



Combat-Related Special Compensation (Fiscal Year 2024)

Report to Congress
July 22, 2025



U.S. Coast Guard

Foreword

July 22, 2025

I am pleased to present the following report, “Combat-Related Special Compensation (Fiscal Year 2024),” prepared by the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Don Young Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022 directs the semi-annual submission of a report that describes the methods used to educate Coast Guard members and retirees on the combat-related special compensation program and provides enrollment statistics.

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 report 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 "K.E. Lunday".

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



Combat-Related Special Compensation (Fiscal Year 2024, First & Second Halves)

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I. Legislative Language

This report responds to the language set forth in Section 11404 of Public Law 117-263 (Pub. L. 117-263), Division K, the Don Young Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022, which reads:

SEC. 11404. COMBAT-RELATED SPECIAL COMPENSATION

“(a) **REPORT AND BRIEFING.**—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, and every 180 days thereafter until the date that is 5 years after the date on which the initial report is submitted under this subsection, the Commandant shall submit a report and provide an in-person briefing to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives on the implementation of section 221 of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2016 (Pub. L. 114–120; 10 U.S.C. 1413a note).

(b) **ELEMENTS.**—Each report and briefing required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

- (1) A description of methods to educate members and retirees on the combat-related special compensation program.
- (2) Statistics regarding enrollment in such program for members of the Coast Guard and Coast Guard retirees.
- (3) A summary of each of the following:
 - (A) Activities carried out relating to the education of members of the Coast Guard participating in the Transition Assistance Program with respect to the combat-related special compensation program.
 - (B) Activities carried out relating to the education of members of the Coast Guard who are engaged in missions in which they are susceptible to injuries that may result in qualification for combat-related special compensation, including flight school, the National Motor Lifeboat School, deployable special forces, and other training programs as the Commandant considers appropriate.
 - (C) Activities carried out relating to training physicians and physician assistants employed by the Coast Guard, or otherwise stationed in Coast Guard clinics, sickbays, or other locations at which medical care is provided to members of the Coast Guard, for the purpose of ensuring, during medical examinations, appropriate counseling and documentation of symptoms, injuries, and the associated incident that resulted in such injuries.
 - (D) Activities relating to the notification of health service officers with respect to the combat-related special compensation program.
- (4) The written guidance provided to members of the Coast Guard regarding necessary recordkeeping to ensure eligibility for benefits under such program.
- (5) Any other matter relating to combat-related special compensation the Commandant considers appropriate.”

Section 11404 of Public Law 117-263 (Pub. L. 117-263), Division K, the Don Young Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022 provides that:

SEC. 221. CLARIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY OF MEMBERS OF THE COAST GUARD FOR COMBAT-RELATED SPECIAL COMPENSATION

(a) Consideration of Eligibility.-

(1) In general.-Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall issue procedures and criteria to use in determining whether the disability of a member of the Coast Guard is a combat-related disability for purposes of the eligibility of such member for combat-related special compensation under section 1413a of title 10, United States Code. Such procedures and criteria shall include the procedures and criteria prescribed by the Secretary of Defense pursuant to subsection (e)(2) of such section. Such procedures and criteria shall apply in determining whether the disability of a member of the Coast Guard is a combat-related disability for purposes of determining the eligibility of such member for combat-related special compensation under such section.

(2) Disability for which a determination is made.-For the purposes of this section, and in the case of a member of the Coast Guard, a disability under section 1413a(e)(2)(B) of title 10, United States Code, includes a disability incurred during aviation duty, diving duty, rescue swimmer or similar duty, hazardous service duty onboard a small vessel (such as duty as a surfman), or a duty in which chemical or other hazardous material exposure has occurred (such as during marine inspections or pollution response activities).

(A) in the performance of duties for which special or incentive pay was paid pursuant to section 301, 301a, 304, 307, 334, or 351 of title 37, United States Code;

(B) in the performance of duties related to a statutory mission of the Coast Guard under section 888(a) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 468(a)); or

(C) while engaged in a training exercise for the performance of a duty described in subparagraphs (A) and (B).

(b) Applicability of Procedures and Criteria.-The procedures and criteria issued pursuant to subsection (a) shall apply to disabilities described in that subsection that are incurred on or after the effective date provided in section 636(a)(2) of the Bob Stump National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003 (Pub. L. 107-314; 116 Stat. 2574; 10 U.S.C. 1413a note) [See Effective Date note above].

(c) Reapplication for Compensation.-Any member of the Coast Guard who was denied combat-related special compensation under section 1413a of title 10, United States Code, during the period beginning on the effective date specified in subsection (b) and ending on the date of the issuance of the procedures and criteria required by subsection (a) may reapply for combat-related special compensation under such section on the basis of such procedures and criteria in accordance with such procedures as the Secretary of the department in which the Coast Guard is operating shall specify.

II. Report

Combat-Related Special Compensation is not a program into which service members are enrolled, but a form of military disability compensation paid monthly based upon a Service determination of eligibility. It restores military retired pay that is offset when a Coast Guard retiree accepts compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for a disability or condition that can be attributed to a combat-related event as defined by Coast Guard program guidance. This allows eligible retirees to concurrently receive an amount equal to or less than their length of service retirement pay and their Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation, to the extent that the offset between these pays is determined to be the result of combat-related disabilities or conditions.

In update to measures undertaken to expand outreach and education of the Combat-Related Special Compensation program as described in the June 2024 report,¹ the Coast Guard has completed the following additional actions for this period comprising the first and second halves of Fiscal Year 2024.

A. Member Combat-Related Special Compensation Education

The Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association website actively shares information about the Combat-Related Special Compensation program with links to the official Combat-Related Special Compensation website as well as to six Coast Guard Veteran social media pages.

The Office of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard continues to disseminate Combat-Related Special Compensation information across the Service through the Command Senior Enlisted Leader network and during unit and site visits.

To ensure consistent exposure, the Coast Guard Force Readiness Command continues to explore regular Combat-Related Special Compensation training modules for service members. The training is being considered for various stages in a member's career, including:

- Accession training,
- Senior leadership and management training, and
- Specialized courses in areas more likely to encounter Combat-Related Special Compensation linked conditions.

B. Participation Statistics

In Fiscal Year 2024, 133 cases were submitted for evaluation, and 74 cases completed; 73 cases remain open in various stages of processing.

C. Health Service Officer Training

New Coast Guard healthcare practitioners and Health Service Officers received Combat-Related Special Compensation training and materials at the Health Services Work Life Service Center New Provider Orientation, a biannual course in Portsmouth, Virginia, recently held on April 22-

¹ Report to Congress titled *Combat-Related Special Compensation (2nd Half, FY 2023)*, signed June 3, 2024.

26, 2024. Combat-Related Special Compensation training was also conducted for the joint events, the annual Health Service Administrators Conference, and the second Health Services Work Life Service Center New Provider Orientation in August 2024.

During Fiscal Year 2024, the personnel Service Command, Personnel Support Division, Medical Administration Branch regularly engaged with the Office of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard and senior leadership on the Combat-Related Special Compensation program and initiatives to further expand and advertise program benefits for veterans and retirees.

D. Recordkeeping

The Coast Guard Office of Safety and Environmental Health is reviewing processes to allow members access to archived mishap reports for Combat-Related Special Compensation applications. Additionally, the Coast Guard Office of Health Services is exploring features to prompt medical providers on Combat-Related Special Compensation related queries in the Military Health System Genesis, the Coast Guard's electronic health record program.

D. Program Management

A process guide to direct the Combat-Related Special Compensation board in ensuring uniform Combat-Related Special Compensation case adjudication has been drafted and is in review. The guide will inform the development of a tactics, techniques, and procedures manual for Service-wide use.

III. Conclusion

The Coast Guard shares Congress' interest in ensuring that our service members are educated and informed concerning compensation and benefits for which they might be eligible, including Combat-Related Special Compensation. To that end, the Service provides regular communications to service members on the subject. Additionally, the Service provides extensive education on Combat-Related Special Compensation to health service administrators and healthcare providers. With an eye toward always improving the knowledge of our members, the Coast Guard is developing training modules to provide information about Combat-Related Special Compensation and how to apply for it to service members at various points in their careers. We are also drafting a guide that will ensure uniform adjudication by providing comprehensive guidance to the Coast Guard board that makes Combat-Related Special Compensation determinations. The Service is committed to continuing to refine training, education, and practices related to Combat-Related Special Compensation and ensure all members understand the process, procedures, and record keeping necessary to receive earned benefits during their service.