

Boatswain Mate, the oldest rate in the Navy, has a rich history of honored traditions. BM's are the leaders and backbone of every ship's crew. A Boatswain Mate maintains the exterior surfaces of ships, deck handling machinery and equipment, handle cargo and operate small boats during a number of evolutions including Anti-Terrorism Operations and Maritime Interdiction boardings of suspect ships.

What They Do

The duties performed by a BM include:

- Stand watch as helmsman, lookouts, and Boatswain Mate of the Watch.
- Repairing, maintaining and stowing equipment in preparation for underway operations.
- Search and Rescue swimmer.
- Standing security watches while in port and underway.
- Operating sound-powered telephone systems.
- Serving as a member of damage control, emergency and security alert teams.
- Participating in naval ceremonies.
- Underway replenishment (transferring supplies from ship to ship at sea).
- Small boat operations.
- Flight deck and amphibious operations.
- Taking command of tugs, barges and other small craft.
- Supervising deck crew in cleaning, painting and maintaining ships and their equipment.
- Direct boat crews in landing and rescue operations.
- Teaching seamanship.
- Serving as flight deck crew during helicopter operations.

Qualifications and Interests

BM's must be able to get along well with others and to speak clearly and distinctly. Other qualities include resourcefulness, a good memory, curiosity, physical strength, manual dexterity, the ability to work as a team member and to perform repetitive tasks.

Working Environment

Boatswain's mates perform most of their duties outdoors, working closely with others, and the majority of work is of a physical nature.

Career Path After Recruit Training

Enlistees are taught the fundamentals of this rating through formal Navy schooling. Advanced technical and operational training is available in this rating during later stages of career development. Temporary assignments to general duty, sometimes aboard ship, may be required while waiting advanced training assignments.

School	Present Location	Approximate Training Time	Subjects	Training Methods
Boatswain Mate "A" School	Great Lakes, IL	6 weeks	Basic general safety, watch standing, deck seamanship, underway replenishment, preventive maintenance.	Group instruction and practical application

Career Path After Recruit Training

Upon completion of Recruit Training, BM's are taught fundamental skills needed to perform in a shipboard environment during a four week "A" school. Selected BMs receive amphibious training following A school depending on future assignment. During a 20-year period in the Navy, BM's spend about 60 percent of their time assigned to fleet units and 40 percent assigned to shore stations.

Credit Recommendations

The American Council on Education recommends that semester hour credits be awarded in the vocational certificate and lower-division Bachelor's degree categories for courses take in this rating on seamanship.

Opportunities

Promotion opportunities are above average when compared to other Navy ratings for men and women who can demonstrate the requisite knowledge and qualifications.

Civilian Occupational Equivalents

To see Related Civilian Occupations for this rating:

BM - <https://www.cool.navy.mil/enlisted/bm.htm>

For more information on opportunities available for this rating, please visit Navy Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) at <https://www.cool.navy.mil/index.htm>

Since Navy programs and courses are revised at times, the information contained on this rating card is subject to change.

(Revised 10/12)