, and these factors have not been considered in the classification of the job, a hazard pay differential is warranted. However, although a hazard pay differential is warranted, the Coast Guard has a responsibility to initiate continuing positive action to eliminate danger and risk which contribute to or cause the physical hardship or hazard. The existence of such a pay differential is not intended to condone work practices which circumvent Federal safety laws, rules, regulations, and procedures.
- c. Regulations required by Reference (b) on payment of a hazard pay differential for exposure to a physical hardship or hazardous condition for GS employees are contained in Reference (c).

6. DISCLAIMER. This guidance is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is it itself a rule. It is intended to provide administrative guidance for Coast Guard personnel and is not intended nor does it impose legally-binding requirements on any party outside the Coast Guard.

7. MAJOR CHANGES. This revision updates agency and office symbols, as well as referenced citations and streamlines process and responsibilities.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS. The Office of Environmental Management, Commandant (CG-47) reviewed this Commandant Instruction and the general policies contained within, and determined that this policy falls under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) categorical exclusion A3. This Commandant 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 requirements, and the U.S. Coast Guard Environmental Planning Policy, COMDTINST 5090.1 (series).

9. DISTRIBUTION. No paper distribution will be made of this Instruction. An electronic version will be located in the Coast Guard Directives System Library internally, and if applicable on the Internet at [www.dcms.uscg.mil/directives](http://www.dcms.uscg.mil/directives) .

10. 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 schedules located on the Records Resource Center SharePoint site at:

<https://uscg.sharepoint-mil.us/sites/cg61/CG611/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

11. POLICY. Hazardous duty pay is additional pay for the performance of hazardous duty or duty involving physical hardship. Hazardous duty pay is payable to General Schedule (GS) employees covered by chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code. Prevailing rate (wage) employees are eligible to receive environmental differential pay in certain circumstances under a separate statutory provision. See Reference (d).
12. APPLICABILITY. General Schedule (GS) or equivalent employees may earn a hazard pay differential. All others are ineligible Reference (e).
13. ENTITLEMENT.
  - a. The head of an operating unit or a designee must pay an appropriate differential to an employee who performs a duty specified in Reference (f) provided the physical hardship or duty has not been considered in the classification of the position Reference (g).
  - b. However, the head of an operating unit or designee may approve payment of a differential even when the hazardous duty or physical hardship has been taken into account in the classification of the position when:
    - (1) The actual circumstances of the specific hazard or physical hardship have changed from that taken into account and described in the position description; and
    - (2) Using the knowledge, skills, and abilities described in the position description, the employee cannot control the hazard or physical hardship; therefore, the risk is not reduced to a less than significant level.
  - c. Categories for which work is payable under a hazard pay differential include, but are not limited to: work in rough and remote terrain, traveling under hazardous conditions, snow or ice removal operations, water search and rescue operations, hazardous boarding or leaving of vessels, working at high altitudes, exposure to toxic chemical materials, or diving.
14. SCHEDULE OF RATES. A schedule of conditions and rates of pay for hazardous duty can be found in Reference (d). Regardless of the number of hazards encountered in a day, total hazard differential pay for any day may not exceed 25 percent of the employee's rate of basic pay for that day Reference (b).
15. HOURS TO WHICH HPD RATES APPLY. Hazard differential pay is computed on the basis of hours in a pay status. Any amount of actual exposure during a calendar day entitles the employee to hazard pay for all compensable hours that day. If a tour spans a two-day period, all hours of work will be considered to have been performed on the day the work began Reference (h).

16. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PAYMENTS AND PAY UNDER OTHER STATUTES.

- a. Hazard differential pay under Reference (b) is in addition to any additional pay or allowances payable under other statutes. It is not basic pay for purposes of computing additional pay or allowances payable under other statutes, i.e., hazard differential pay should not be used to compute overtime, holiday pay, or Sunday premium pay, the amount of retirement, Thrift Savings Plan contributions, and life insurance deductions Reference (i). An employee may receive hazard differential pay during overtime hours as they are in a pay status during those hours. However, the hazard differential pay is computed on the employee's hourly rate of basic pay, not their hourly overtime rate.
- b. An employee may not be paid hazard differential pay for hours which they receive annual premium pay for regularly scheduled standby duty, annual premium pay for administratively uncontrollable overtime work, or availability pay for criminal investigators Reference (h).
- c. Hazard differential pay is not subject to the biweekly maximum limitation on premium pay under Reference (j). However, it is subject to the aggregate compensation limitation under Reference (k), which limits an employee's aggregate compensation to the rate payable for level I of the Executive Schedule at the end of a calendar year.

17. EFFECT ON EXCUSED ABSENCE AND LEAVE.

- a. Hazard differential pay may be paid during hours of paid leave if hazardous duty is performed on a day which paid leave is taken. For example, if an employee performs a hazardous duty for one hour and then takes annual leave for the seven hours remaining in their workday, the employee is paid hazard differential pay for the entire 8-hour workday Reference (h).
- b. Hazard differential pay may not be paid for periods of leave without pay. Hazard differential pay may only be paid while an employee is in a pay status.

18. RECORDING HDP HOURS. Hazard differential pay must be coded for payment using the U.S. Coast Guard's automated time and attendance (T&A) system (i.e. webTA).

19. TERMINATION OF HDP. Hazard differential pay must be discontinued when one or more of the conditions requisite for such payment ceases to exist: Safety precautions have reduced the element of hazard to a less than significant level of risk, consistent with generally accepted standards that may be applicable, such as those published by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Department of Labor; or protective or mechanical devices have adequately alleviated physical discomfort or distress Reference (l).

20. ADDITIONS TO THE SCHEDULE OF HAZARDOUS DUTY PAY RATES.

- a. Amendments to Appendix A to Subpart I of 5 CFR 550 must be submitted with appropriate documentation to the Office of Civilian HR Operations (CG-123).

Commandant (CG-123) must send to the Office of Civilian Workforce Management (CG-122) who will coordinate and review with the Office of Safety and Environmental Health (CG-113). Commandant (CG-122) must forward to the Director of Civilian Human Resources, Diversity and Leadership (CG-12) for review and concurrence who then forwards to DHS Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO) for concurrence. The final approver is the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). Justification supporting a request for amendment of Reference (f) must explain the:

- (1) Nature of the duty;
- (2) Degree to which the employee is exposed to physical hardship or hazard;
- (3) Length of time during which the duty will continue to exist;
- (4) Degree to which control may be exercised over the physical hardship or hazard;
- (5) Rate of hazard pay differential considered appropriate for approval by OPM; and
- (6) Estimated cost to the agency if the proposed amendment to Reference (f) is approved Reference (m).

## 21. RESPONSIBILITES.

- a. Commandant (CG-12):
  - (1) Reviews and provides final determination of hazard differential pay requests subject to availability of funds by Commanadant (CG-832).
  - (2) Reviews requests to amend Reference (f) before forwarding to DHS OCHCO.
- b. Commandant (CG-122):
  - (1) Receives and reviews request package from Commandant (CG-123) and reviews to ensure claimed hazard duty is not accounted for in the employee's position description (PD).
  - (2) Forwards request and accompanying documents including requestor's position description to Commandant (CG-113) for a determination on whether the safety procedures in place sufficiently mitigate the hazard to a "less than significant" level.
  - (3) Reviews requests for policy determination of hazard differential pay and forwards to Commandant (CG-12) for approval, subject to availability of funds by Commanadant (CG-832).
  - (4) Sends approved and denied requests to the appropriate organization with memo outlining the final determination.
  - (5) Clears new additions to HDP to DHS for final approval from the OPM.
- c. Commandant (CG-123): Receives requests for hazard differentials and forwards to Commandant (CG-122) for review and coordination with Commandant (CG-113) and approval from Commandant (CG-12).

- d. Supervisors:
  - (1) Reports and certifies actual exposures to hazardous conditions.
  - (2) Prepares requests for hazard differentials and routes through Commandant (CG-113), and Commandant (CG-832) to Commandant (CG-122).
- e. Commandant (CG-113): Reviews request and PD and makes determination on whether the safety procedures in place sufficiently mitigate the hazard to a "less than significant" level.
- f. Commandant (CG-832):
  - (1) Calculates budgetary impact involving Physical Hardship or Hazard duty pay with environmental differential.
  - (2) Verifies required funding is available and sufficient to cover the projected cost of environmental differential pay for these positions.
  - (3) Reviews requests to ensure the nature of the hazard differential is included and affirmed by supervisor.

17. FORMS. None.

18. 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](mailto:Section.508@uscg.mil).

19. REQUEST FOR CHANGES. Commandant (CG-122) is the sponsoring office. Any recommended changes should be submitted to the Office of Workforce Management Chief.

/BLANCA A. SANCHEZ/  
Director of Civilian Human Resources,  
Diversity and Leadership

Appendix A. Definition of Terms



## DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. **Physical hardship** means duty involving physical hardship that may not in itself be hazardous, but causes extreme physical discomfort or distress and is not adequately alleviated by protective or mechanical devices, such as duty involving exposure to extreme temperatures for a long period of time, arduous physical exertion, or exposure to fumes, dust, or noise that causes nausea, skin, eye, ear, or nose irritation (5 CFR 550.902).
2. **Hazardous duty** means duty performed under circumstances in which an accident could result in serious injury or death, such as duty performed on a high structure where protective facilities are not used or on an open structure where adverse conditions such as darkness, lightning, steady rain, or high wind velocity exist (5 CFR 550.902).
3. **Hazard pay differential** means additional pay for the performance of hazardous duty or duty involving physical hardship (5 CFR 550.902).
4. **Considered in the classification** means that the duty constitutes an element considered in establishing the grade of the position - i.e., the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform that duty are considered in the classification of the position (5 CFR 550.904(c)).