



Operations & Officers Training 3 Hr Seminar

MERIT MARK CRITERIA

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

In order to make your job easier, we have put together a number of case scenarios that might answer specific questions that you have concerning a particular recommendation, which you intend to submit. Understand, these rules are not chiseled in stone. There may very well be extenuating circumstances that must be considered in order to make an accurate judgment. If this is the case, it is imperative that you present **all** of the facts and don't assume that the recommendation would speak for itself.

REMEMBER, the Area Monitor and the Chief Commander do not have personal knowledge of the member, and must rely only on what is written in the recommendation.

The following material is offered as examples of work that is required to earn a Merit Mark. These examples relate to recommendations that are prepared for work performed on a single specific project. In most cases our members work on various projects during the year so number of hours and work involvement can be reduced or spread out.

It is imperative that the information that you provide gives the Chief Commander and the Area Monitors **ALL** of the facts.

- 1) **EDUCATIONAL:** Teach a minimum of two class sessions (2 hr each) or proctor a minimum of four sessions. Be sure to signify that you are referring to class sessions not complete courses. Include the number of lesson plans that were prepared.
- 2) **TITLES:** Don't rely on job titles. Tell us what this member did in terms of work accomplished and hours of work involved. Members cannot be recommended by stating, "fulfilled the duties of their office." For instance: Commander's Aide, Law Officer, Flag Lieutenant, Chaplain, Historian, Property Officer, Photographer and Port Captain. We must know what these officers actually did to earn a Merit Mark.
- 3) **HOSTING PARTY:** Hosting a party at member's home adds a plus when combined with other work performed. Be sure to include the number of hours of work including preparations.
- 4) **CRUISE AND RENDEZVOUS:** Certainly, one of the most important social functions that our members attend and contribute their efforts. General rule is work on one social event over the past 12 months does not contribute enough effort to earn a Merit Mark. However, there are certainly exceptions to this rule. For instance, a cruise that takes place over a number of days with work being performed each day. This may involve planning sessions and necessary committee meetings resulting in hours of work. Actual work performed requires a substantial number of work hours.
- 5) **BOAT SHOW PARTICIPATION:** Effort here is usually the number of hours worked. How many days did show run? How many watches did the member stand? How many hours did member work? Was set-up or tear down involved?
- 6) **COOPERATIVE CHARTING:** How many trips? How many corrections to nautical charts? How many total reports? Number of hours involved?

- 7) **VESSEL SAFETY CHECK:** The new examiner must pass examiner's qualification course, which involves 5 supervised boat inspections. Thereafter, he or she must inspect a minimum of 10 boats per year to qualify for a Merit Mark.
- 8) **MEETING ATTENDANCE:** Attending meetings is a privilege of membership and by itself doesn't count towards Merit Mark consideration. When combined with other work performed, it is definitely a contributing factor. Exceptions to this rule are attending Executive Committee Meetings as an elected member or attending District or National Meetings as a delegate. Specify number of meetings attended and in what capacity.
- 9) **TELEPHONE COMMITTEE:** To earn a Merit Mark for work performed solely on this committee requires a factual count of calls made and hours spent. Quantify the number of calls. (How many times)
- 10) **COMMITTEE WORK:** As a "stand alone" recommendation should include information on:
 - (1) number of committee meetings,
 - (2) number of reports written,
 - (3) total hours of work.
- 11) **OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES:** Work performed for other organizations does not contribute towards Merit Mark consideration. The word "liaison" is often used to justify these recommendations. In order to qualify for a Merit Mark the outside activity must be an official squadron function and designated as such by the Squadron Commander with the consent of the Executive Committee. This would include work performed for the USCGAux and the Sea Scouts.
- 12) **GIFTS:** Gifts of money, meeting space, printing etc. are very helpful to the Squadron, but they should not be considered appropriate for Merit Mark consideration. Instead, commander should present these donors with a certificate of appreciation. Personal effort must be involved.
- 13) **CREDIT FOR FUTURE WORK:** Merit Marks are awarded for work that has been completed. Future efforts must be handled *later* as a separate recommendation marked "Supplemental."
- 14) **WORDS TO WATCH OUT FOR:** Words such as "helped, aided, offered advice, assisted and worked with," without further supporting information are most uninformative. Spell out the actual tasks performed by these individuals.
- 15) **PREP TIME:** Don't forget the preparation time needed to do something. An instructor might spend 2 hours to actually teach a seminar, but many more hours spent doing the research, preparing a lesson plan, adding local interest to the PowerPoint slides, etc.

A member might spend ½ hour driving his boat/trailer in the city parade, but many more hours spent washing truck, washing boat, hang the signs on the boat, the hour to line up before the parade, breakdown afterwards , etc.

Reviewing the Ranks



	<u>Squadron</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>National</u>
Commander	Cdr	D/C	C/C
Department Head	Lt/C	D/Lt/C	V/C
Asst Department Head	1st/Lt	D/1st/Lt	R/C
Chairman	Lt	D/Lt	R/C
Asst Chairman	-----	-----	Stf/C

Except for P/C/Cs - Using highest current (active) rank is always correct

Order of seniority/precedence for USPS positions & ranks – The pecking order:

- 1) Chief Commander (**C/C**)
- 2) Vice-commanders (**V/C**)
- 3) Rear commanders (**R/C**) and district commanders (**D/C**)
- 4) Staff commanders (**Stf/C**)
- 5) Members of national general committees (Rules, Nominations)
- 6) Other members of the Governing Board:
 - general and emeritus members, squadron commanders (**Cdr**),
past chief commanders (**P/C/C**);
past vice-commanders having served 2 full terms in that rank (**P/V/C**);
- 7) Aides to the chief commander including the national chaplain, and
flag lieutenant (**N/F/Lt**)
- 8) Members of standing committees of the Governing Board
- 9) District lieutenant commanders (**D/Lt/C**)
- 10) District first lieutenants (**D/1/Lt or D/1st/Lt**)
- 11) District lieutenants and aides, including chaplains (**D/Lt**), and
district flag lieutenants (**D/F/Lt**)
- 12) Lieutenant commanders (**Lt/C**)
- 13) First lieutenants (**1/Lt or 1st/Lt**)
- 14) Lieutenants and aides (**Lt**)

Except for past chief commanders (P/C/C), past officers hold no rank or seniority beyond that inuring from some currently active position. Among themselves, recognized past officers may be ranked according to their former position.

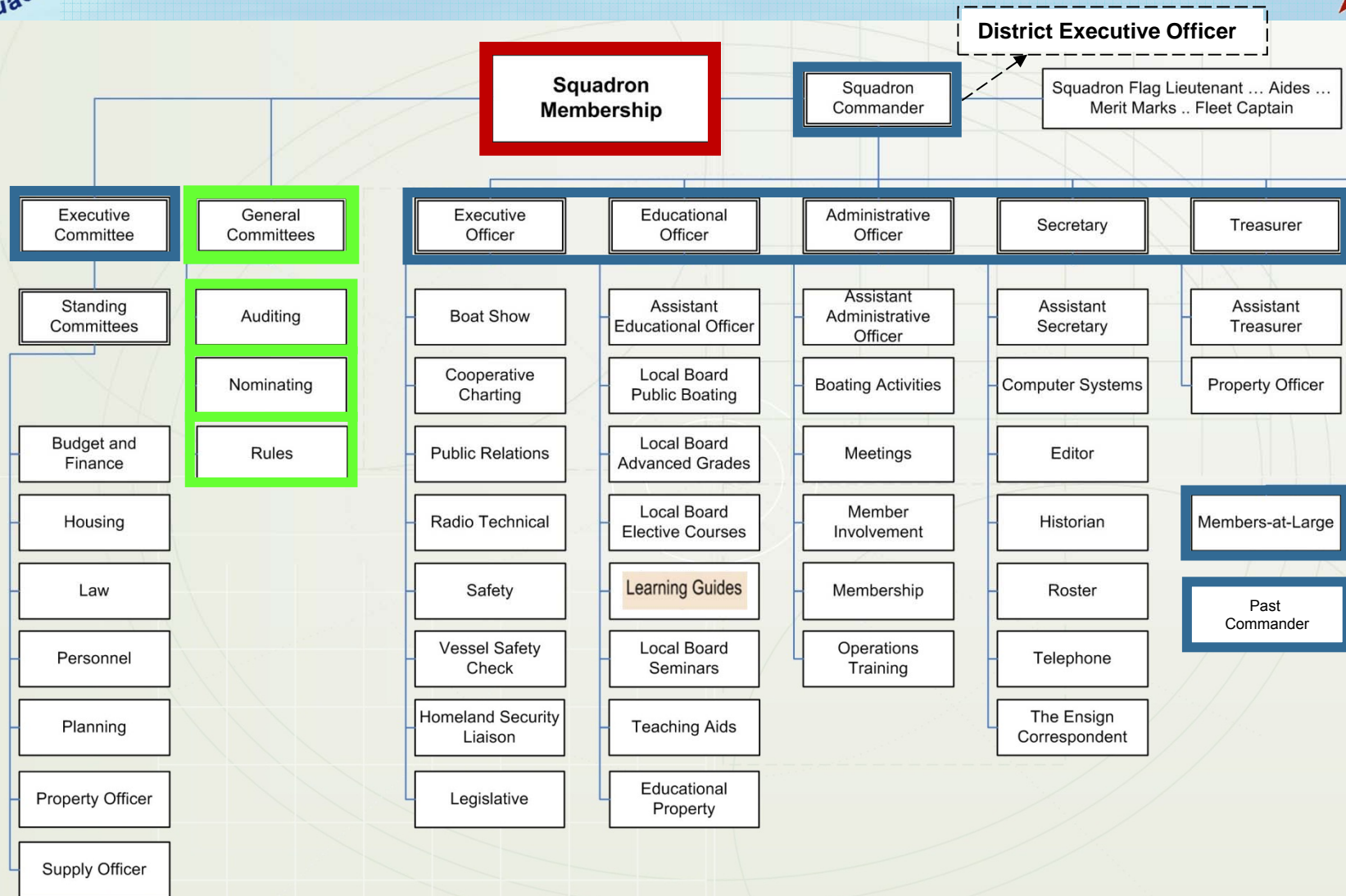
Periods are not used when showing any ranks.



Squadron Organization

Organization

Squadron



Only 4 things squadron HAS to do

	Required Squadron Actions	Report it to USPS HQ	By Whom
1	Elect Officers (minimum Cdr, SEO, Secy/Treas)	OD-2 (or OD-1 for districts) (copy District Secy)	Secretary
2	Offer a USPS approved boating course	HQ-800	SEO
3	File an IRS 990 <i>(Don't mess with the IRS)</i> (Do this whether you think you need to or not)	TR-1	Treasurer
4	Submit Merit Mark recommendations (for members who have earned them)	DB2000	Commander

The above extracted from a quote by C/C John Alter, SN
D25 Spring Conference 2012

He said, "I often hear Squadron Commanders complain they can't keep up with all the administrative chores expected of them and items being promoted in the Monthly Blasts and other sources - the never ending 'to do' list. Remember, there are only four things you HAVE to do; everything else is optional based on your member's interests and desires."



CURRENT COURSE EDITIONS

As of 08 December 2015

COURSES	SM		IM		
BOATING COURSE	YEAR	UPDATES	YEAR	IM ONLY ON CD	UPDATES
America's Boating Course 3rd Edition	2015		2015	Yes	
ADVANCED COURSES	YEAR	UPDATES	YEAR		UPDATES
Seamanship	2015 (Use exam for S2009)		2014	Yes	
Piloting w/ <i>Weekend Navigator</i>	2011, Rev'd 2015	Errata 10 Jun 14 Form for Exercises 1-1 and 1-2	2008		
Advanced Piloting w/ <i>Weekend Navigator</i>	2011	Errata 19 Nov 15	2011		
Junior Navigation	2012, Rev'd 2014		2012 Rev'd June 2015	Yes	
Navigation	2015	Errata, 02 Nov 15	2015	Yes	
ELECTIVE COURSES	YEAR	UPDATES	YEAR		UPDATES
Cruising and Cruise Planning	2013	Errata 25 Sep 14	2013 (On Instructor CD)	Yes	
Engine Maintenance	2011		2011		
Instructor Development (Download Only)	2013 Rev'd 2015		2013		
Marine Electrical Systems	2008 Rev 1		2008 Rev 1		
Marine Communication Systems	2009 2 nd Printing		2009 2 nd Printing		
Electronic Navigation	2014		2014	Yes	
Sail	2009		2009		
Weather	2008, Rev'd 2012	Errata 07 Oct 13	CD	Yes	

Note: Some course manuals (student and instructor versions) have an incorrect local telephone number for USPS Headquarters on the Acknowledgements Page. The correct local telephone number is 919-821-0281. The toll-free number is still 1-888-367-8777 (1-888-FOR-USPS).

ATTENTION: Educational course materials may be ordered only through the squadron with the order approved by the Cdr, SEO, AsstSEO, or appropriate ChLB. Prices are listed in the course catalog.

REFERENCE PUBLICATIONS

Nautical Almanac (commercial edition)
Nautical Almanac (commercial edition)

2016
2015

HANDOUT # 5

Page 1 of 3

2016 OT in 3 Seminar

SEMINARS	YEAR	SUGGESTED MINIMUM COST TO PUBLIC*
Advanced Powerboat Handling	2009	\$85.00
Anchoring	2012	\$70.00
Basic Coastal Navigation	2009	\$75.00
Basic Weather and Forecasting (See Note 1 Below)	2011	\$65.00
Boat Handling Under Power	2007	\$60.00
Boating on Rivers, Locks and Lakes	2010	\$60.00
Crossing Borders	2013	\$56.00
Emergencies on Board	2011	\$75.00
Fuel and Boating	2011	\$60.00
How to Use a Chart	2012	\$70.00
Hurricanes and Boats	2008	\$50.00
Knots, Bends, and Hitches	2015	\$65.00
Man Overboard (See Note 1 Below)	2012	\$55.00
Marine RADAR	2008	\$60.00
Mariner's Compass	2009	\$60.00
Mastering the Rules of the Road (See Note 1 Below)	2009	\$66.00
Paddle Smart	2007	\$65.00
Partner in Command	2009	\$65.00
Practical On The Water Training	2011	\$200.00
Sail Trim	2007	\$60.00
Tides and Currents (See Note 1 Below)	2011	\$60.00
Trailer Your Boat	2014	\$75.00
Using GPS	2006	\$65.00
Using VHF & VHF/DSC Marine Radio	2006	\$60.00

* The actual cost to the public could vary, depending on facility costs, locale, and any additional expenses. If a seminar is conducted on the water, the cost to the public could increase significantly; for example, Advanced Powerboat Handling could exceed \$200 if conducted with an on the water component.

Note 1: Errata or additional information for these seminars are on the Seminars web page (usps.org/education/seminars) under News.

GUIDES			YEAR	COST TO PUBLIC
Basic Plotting			2010	\$6.95
Boat Insurance			1997	\$6.95
Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS)			2006	\$16.95
How to Fly Flags			2010	\$9.00
Introduction to Sailing			2002	\$14.95
Introduction to Navigational Astronomy			1998	\$6.95
Knots, Bends and Hitches for Mariners			2006	\$14.95
Marine Amateur Radio			2005	\$12.95
Mariner's Compass Guide			2009	\$6.95
Plotting and Labeling Standards			2011	\$6.95
Predicted Log Guide (Errata 13 Jan 09)			2008	\$12.95
Sight Reduction Methods			1997	\$16.95
USPS Nautical Glossary			1999	\$6.95
Water Sports			1998	\$6.95
Current CDs/DVDs			Current PowerPoint Files	
TITLE		DATE	COURSE	DATE
Basic Knots CD		2003	ABC 3rd Ed Course Instructor CD	2015
Recertification Instructor CD		2011	Seamanship (CD)	11/13/14
Anchoring DVD		2012	Piloting (CD)	2008, Rev'd March 2012
Marine RADAR DVD		2012	Advanced Piloting (CD)	25 Sep 2011
			Junior Navigation (CD)	June 2015
			Navigation (CD)	May 2015
Current Order Forms			Cruising & Cruise Planning (CD)	2/9/2013
FORM	TITLE	DATE	Engine Maintenance (CD)	15 Feb 2011
SOF*	Standard Order Form*	09/15	ID (For Members) (Web)	2013
	Materials Catalog*	12/15	Marine Electrical Systems (CD)	2008 Rev 1 -20 Aug 2010
ED-33*	Examination Order*	10/10	Marine Communication Systems (CD)	2009 – Rev'd 11 Apr 2010
HQ-9A	Return of Course Materials	08/12	Electronic Navigation (CD)	Sep 2014
	VSC Supplies and Free Brochures Order Form	03/15	Sail (CD)	23 May 2009
			Weather (CD)	09 Jan 2012

* Note that the SOF, Materials Catalog, and ED-33 (for exams) paper documents have been superseded by on-line processes, available from any Educational Department web page under "Order Course Materials". Members are encouraged to use these on-line facilities in place of the paper documents whenever possible. Paper copy of either the standard ED-33 or the alternative eED-33 is REQUIRED with all sight folder submissions; no Internet submission is possible.

N/A = Not Currently Available

Web = <http://www.usps.org/national/eddept>

WHAT'S THE PLAN?

Developing Measurable Objectives
to achieve specific tasks



TASK: _____

1. What results do you want to achieve?

Outcome?

Action?

Actor(s)

2. How will you gauge the success of your effort?

Criteria?

Measurement?

3. When will the results be realized?

Time / Date?

Five Preliminary Steps to Developing Answers to these 3 Planning Questions

1. Analyze the Present Situation
2. Determine Obstacles
3. List Inputs
4. Utilize Available Information
5. Build a Support Team

Finding Solutions

Problem Solving - 9-Step Process



1. Identify the problem area.
2. Determine the unsatisfactory performance level.
3. Define a reasonable 'desired level'
4. Isolate the difference between step 2 and step 3.
5. Brainstorm possible causes of the problem.
6. Decide which causes are the most critical.
7. Identify alternate solutions.
8. Evaluate proposed solutions:
 Estimate contributions of proposed solutions to the goal,
 their cost
 and their feasibility.
9. Make commitment to a plan.



'OT in 3' Seminar - Self Study Homework



Planning Assignment

Develop **your** personal plan

Courses & seminars you want to take &/or teach

Skills you have to offer & those you want to learn

Actions needed based on your Self Performance Evaluation

Reading Assignment

Operations Manual – the little 'read' book

Find it on Operations Manual Committee webpages

Start with Appendix A 'Using this Manual', then read Squadron Chapters

5 – Squadron Organization

6 – Squadron Educational Activities

7 – Squadron Departments and Committees

Bylaws

Find them on Rules Committee webpages

National Bylaws

Your District Bylaws (or District Model if yours are out of date)

Your Squadron Bylaws (or Squadron Model if yours are out of date)

Job Descriptions

Find them on Leadership Development Committee webpages

Squadron Job Descriptions

District Job Descriptions

Branding Standards Manual

Find it on Public Relations Committee webpages

Handouts from 'OT in 3' Seminar

Find them on Leadership Development Committee webpages

1 – Merit mark Criteria-Guidelines

2 – Reviewing the Ranks

3 – Squadron Chart

#3a – 4 Required Actions

5 – Ed Courses, Seminars, Guides

7 – What's the Plan?

9 – Problem Solving – 9 steps

10 – Self Study Assignment - Homework

Exploring Assignment - Also, all on the internet

USPS Website – learn where to find the info you seek

SailAngle – learn how to use this communication tool

OT in 3 - Evaluation Form

Date ____ / ____ / ____

Please take a moment to fill out this form. Your answers will help us make future improvements
Put a check mark ☒ in the box that best applies

1 How long have you been a member?		
5 yr or Less <input type="checkbox"/>	10 yrs or Less <input type="checkbox"/>	More than 10 yrs <input type="checkbox"/>

2 Ever attended one of the longer versions of Operations Training? If yes, which one?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
12 hr version <input type="checkbox"/>	8 hr version <input type="checkbox"/>		

3 How would you rate this 3 hr version on a scale of 1 to 10 ?		
1 = needs a complete rewrite	10 = don't change a thing	<input type="text"/>

4 How do you like the shortened time requirement of 3 hrs for this version ?		
1 = way too short	10 = perfect	<input type="text"/>

5 Any suggestions for improving it? Add / delete / change?

6 Anything else you'd like to say?

Your Name and Cert# are required for credit. Please turn in to your Presenter.

Please Print

Your Name _____

Certificate # _____

Squadron _____

Presenter _____

Thanks for taking the time to complete this evaluation.