

## **YOUR SERVICE OBLIGATION**

Upon entrance in USMMA or the SIP Program, you signed an agreement (the “Service Obligation Contract”), which is mandated by law. In the exchange for your education at USMMA or SIP funding, you committed to fulfill a maritime service obligation following graduation- an obligation that is restated in MARAD’s regulations and in the Service Obligation Contract you signed.

What follows is a summary of the applicable laws and regulations governing your service obligation.

Having successfully completed the course of instructions at your Academy and received your U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC) with an officer endorsement, your remaining service obligation covers the following four elements:

1. Service/employment in the maritime industry or U.S. Armed/Uniformed Services;
2. Maintaining your USCG credential;
3. Maintaining your Reserve commission; and
4. Annual compliance reporting.

Your obligation requires completion of every element listed above. The only exception to this is individuals who, for the five (5)- year period following graduation, serve as a commissioned officer on active duty in a branch of the U.S. Armed Forces or as a commissioned officer of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) or the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS). Those graduates who provide five (5) years of honorable active duty service shall be excused from the licensure and reserve requirements of their obligation. Details are included below.

Failure to comply with your service obligation may lead to induction into the U.S. Armed Forces or repayment of (a) the cost of the education you received while enrolled at USMMS or (b) the amount of SIP funding you received from MARAD.

This section of the letter provided details on fulfilling your obligation for each of these categories, and attempts to answer frequently asked questions about your obligation.

### **SERVICE/EMPLOYMENT IN THE MARITIME INDUSTRY**

A. What exactly does the service/employment portion of my service obligation require?

The Key component of your service obligation is that for a specified amount of time following graduation, you must sail as a merchant marine officer aboard a U.S. flag vessel. For USMMA graduates, your service/employment requirement is five (5) years. For SIP graduates, your service/employment requirement is three (3) years.