CORE CONCEPT

Maritime Law Enforcement Course: Coast Guard Boarding, Interdiction and Maritime Domain Awareness

26 – 30 October 2026
London - Central London four-star

Maritime Law Enforcement Course: Coast Guard Boarding, Interdiction and Maritime Domain Awareness

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Introduction:

Maritime law enforcement for coast guard boarding, interdiction and maritime domain awareness is a 1-week course for coast guard, maritime border guard and naval liaison units, ending with a Maritime Interdiction Operations Plan for a case sector. Patrol units lose prosecutions when boardings lack a recorded legal basis, force escalates unchecked, seized evidence breaks custody and suspect contacts slip through gaps in the surface picture. Nominees already crew patrol craft, lead boarding parties or watch operations consoles, and practise through simulated pursuits, boardings and interdictions. CoreConcept Training Center delivers this maritime law enforcement course.

Course Objectives:

- Determine enforcement jurisdiction for a suspected offence from the maritime zone, vessel flag and offence type before tasking a patrol unit
- Justify stopping a foreign or stateless vessel through the right of visit, hot pursuit or flag state consent and record that legal basis
- Conduct boardings with assigned team roles, a pre-boarding risk assessment, systematic search and a graduated use of force continuum
- Interdict smuggling, illegal fishing and migrant vessels using offence-specific inspection steps and protection safeguards
- Preserve evidence at sea through chain of custody forms, photography and handover records that support prosecution
- Build a sector picture from AIS, coastal radar and VMS data to detect dark vessels and nominate targets for interception

Target Audience:

- Coast guard patrol units responsible for intercepting and boarding vessels in waters under national jurisdiction
- Maritime border guard units responsible for counter-smuggling and irregular migration patrols at sea
- Naval liaison units responsible for supporting civil law enforcement boardings and sharing surface contact information
- Maritime operations centre units responsible for surveillance, vessel tracking and tasking of patrol assets
- Fisheries protection units responsible for at-sea inspection of fishing vessels, gear and catch records

Course Outline:

Day 1: Maritime Enforcement Jurisdiction and Domain Awareness Foundations

- Enforcement Jurisdiction Matrix by Maritime Zone and Offence Type
- Maritime Crime Typology Covering Smuggling, Piracy and Illegal Fishing
- AIS and Coastal Radar Fusion Into a Common Operating Picture
- Dark Vessel Indicators From AIS Gaps and Spoofed Tracks
- Sector Patrol Capability Baseline and Enforcement Gap Review

Day 2: Legal Bases for Stopping Vessels and Use of Force

- UNCLOS Article 110 Right of Visit Grounds and Limits
- UNCLOS Article 111 Hot Pursuit Start, Continuity and Termination
- Flag State Consent Requests and Bilateral Boarding Arrangements
- Stateless and False Flag Vessel Verification Procedure
- Graduated Use of Force Continuum From Presence to Disabling Fire

Day 3: Boarding Team Procedures and Vessel Search

- Visit, Board, Search and Seizure Phases for Patrol Units
- Boarding Team Roles, Briefing and Pre-Boarding Risk Assessment
- Compliant and Non-Compliant Boarding Approach and Embarkation Methods
- Ship Papers, Crew List and Cargo Manifest Verification
- Systematic Space Search for Hidden Compartments and Contraband

Day 4: Interdiction Case Types, Evidence at Sea and Detention Handover

- Drug and Weapons Smuggling Interdiction Indicators and Response Options
- Illegal Fishing Inspection Using VMS Records and Catch Logs
- Migrant Vessel Interception With Safety of Life Safeguards
- Chain of Custody Forms, Photography and Evidence Packaging Afloat
- Suspect Detention, Vessel Escort and Prosecutor Handover File

Day 5: Sector Interdiction Simulation and Operations Plan

- Case Sector Briefing With Traffic Density and Threat Data
- Simulated Target Nomination From the Fused Surface Picture
- Simulated Hot Pursuit and Non-Compliant Boarding Decision Points
- Evidence and Detention Handover Inject Debrief and Review
- Maritime Interdiction Operations Plan Completion and Panel Defence

Skills You Will Gain:

- Enforcement Jurisdiction Analysis
- Boarding Team Leadership
- Use of Force Decision-Making
- Vessel Search Technique
- Maritime Evidence Preservation
- Fishing Vessel Inspection
- Dark Vessel Detection
- Interdiction Operations Planning

Why Attend This Course:

- Present a Maritime Interdiction Operations Plan for a case coast guard sector to the sector commander and the head of the maritime operations centre
- Decide when a suspect contact justifies pursuit, boarding or referral to the flag state, based on a documented legal basis
- Avoid collapsed prosecutions, unlawful detention claims and boarding injuries caused by unrecorded authority, uncontrolled force or broken evidence custody
- Equip patrol and boarding colleagues with the jurisdiction matrix, boarding checklist and evidence log templates developed during the course

Conclusion:

Back at work, the participant hands the sector commander and the maritime operations centre a Maritime Interdiction Operations Plan that sets patrol priorities, surveillance coverage, target nomination criteria, boarding team composition, use of force authorities and evidence handover routes. Commanders use it to allocate patrol craft and approve boarding policy, while prosecutors receive cases assembled to a common standard. After the first interdiction under the plan, the unit should review the legal basis record, evidence log and detection timeline, then adjust patrol areas and checklists.

Frequently Asked Questions FAQ:

What should participants know before a maritime law enforcement course on coast guard boarding and interdiction?

Participants should already serve on patrol craft, boarding parties, operations centres or fisheries inspection teams. Working knowledge of their unit's standing orders is enough; no legal qualification is needed. An anonymised patrol report or boarding record helps during the simulation.

How does maritime law enforcement training differ from a law of the sea or port facility security course?

It is operational. Law of the sea courses analyse zones, boundaries and disputes for legal advisers, and port facility security courses manage access and screening on the quay. This course covers detecting, stopping, boarding, searching and seizing vessels at sea.

Why does maritime domain awareness matter for coast guard interdiction and maritime law enforcement?

Patrol craft cannot be everywhere. Fusing AIS, coastal radar, VMS and patrol reports into one picture shows which vessels behave abnormally, so commanders send limited assets to the contacts most likely to be smuggling, fishing illegally or carrying migrants.

What do participants take back from the maritime law enforcement course on boarding and interdiction?

Participants return with a Maritime Interdiction Operations Plan for a case coast guard sector, including a jurisdiction matrix, target nomination criteria, a boarding checklist, a use of force decision record and an evidence log, ready to adapt to their own unit.