



Marine Safety: Five Year Strategy and Plan

Report to Congress
May 1, 2026



U.S. Coast Guard

Foreword

May 1, 2026

I am pleased to present the following report, Marine Safety Five Year Strategy and Plan, prepared by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Section 2116 of Title 46, U.S. Code, directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a long-term strategy for improving vessel and passenger safety and to report on performance and resource needs.

Pursuant to congressional requirements, this report is provided to the following Members of Congress:

Senator Ted Cruz
Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

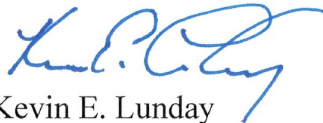
Senator Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Representative Sam Graves
Chairman, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Representative 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,



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





Marine Safety: Five Year Strategy and Plan

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I. Legislative Language

This document fulfills the requirements set forth in section 2116 of Title 46, U.S. Code (USC), as per the following:

46 U.S.C. § 2116. Marine Safety Strategy, Goals, and Performance Assessments

(a) Long-Term Strategy and Goals. -In conjunction with existing federally required strategic planning efforts, the Secretary shall develop a long-term strategy for improving vessel safety and the safety of individuals on vessels. The 5-year strategy shall include the issuance of a plan and schedule for achieving the following goals:

- (1) Reducing the number and rates of marine casualties.
- (2) Improving the consistency and effectiveness of vessel and operator enforcement and compliance programs.
- (3) Identifying and targeting enforcement efforts at high-risk vessels and operators.
- (4) Improving research efforts to enhance and promote vessel and operator safety and performance.

(b) 5-Year Strategy and Plan. -

(1) Measurable goals. -The 5-year strategy and plan shall include specific numeric or measurable goals designed to achieve the goals set forth in subsection (a). The purposes of the numeric or measurable goals are the following:

- (A) To increase the number of safety examinations on all high-risk vessels.
- (B) To eliminate the backlog of marine safety-related rulemakings.
- (C) To improve the quality and effectiveness of marine safety information databases by ensuring that all Coast Guard personnel accurately and effectively report all safety, casualty, and injury information.
- (D) To provide for a sufficient number of Coast Guard marine safety personnel, and provide adequate facilities and equipment to carry out the functions referred to in section 93(c) 1 of title 14.

(2) Resource needs. -The 5-year strategy and plan shall include estimates of-

- (A) the funds and staff resources needed to accomplish each activity included in the strategy and plan; and
- (B) the staff skills and training needed for timely and effective accomplishment of each goal.

(c) Submission With the President's Budget. -Not later than 5 years after the date of the enactment of the Elijah E. Cummings Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2020, and every 5 years thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to Congress the strategy and plan not later than 60 days following the transmission of the President's budget submission under section 1105 of title 31.

(d) Achievement of Goals. -

(1) Progress assessment. -In conjunction with the submission of the 5-year strategy and plan, the Commandant shall assess the progress of the Coast Guard toward achieving the goals set forth in subsection (b). The Commandant shall convey the Commandant's assessment to the employees of the marine safety workforce and shall identify any deficiencies that should be remedied before the next progress assessment.

(2) Periodic briefings. -The Secretary shall periodically brief the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives-

(A) on the performance of the marine safety program in achieving the goals of the marine safety strategy and plan under subsection (a) for the period covered by the briefing;

(B) on the program's mission performance in achieving numerical measurable goals established under subsection (b), including-

(i) the number of civilian and military Coast Guard personnel assigned to marine safety positions; and

(ii) an identification of marine safety positions that are understaffed to meet the workload required to accomplish each activity included in the strategy and plan under subsection (a); and

(C) recommendations on how to improve performance of the program.

II. Report

A. Overview

On June 25, 2025, the Secretary of Homeland Security approved the Force Design 2028 Execution Plan that will drive transformational changes throughout the Coast Guard. As part of the Force Design 2028, the Coast Guard is taking immediate and decisive action to implement these changes to control, secure, and defend the U.S. border and maritime approaches, facilitate commerce vital to economic prosperity and strategic mobility, and successfully respond to crises and contingencies. These efforts will enable the Coast Guard to protect the Marine Transportation System, assure economic prosperity, strengthen national security and the U.S. maritime industry, and achieve existing and emerging marine safety goals.

The Coast Guard commitment to marine safety is enduring. Presidential Executive Order 14629, *Restoring America's Maritime Dominance*, Force Design 2028, along with historic investments in Coast Guard capability, offer the unique opportunity to accelerate our progress toward marine safety goals. The Service is laser focused on developing detailed plans to implement the Force Design 2028 Execution Plan, including specific actions to advance prevention operations. As such, the five-year strategy and detailed plan, including resource estimates, that was developed since the enactment of the Elijah E. Cummings Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022 requires additional review and revision. We look forward to continued engagement with Congress on progress towards our goals and changes that drive improved performance outcomes.

B. Long Term Strategy and Goals

The Coast Guard will proactively apply its authorities and leverage the enduring Prevention-Response Framework and Prevention Concept of Operations to deliver measurable value to the American people. This strategy is built on three decision-making “Outcome Tables”—Border Control, Flow of Commerce, and Responding to Contingencies—focused on achieving tangible results, including advancing marine safety legislative goals. These tables will guide actions to address the challenges posed by the growing maritime industry, new waterway users, and emerging threats.

The Coast Guard’s ability to execute prevention operations in a rapidly evolving maritime environment is fundamentally linked to the competency, capacity, and operational readiness of its personnel. Prevention professionals, consisting of Active Duty, Civil Service, Reserve, and Auxiliary Personnel, must possess the knowledge, skills, and actionable information necessary to perform their duties effectively. A modern talent management system must be coupled with an agile force structure and design, ensuring personnel with the right competencies are positioned in the right place, at the right time to respond to changes in the Marine Transportation System.

To safeguard America’s waterways and ensure the resilience of the Marine Transportation System, the Coast Guard must transform its prevention capabilities to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving operational landscape. By modernizing information systems, revolutionizing maritime services, and enhancing waterway infrastructure, the Coast Guard will empower a ready workforce, improve decision-making through advanced data tools, and deliver reliable, user-centric solutions to stakeholders. These efforts will drive innovation, strengthen mission outcomes, and position the Coast Guard as a leader in marine safety and risk management.

C. Measurable Goals

The Coast Guard will monitor the specific goals outlined in 46 USC § 2116 (a) as detailed below. The Coast Guard may implement new or improved measures to ensure it is achieving its goals and delivering value to the American public. Force Design 2028 is developing measures to enhance the Coast Guard's ability to track performance. Additionally, the Coast Guard is investing in advanced data capability that is already beginning to ingest and analyze Prevention mission data to enable better measures and tracking. Two initial focus areas for data analysis and target development are customer service standards and risk-based targeting programs. These efforts are the foundation for improved measures for consistency and risk-based operations.

While new measures are under development, the Coast Guard reports on performance measures to the Department of Homeland Security in accordance with the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010, to include the following measures and targets:

Reducing the Number and Rates of Marine Casualties

Measure Name	FY 2026 Target
Three-year average number of serious marine incidents	584
Three-year average number of commercial mariner deaths and significant injuries	98
Three-year average number of commercial passenger deaths and significant injuries	114
Three-year average of recreational boating deaths	664
Availability of maritime navigation aids	97.5%
Five-year average number of navigational accidents	1,012

- Port State Control Ship visits, examinations conducted, and detention measures will continue to be tracked and reported through the public Annual Port State Control Report.¹
- Inspections & Deficiencies across the domestic fleet, as well by as type of vessel, will continue to be tracked and reported through the public Annual Domestic Flag State Control Report.²

Improving the Consistency and Effectiveness of Vessel and Operator Enforcement and Compliance Programs

Measure Name	FY 2026 Target
Annual Maritime Transportation Security Act Facility compliance rate with Transportation Worker Identification Credential regulations	99.0%
Percent of attainment of annual performance goal for Coast Guard Container Inspections	100.0%

¹ <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Prevention-Policy-CG-5P/Inspections-Compliance-CG-5PC-/Commercial-Vessel-Compliance/Foreign-Offshore-Compliance-Division/Port-State-Control/Annual-Reports/>

² <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Prevention-Policy-CG-5P/Inspections-Compliance-CG-5PC-/Commercial-Vessel-Compliance/Domestic-Compliance-Division/CVC1AnnualReport/>

- Recognized Organization Safety Compliance Performance will continue to be tracked and reported through the public Annual Port State Control Report.
- Recognized Organization and Third-Party Organization Performance Metrics will continue to be tracked and reported to Congress in the Annual Domestic Flag State Control Report.

Identifying and Targeting Enforcement Efforts at High-Risk Vessels and Operators

Measure Name	FY 2026 Target
Number of breaches at high-risk maritime facilities	419
Percent of regulated facilities under 33 CFR 127 and 33 CFR 154 that receive Coast Guard Transfer Monitors	20%

- Port State Control Flag Administration Compliance Performance for High Risk and Medium Risk Flag Administrations will continue to be tracked and reported through the public Annual Port State Control Report.
- Alternate Compliance (ACP) & Maritime Security (MSP) Programs Performance will continue to be tracked and reported the public Annual Domestic Flag State Control Report.

Improving Research Efforts to Enhance and Promote Vessel and Operator Safety and Performance

The Prevention Concept of Operations drives continuous improvement through research, investigations, and lessons learned. Overall program performance, to include how well research, investigations, and lessons learned are incorporated, is monitored through the Coast Guard Mission Management System. The Prevention Quality Management Board, convened by the Assistant Commandant for Prevention Policy, sets and monitors Mission Management System measures and goals. Additionally, Force Design 2028 emphasizes outcomes, performance, and cutting-edge technology, driving research efforts to enhance and promote vessel and operator safety, ensuring the Coast Guard remains at the forefront of maritime innovation and operational excellence.

D. Resource Needs

The Coast Guard embraces the transformational opportunities presented by Force Design 2028 and anticipates meaningful improvements to the marine safety program as these efforts progress. While the dynamic nature of this initiative makes it premature to outline a comprehensive resource plan at this time, there are persistent resource shortfalls and specific Force Design 2028 focus areas.

The Coast Guard must grow the future force starting today. To meet mission, the Coast Guard requires a 1,000-member Marine Inspections workforce. The Coast Guard currently has 768 funded billets in place, leaving a gap of nearly 300 billets. These billets also require sufficient operating funds to support their training, personal protective equipment, and technology appropriate to meet demands of an increasingly complex operating environment. In addition to operational billets, the Coast Guard requires increased competency and capacity in advanced technology and cybersecurity to keep pace with industry development to spur economic growth while upholding safety and security standards.

Resources are also required to ensure the readiness of Aids to Navigation and the assets that maintain them to prevent casualties. This includes icebreakers, Waterways Commerce Cutters, and fixed and floating Aids to Navigation. The Coast Guard is moving forward with the acquisition of the new Waterways Commerce Cutter class, designed to replace the legacy fleet of inland tenders and facilitate commerce vital to the nation's economic security and strategic mobility. Separately, the Coast Guard faces challenges in managing its fixed and floating Aids to Navigation constellation readiness due to inflationary pressures and insufficient operating funds. As part of Force Design 2028, the Coast Guard will improve Shore Infrastructure project planning and execution to improve fixed Aids to Navigation readiness.

The Force Design 2028 Execution Plan also outlines key investments necessary to achieve the goals outlined in this report. The Coast Guard will expand the ability to rapidly acquire, develop, and deploy user-centric designed software and enhance the Coast Guard's support to the maritime industry by replacing antiquated systems with modern ones. Additionally, a Coastal Sentinel solution will establish command, control, and communications functions and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities to advance our ability to achieve 100% operational control of the U.S. border and maritime approaches.

III. Conclusion

The Coast Guard remains steadfast in its commitment to improve vessel and mariner safety, as outlined in Section 2116 of Title 46, U.S. Code. As part of the Force Design 2028 implementation, the Coast Guard will adapt the specific actions and milestones to achieve these goals. The Coast Guard looks forward to continued engagement with Congress and other partners to deliver lasting value to the American public.