

Opportunities for U.S. Public Health Service Dental Officers in the U.S. Coast Guard

Dental officers are expected to be fully capable of providing all general dentistry core privileges in order to meet Coast Guard mission needs. Core privileges include but are not limited to examinations, radiographs, diagnosis and treatment planning, amalgam and resin restorations, prophylaxis, scaling and root planing, surgical periodontal procedures, cast and ceramic restorations, removable partial and complete dentures, extractions, non-surgical root canal therapy, vital and non-vital bleaching, mouthguards, sealants, and removable and fixed retainers. Certain supplemental privileges may be considered based on proof of additional training, local command needs and requisite dental support. Most patients are active duty members of the Coast Guard or other military services. Most of our clinics are staffed by one or two USPHS dental officers. Very few of our clinics provide dental care for geriatric or pediatric patients. We have the highest retention rate of dentists of all of the uniformed services. The Coast Guard welcomes dental officers who would like to transfer from other PHS agencies or uniformed services. For additional information please go to the following website: www.uscg.mil/dentist.

Our dental officers attend one-week training courses sponsored by the Naval Postgraduate Dental School in Bethesda, Maryland as well as the Naval Dental Center in San Diego, California. Active duty dentists also attend courses such as the Homeland Securities Medical Executives, Senior Leadership, Joint Operations Medical Management, and Medical Management of Chemical and Biological Casualties courses. After serving two years with the Coast Guard, well qualified dental officers can apply for post-graduate dental training. The Coast Guard has several dental residencies including a two-year comprehensive program at the Naval Postgraduate Dental School in Bethesda, Maryland; a one-year exodontia program in association with the Great Lakes Naval Center, Illinois, and a two-year civilian endodontic residency. Upon graduation, two-year residencies incur a four-year service obligation and one-year residencies incur a three-year service obligation.

The Coast Guard participates in a contracted dental program for active duty Coast Guard members serving in remote areas as well as a contracted specialty program (Active Duty Dental Program – ADDP). Dental Officers are required to be knowledgeable of the ADDP programs in order to manage mission and personnel needs. Additionally, the day-to-day business practice will transition to an Electronic Health Record (EHR) anticipated in 2013. Currently, we have installed digital radiography in our clinics. Future plans will include communication between the clinics for sharing of the digital images.

Each clinic currently undergoes an external accreditation survey utilizing the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC). Many of our dental officers are tasked with coordinating the quality improvement focus groups within their clinics. In addition to managing dental clinics, our senior dental officers may be assigned the responsibility of Senior Health Services Officer; as such, officers would be responsible for helping coordinate medical processes to ensure timely and efficient, mission-oriented healthcare.

Our dental officers proudly support operational dental readiness requirements in keeping with the Coast Guard Motto, *Semper Paratus* (Always Ready), for over 41,000 active duty enlisted and officers of the USCG as well as members of other branches of the uniformed services. On an average Coast Guard day, the USCG saves 15 lives, assists 114 people in distress, conducts 82 search and rescues, 23 waterfront facility safety inspections, 202 law enforcement boardings, services 40 aids to navigation, interdicts 26 illegal migrants at sea, protects \$4.9 million in property, seizes \$12.4 million worth of illegal drugs, and provides 4 cutters in support of Theatre Security Operations. The missions of the USCG include national defense, expeditionary, homeland security, maritime safety/maritime security, protection of natural resources and maritime mobility in addition to our contingency medical support. Historically, the Coast Guard functions under the Navy in times of war. Since March 1, 2003, the Coast Guard became a division under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

We have 58 dentists in our 30 clinics which are located mainly along the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific Coasts, including Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico. Coast Guard dental officers are expected to move (Permanent Change in Station – PCS) every 3 to 5 years pending duty location and needs of the Coast Guard. A typical career officer will likely incur 4 to 6 duty locations in a typical twenty-year career.

Dental Officer Clinical Duty Sites in the USCG



Tour length In yrs.	PACIFIC	Tour length In yrs.	ATLANTIC/GULF
3	Kodiak, AK*	5	Selfridge, MI
3	Sitka, AK *	5	Boston, MA
4	Juneau, AK*	5	Cape Cod, MA
3	Ketchikan, AK*	5	New London, CT
4	Honolulu, HI *	5	Baltimore, MD
5	Port Angeles, WA	5	Washington, DC
5	Seattle, WA	5	Cape May, NJ
5	Astoria, OR	5	Yorktown, VA
5	North Bend, OR	5	Portsmouth, VA
5	Petaluma, CA	5	Elizabeth City, NC
5	Alameda, CA	5	Galveston/ Houston, TX
5	San Pedro, CA	5	New Orleans, LA
		5	Mobile, AL
		5	Clearwater, FL/ St Pete satellite
		5	Opa-Locka, FL
		5	Miami Beach, FL
		3	San Juan / Borinquen, PR
* OCONUS – Outside Continental U.S.			

If you are interested in joining our program, you must first be commissioned by the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS). Information about commissioning and the application process can be obtained by calling the USPHS at (800) 279-1605 or by visiting their web site at: <http://www.usphs.gov>.

Training and Experience Date (T&E): The T&E date calculation varies by profession. In general, 4 years credit is given for baccalaureate level degree, regardless of how long it took to obtain the degree and 4 years is given for your dental degree. This totals 8 years. Then you can receive additional T&E credit for work experience as a dentist (however many years you have been a dentist) and 1 year for graduate level degree (MS).

To read about the appointment process including the tabulation of your training and education date which will determine the rank at which you will be commissioned, go to: http://dep.psc.gov/PDF_docs/ccpmtransmittal663_2.pdf

The number of years of T&E credit required for each rank is as follows:

Rank	Temporary	Permanent
O-3 Lieutenant (LT) [new DDS or DMD]	8 years	10 years
O-4* Lieutenant Commander (LCDR)	12 years	17 years
O-5* Commander (CDR)	17 years	24 years
O-6* Captain (CAPT)	24 years	25 years

* New officers cannot be given this rank unless they have enough credit to earn a permanent O-4 (the full 17 years are required).

To get an idea of what your starting salary will be, go to Military Pay Rates: <http://www.dfas.mil/militarymembers/paventitlements/militarypaytables.html>. Your military pay will include the following:

- **Basic Pay:** The years of service reflects the years of active duty service in the military/uniformed services)
- **Basic Allowance Housing (BAH):** This varies based on the area of your duty station and whether you are single or married and have children.
- **Special Pay for Dental Officers:**
 - ***Variable Special Pay (VSP):*** All dental officers receive this. It is based on years in service and rank
 - ***Additional Special Pay (ASP):*** All dental officers receive this. It is based on years of service only.
 - ***Multiyear Retention Bonus (MRB):*** Only those dentists with a 2 year AGPR/AEGD, other specialty residency, or ACP receive this. It is based on length of the contract you sign – 2, 3, 4 year.
 - ***Board Certified Pay:*** Those dentists with board certification receive this. It is based on years of service only.

For assistance with your USPHS application please contact CAPT Wade McConnell at 202-475-5186 or Wade.B.McConnell@uscg.mil. For additional information on the Coast Guard dental officer program please contact:

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