



Sexual Misconduct on U.S. Vessels (FY 2024)

Report to Congress
April 4, 2025



U.S. Coast Guard

Foreword

April 4, 2025

The Coast Guard provides the following report, “Sexual Misconduct on U.S. Vessels (FY 2024).”

Section 10105 of Title 46, U.S. Code, directs the submission of a report that provides the number of reports received; the number of penalties issued; the number of open investigations; the number of completed investigations including their outcomes; the number of credentials denied or revoked due to sexual harassment, sexual assault, or related offenses; and recommendations to support the efforts of the Coast Guard to improve investigations and oversight of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the maritime sector.



Pursuant to Congressional requirements, this report is provided to the following members of Congress:

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chairman, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Please direct any inquiries to my Senate Liaison Office at (202) 224-2913 or House Liaison Office at (202) 225-4775.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kevin E. Lunday".

Kevin E. Lunday
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
Acting Commandant



Sexual Misconduct on U.S. Vessels (FY 2024)

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I. Legislative Language

This report responds to the language set forth in Section 10105 of Title 46, U.S. Code (U.S.C.), which reads:

46 U.S.C. § 10105. REPORTS TO CONGRESS

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Don Young Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022, and on an annual basis thereafter, the Commandant shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report that includes—

- (1) the number of reports received under section 10104 [46 U.S.C. § 10104: Requirement to report sexual offenses];
- (2) the number of penalties issued under such section;
- (3) the number of open investigations under such section, completed investigations under such section, and the outcomes of such open or completed investigations;
- (4) the number of assessments or audits conducted under section 3203 and the outcome of those assessments or audits;
- (5) a statistical analysis of compliance with the safety management system criteria under section 3203;
- (6) the number of credentials denied or revoked due to sexual harassment, sexual assault, or related offenses; and
- (7) recommendations to support efforts of the Coast Guard to improve investigations and oversight of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the maritime sector, including funding requirements and legislative change proposals necessary to ensure compliance with title CXVI of the Don Young Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022 and the amendments made by such title.

(b) PRIVACY.—In collecting the information required under subsection (a), the Commandant shall collect such information in a manner that protects the privacy rights of individuals who are subjects of such information.

II. Background

Sexual misconduct, which includes incidents of sexual assault and sexual harassment, has no place in the maritime industry and the Coast Guard is committed to helping prevent these occurrences and respond effectively to allegations, enabling the maritime industry to eliminate this toxic behavior from the workplace. The Don Young Coast Guard Authorization Act (CGAA) of 2022 amended the Title 46 definitions, reporting requirements, and statutorily required sanctions for sexual assault and sexual harassment on U.S. vessels. Since enactment, the Coast Guard has engaged in a multi-faceted effort to address sexual misconduct in the maritime industry, to include robust policy development and a comprehensive communications and engagement campaign to promote a respectful culture that is fully committed to preventing destructive behaviors, including sexual assault and sexual harassment.

The Coast Guard leverages the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) continuous monitoring of Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) holders, to take immediate administrative actions against credentialed mariners who commit felony offenses. When an individual with a TWIC is wanted, arrested, or convicted of a felony that would disqualify them from being able to possess a TWIC, including rape or aggravated sexual abuse, TSA suspends their TWIC and provides their name to the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard follows up with suspension and revocation (S&R) action on a mariner's Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC) for certain felony crimes, including acts of sexual misconduct.

The Coast Guard uses the term sexual misconduct, which includes allegations of sexual assault and sexual harassment, to remove the burden on survivors of having to decipher the nuanced legal definitions of harassment or assault. When the Coast Guard receives a report of harassment, sexual harassment, assault, or sexual assault, trained law enforcement professionals evaluate the circumstances presented and open an investigation based on the most legally serious offense alleged. During an investigation, additional crimes or acts of misconduct are sometimes revealed. Reporting metrics below represent the investigations opened after an initial report was received. Because sexual misconduct and harassing behaviors exist on a continuum of harm, the Coast Guard is also providing information regarding reporting and investigations of assaults regardless of whether sexual misconduct or harassment is part of the assault investigation.

Consistent with law enforcement practices, the Coast Guard uses the terms "victim" and "suspect" for persons involved in sexual misconduct investigations.

The Coast Guard is also partnering with agencies that operate public vessels, including the Department of Defense and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to establish internal processes to receive notification of sexual misconduct. Due to public vessel status, these incidents are not otherwise covered by the reporting requirements of 46 U.S.C. § 10104. In addition, a recently updated Memorandum of Agreement with Military Sealift Command (MSC) implements voluntary reporting procedures for sexual assault and sexual harassment involving credentialed mariners on MSC vessels.

The Coast Guard's efforts to enable the maritime industry to address misconduct in the maritime environment have fostered a cultural change within the industry, strengthening seafarer trust in the Coast Guard. Most notably, the Coast Guard observed a substantial increase in reporting from less than three cases annually to nearly three hundred reports in FY 2024 including a larger number of

previously unreported allegations dating back over a decade. The Service will continue its educational outreach campaign and collaboration with federal advisory committees, such as the National Merchant Marine Personnel Advisory Committee and the National Merchant Mariner Medical Advisory Committee, to gather recommendations for more impactful prevention training and support for survivors.

Our work at the International Maritime Organization's Maritime Safety Committee helps prioritize the development of mandatory training provisions addressing bullying, harassment, and sexual misconduct. Collaboration within the interagency and with non-profit organizations aims to foster a culture inhospitable to sexual misconduct in the maritime domain and garner trust in the Coast Guard's efforts to address such behavior. The Coast Guard's approach underscores a commitment to prevention, education, and enforcement to ensure a safe workplace for all mariners.

III. Report

Sexual misconduct that occurs on board U.S. commercial vessels harms mariners, interrupts safe operations, and often leads to accidents, lost careers, and a lifetime of trauma for survivors. The Coast Guard is committed to investigating all reports of sexual misconduct on U.S. vessels, supporting survivors and pursuing appropriate enforcement actions.

The Coast Guard has seen a significant increase in reports since the CGAA of FY 2022 updated reporting requirements under Title 46, U.S. Code, for sexual assault, sexual harassment, and harassment on U.S. vessels. The Coast Guard received a 91 percent increase in reports from FY 2023 (150 reports) to FY 2024 (287 reports). The Coast Guard completed and referred 15 sexual assault criminal cases to the Department of Justice and other authorities for consideration. Although the 15 referrals were subsequently denied for criminal prosecution, the cases and their associated evidence were transferred to the S&R National Center of Expertise (NCOE) to initiate administrative enforcement investigations against the perpetrators' MMCs. The number of completed S&R cases, representing investigations with potential administrative actions against credentials, increased from 10 in FY 2023 to 184 in FY 2024. In addition, the National Maritime Center (NMC) denied 69 credential applicants due to sexual assault convictions pursuant to 46 U.S.C. § 7511 in FY 2024, an increase from 43 denied credential applicants due to sexual assault convictions pursuant to 46 U.S.C. § 7511 in FY 2023. The Coast Guard expects the relative increase in reporting to continue through FY 2025. The Coast Guard will continue to collect and assess data to help guide future prevention, accountability, and survivor response efforts.

In accordance with 46 U.S.C. § 10104(a), alleged incidents of harassment are required to be reported to the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard has received numerous reports of harassment, including incidents of a non-sexual nature. The term "harassment" is not currently defined in statute or federal regulations. In the interim, the Coast Guard has provided guidance to the marine industry that a responsible entity should refer to their company's anti-harassment policy, procedures, Safety Management System (SMS), or a similar document that defines harassment or describes incidents of harassment. In the absence of a statutory definition or a relevant company policy, responsible entities have been encouraged to use their best judgment and report to the Coast Guard when in doubt as to whether a harassment allegation meets the required threshold. As a basis for S&R administrative proceedings, the Coast Guard routinely uses a company's anti-harassment policy for misconduct complaints against mariners.

The statistical data¹ reported below represents investigations from October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024, unless otherwise noted.

¹ This data was sourced from Coast Guard Investigative Service's database, the Coast Guard's Marine Information for Safety and Law Enforcement (MISLE) database, and the S&R NCOE.

Number of reports received under 46 U.S.C. §10104.

Offense Type	Amount
Sexual Assault	18
Assault	15
Sexual Harassment	107
Harassment	147
TOTAL	287

Additional reports received by the S&R NCOE outside the scope of 46 U.S.C. § 10104 that require administrative action.

Offense Type	Amount
Prior Conviction of Sexual Offense	17
TWIC Suspension or Revocation for Sexual Felony Offense	20
TOTAL	37

The majority of the cases stemming from prior convictions for sexual offenses were reported to the S&R NCOE via the Coast Guard's NMC during vetting of merchant mariner applications. The TWIC suspensions and revocations were reported by TSA to the S&R NCOE under RAP Back program protocols.

During this timeframe, no violations related to failing to report an incidence of sexual misconduct or harassment were identified that warranted issuing a civil penalty to a responsible entity under 46 U.S.C. § 10104. However, the Coast Guard has taken S&R action against one responsible entity, a credentialed Master, for condoning sexual harassment and failing to report under 46 U.S.C. § 10104. Coast Guard personnel are closely monitoring reporting of these offenses and are fully prepared to pursue civil penalties for instances where a responsible entity fails to make an initial report or provide the results of their required internal investigations in the required timeframes.

Number of open and completed criminal investigations.

Open Criminal Investigations

Offense Type	Amount	Outcome
Sexual Assault	2	Under investigation
Assault	1	Under investigation
TOTAL	3	

Completed Criminal Investigations

Offense Type	Amount	Outcome
Sexual Assault	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 cases referred directly to DOJ for potential prosecution. No criminal referrals were accepted/pursued. • 3 cases were referred to the Navy Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) for their consideration and potential action. • 1 foreign cruise ship case was referred to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for their consideration and potential action. • 1 case was referred to local sheriff's office for their consideration and potential action. • 2 cases were referred to S&R NCOE for administrative action which remain under investigation.
Assault	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 cases referred to DOJ. No criminal referrals were accepted/pursued. • 1 case was referred to NCIS for their consideration and potential action. • 2 cases were closed due to lack of sufficient evidence. • 1 case was forwarded to local law enforcement authorities for their consideration and potential action.
TOTAL	26	

Number of open and completed administrative investigations.

Open S&R Investigations

Offense Type	Amount	Outcome
Sexual assault	42	Under investigation
Assault	17	Under investigation
Sexual harassment	86	Under investigation
Harassment	48	Under investigation
TWIC revocation - sex offenses	43	Under investigation
Prior conviction of sex offense	16	Under investigation
Pending assessment	6	Under investigation
TOTAL	258	

Completed S&R Investigations

Offense Type	Amount	Outcomes
Sexual Assault	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepted 1 voluntary surrender. Lacked S&R jurisdiction in 7 cases. Insufficient evidence in 1 case.
Assault	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacked S&R jurisdiction in 3 cases. Insufficient evidence in 1 case.
Sexual Harassment	64	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepted 1 voluntary surrender. Accepted 1 settlement agreement. Issued 2 Letters of Warning. Lacked S&R jurisdiction in 52 cases. Insufficient evidence in 2 cases. MMC expired in 1 case. NMC was provided notice prior to any reissuance. Administratively closed 5 cases that were opened in error.
Harassment	103	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issued 1 Letter of Warning. Lacked S&R jurisdiction in 94 cases. Insufficient evidence in 5 cases. Victim was satisfied with company process following initial investigation in 2 cases. No further action taken. Administratively closed 1 case that was opened in error.
TWIC Revocation-Sex Offenses	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mariner voluntarily surrendered his MMC after receiving a S&R complaint filed by the Coast Guard.
Prior Conviction of Sex Offense	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NMC was notified and records locked of 2 cases. Both credentials expired and will not be renewed. Administratively closed 1 case that was a duplicate and opened in error.
TOTAL	184	

A significant number of the above cases involved suspects who did not hold a MMC and therefore the Coast Guard lacked S&R jurisdiction. Cases that are classified as insufficient evidence failed to meet the preponderance of the evidence standard to pursue a S&R complaint. In instances where a mariner's MMC expires during the course of an S&R investigation, the NMC prevents renewal of the MMC until the investigation is resolved. Cases that were resolved by a voluntary surrender are equivalent to revocation and result in the mariner losing their MMC. Letters of Warning are issued in lieu of other S&R administrative action and remain as a part of the mariner's permanent Coast Guard record. Settlement agreements included remedial actions such as mandated training requirements, periods of MMC suspension, and follow-on probationary periods.

Number of assessments or audits conducted under 46 U.S.C. § 3203 and outcomes.

The Coast Guard developed and released a new procedure, CVC-PR-011(1) - Conducting Sexual Assault Sexual Harassment (SASH) Audits, in April 2024. The procedure provides guidance to Coast Guard personnel conducting audits of SMS for U.S. flagged vessels and companies to verify compliance with 46 U.S.C. § 10104. As of September 30, 2024, the Coast Guard conducted one audit under 46 U.S.C. § 3203 in May 2024; however, the Coast Guard anticipates that the number of audits will increase in FY 2025 as the new audit guidance is fully implemented.

Statistical analysis of compliance with the SMS criteria under section 3203.

As of September 30, 2024, the Coast Guard conducted one audit under section 3203. The Coast Guard will continue audits for further statistical analysis of compliance under section 3203.

Number of credentials denied or revoked due to sexual harassment, sexual assault, or related offenses.

In FY 2024, the Coast Guard denied 69 MMC applicants due to sexual assault convictions pursuant to 46 U.S.C. § 7511. Nineteen of those denied applicants were referred to the S&R NCOE for an investigation because they had valid MMCs requiring administrative action. Of the 69 initial denials, five mariners appealed the denial. Of the five appeals, two denials were upheld and three appeals remain under consideration.

Recommendations to support efforts of the Coast Guard to improve investigations and oversight of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the maritime sector.

The Coast Guard will work with the Office of Management and Budget and Congress to identify areas to improve investigations and oversight of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the maritime sector.

IV. Conclusion

Efforts described in this report are part of broad goals to prevent sexual misconduct and enabling behaviors on U.S. commercial vessels and to maintain a safe environment for all. These measures aim to prevent and address occurrences of sexual misconduct by promoting respect and accountability throughout the maritime domain.

Appendix: Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Definition
CGAA	Coast Guard Authorization Act
DOJ	Department of Justice
MISLE	Marine Information for Safety and Law Enforcement
MMC	Merchant Mariner Credential
MSC	Military Sealift Command
NCOE	National Center of Expertise
NMC	National Maritime Center
SASH	Sexual Assault Sexual Harassment
S&R	Suspension and Revocation
SMS	Safety Management System
TSA	Transportation Security Administration
TWIC	Transportation Worker Identification Credential
U.S.C.	U.S. Code