

Career In The Merchant Navy (Shipping)

Introduction

Merchant navy is a very lucrative career for someone who is interested in an adventurous life and working outdoors. If you are a student of science or mechanical engineering, in the age group of 17 - 28, have an aptitude to work hard, a friendly disposition and are not interested in 9 - 5 jobs, then Merchant Navy is the most exciting career opportunity for you.

What is Merchant Navy?

The primary function of the Merchant Navy is to transport goods from one place to another. It is the most essential component of world economy. More than 90% of goods are transported all over the world using ships.

Career options in Merchant Navy:

So what work do people do on board ships? Is life one big cruise for them? Let's explore the possibility of a career in the Merchant Navy.

Ships carry passengers and cargo from one place to another, so they require to be loaded properly. Ships are also navigated and that requires a lot of skill, and since ships are made of steel and ply in saltwater they also need to be maintained from time to time. All these jobs are carried out on board by **Navigating officers or Deck officers.**

There is a host of machineries that are required for the day to day running of the ship. All these jobs are carried out by **Marine Engineers** on board.

Generally a Navigating officer or a Marine Engineer would spend 4 to 6 months on board a ship and once his tour of duty is over, he/she gets to enjoy half of time spent on board as leave, in this case 2 to 3 months of holiday.

The remuneration for a mariner is very lucrative and a 3rd Officer or a 4th Engineer who is of 23 to 24 years is expected to earn above Rs.1 lakh per month while on board, whereas a Chief Engineer or a Captain earns anything between Rs. 3 to 4 lakh per month.

How to join the Merchant Navy.

There are a certain requirements of joining the Merchant Navy and we shall dwell on them briefly;

Navigating Officer:

Academic and Health Requirements:

To work on board as a Navigating officer one needs to either be a XIIth science student less than 22 years with PCM marks more than 60% marks or a B.Sc. graduate with more than 60% in either Physics, Mathematics, Chemistry or Electronics but with Physics as a subject in any one year and age less than 25 years. In both cases a student must have more than 50% marks

in English in the XIIth standard. To join the Navigating stream, 6 × 6 eyesight without glasses, no colour blindness and perfect health are a must. Selections of deck cadets are generally conducted by companies during the month of May-June and November- December every year.

Pre Sea Training:

Before a deck cadet is sent on board a ship he/she has to undergo a 1 year pre-sea training in a Maritime training institute ashore. The tuition fee of such training has to be borne by the candidate, which is to a tune of Rs. 2 - 3 lakh.

On board Training and Examination:

Once a cadet completes a year of pre-sea training, he is then placed on board ship, his training period on board the ship is of 18 months and this period may be dispersed over 2 or 3 different ships with a leave period in between. During this period of on-board training, the apprentice receives a stipend of approximately Rs. 15,000 per month. Once the on board training period is completed the cadet is eligible for appearing competency examinations as a navigating officer conducted by the Directorate General of Shipping, Govt. of India.

Career Progression:

In the Merchant Navy if you want to progress to be a captain of the ship then you have to give a competency exam at each stage. The qualifying aspect of giving exams is sea time. A third officer can go on to become a 2nd officer after gaining some experience. But to be a chief officer one must appear after completing 18 months of sea time as a 2nd officer for exam conducted by the Government of India. After completing these exams and additional 18 months of sea time he has to appear for another exam to qualify to become a Captain of a ship. Generally it takes about 10 years for a candidate to go from a cadet to qualify to be a captain of a ship.

Marine Engineer:

Academic and Health Requirements:

To work on board as a Marine Engineer one needs to be a B.E. in Marine Engineering or Graduate in Mechanical Engineering with 60% marks aggregate followed by 1 year pre-sea training course, age less than 28 years and must have more than 50% marks in English in the XIIth standard. The Marine Engineer must not have less than 6 × 12 on each eye (i.e. + 2.5 in each eye) and no colour blindness and be of perfect health.

Pre Sea Training:

Before a Trainee Marine Engineer is sent on board a ship he/she has to undergo

a 1 year pre-sea training in a Maritime Training Institute ashore. The tuition fee has to be borne by the candidate, which is to a tune of Rs. 2 - 3 lakh.

On board Training and Examination:

Once a cadet completes a year of pre-sea training, he is then placed on board ship, his training period on board the ship is of 6 months. During this period of apprenticeship on board once the on board training period is completed the Trainee Marine Engineer is eligible for appearing competency examinations as a Marine Engineer conducted by the Directorate General of Shipping, Government of India, and once a candidate successfully passes these exams he is eligible to go on board a ship as a Fourth Engineer.

Career Progression:

Here again as in the Navigating officer, if a Marine Engineer wants to progress to be a Chief Engineer of the ship he has to give a competency exams at each stage. The qualifying aspect of giving exams is again sea time wherein after a specific amount of sea time is completed he can appear for examinations for the next rank. Thus a 4th Engineer can go on to become a 3rd Engineer after gaining some experience. But, to be a 2nd Engineer he has to appear for exams conducted by the Government of India after completing 18 months of sea time. After these exams he can again appear for another examination and additional 18 months of sea time to qualify to become a Chief Engineer of a ship. Generally it takes about 11 years for a candidate to go from a Trainee Marine Engineer to qualify to be a Chief Engineer of a ship.

Which company to choose?

Choosing a company having a large diversified fleet of ships should be preferred since you can gain a lot of experience in different types of ships and also your progress to the next rank will be faster.

Scrutinise the background of the company. You can know more about a company by a little research on the web, ask people with a background in shipping about the company you are about to join, do not get fooled by the lure of money alone. Try to look for companies which provide you a long term career, safety and quality being prime movers and who have a variety of ships to provide you with a wide spectrum of experience. You can know more about this profession by visiting our website : <http://aemtc.aegroup.biz> and www.angloeasterngroup.com or sending in your queries at careers.sea@angloeasterngroup.com