

**BOARD OF PILOT COMMISSIONERS  
FOR THE BAYS OF SAN FRANCISCO, SAN PABLO, AND SUISUN**

**HOW TO BECOME A PILOT TRAINEE - COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS  
2022**

**Q: What Coast Guard license do I need?**

**A:** A current, valid federal license, with an unlimited radar endorsement, either as master of vessels of not more than 1600 gross tons or as master of vessels of any gross tons.

**Q: If I am a Chief Mate who has yet to sail in command, will I be eligible to apply for your program?**

**A:** With the regulatory change that is pending, if you have two-years' experience sailing in the capacity of Chief Mate of a self-propelled vessel in navigation of not less than 1600 gross tons and holds a master's license of any gross tons, you can apply.

**Q: If I am a pilot in another port, will my application be entertained under the new minimum qualification requirements?**

**A:** With a regulatory change that is pending, piloting experience can be used to meet the minimum eligibility requirement for this exam. The new rules will require one year as a full-time commercial pilot, not a member of the crew, directing and controlling the movement of vessels of not less than 1600 gross tons in waters in which a pilot is required by state, federal or foreign law, and holds, at a minimum, a valid federal license, with an unlimited radar endorsement, as master of vessels of not more than 1600 gross tons.

**Q: I have sailed as a master on ships for a number of years but came ashore two years ago to take the position of a ship's superintendent, a position I have held continuously since that time. As a ship superintendent, I am responsible for the operation of my company's ships. Does the time as ship superintendent qualify for meeting your recency requirements?**

**A:** There is no provision in the Training Program regulations to allow for shore side experience in lieu of sea time. An applicant must meet the recency requirements of CCR Section 213(e)(4) both at the time of applying to take a Pilot Trainee Training Program Selection Examination and upon entering the training program.

**Q: Do I need to have my pilotage endorsements for San Francisco Bay prior to application?**

**A:** No. Having local pilotage endorsements will permit you to begin handling ships earlier in the Pilot Trainee Training Program if admitted, but these endorsements are not a prerequisite for entry into the program.

**Q: Can you recommend any reading materials to help me prepare for the written examination?**

**A:** Yes. A list of textbooks used to prepare the written examination can be found in the Pilot Trainee Training Program Selection Examination Handbook posted on the Board's website.

**Q: I have a physical condition that is well-controlled with medication. Do I need to take a medical examination before I apply or take the written examination?**

**A:** You do not have to pass a medical examination in order to take the Pilot Trainee Training Program Selection Examination written examination or the simulator examination exercise components. However, you do have to pass a medical assessment performed by a Board-appointed physician prior to entering the training program. If you have any doubt whether you can pass a medical assessment performed by a Board-appointed physician, it would be in your interest to have a physical examination by a physician who is familiar with the U.S. Coast Guard standards before you invest in the time and effort needed to compete successfully for entrance into the training program.