

6 Captain's Challenge: Build the Right Crew for the Job

Marine Month
IN CANADA

Role cards

Captain (Your Role)

Responsibilities:

Leads the ship and crew. Responsible for keeping the ship running smoothly, the grain safe, and everyone following the rules. Helps with navigation, solves problems, and keeps the team working together.

Training:

Maritime college
Years of sea experience
Captain's license from Transport Canada

Where they work:

Mainly on the navigation bridge, where navigation and decision-making take place.

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Chief Engineer

Responsibilities:

In charge of the ship's engine room and all machinery. Makes sure engines, generators, and other systems are working properly. Fixes problems quickly to keep the ship on schedule.

Training:

Maritime college or on-the-job experience

Transport Canada engineering license

Progressed from engine cadet through sea experience and exams

Where they work:

Primarily in the engine room, monitoring and maintaining ship systems.

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First Mate

Responsibilities:

Second-in-command after the Captain. Leads the deck crew, helps navigate during assigned watch, and oversees loading, storage, and unloading of grain to keep everything safe and balanced.

Training:

Maritime college or equivalent sea-time experience

Transport Canada officer's license

Advanced from cadet through hands-on experience and exams

Where they work:

Mainly on the navigation bridge and in the cargo control room during loading/unloading.

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Chief Cook

Responsibilities:

Prepares all meals on board. Plans menus, ensures food is safe and nutritious, and helps keep the galley clean and organized. Supports crew health and energy during the voyage.

Training:

Culinary school or marine cook training
Ship's Cook Certificate from Transport Canada
Gained experience in kitchens on land or at sea

Where they work:

Works in the ship's kitchen, called the galley.

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Ordinary and Able Seaman

Responsibilities:

Important members of the deck crew. They handle ropes, load and secure cargo, clean the deck, and stand watch to look out for hazards. Able Seamen have more experience and may also steer the ship, act as lookouts, or help navigate rivers and harbours.

Training:

Basic safety training and medical check

Seafarer's Identity Document

Most start as Ordinary Seamen and gain experience to become Able Seamen through additional training and time at sea

Where they work:

Primarily on the deck, helping with cargo operations and ship maintenance. Able Seamen may also work on the navigation bridge when steering or standing lookout.