



Frequently Asked Questions for Steward Position

What is a Steward?

Stewards are part of the passenger services department for the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) and all unlicensed new hire vessel personnel begin as Stewards. Becoming a Steward is the first step that you can take in starting a maritime career. As you gain sea time and additional endorsements you can move up through the ranks into several different departments onboard a vessel. To become a Steward requires obtaining some initial documentation before a new hire is ready to go to work and be dispatched to a vessel. Details on the needed documentation is located on our website; https://dot.alaska.gov/amhs/emp_ps_hire.shtml and AMHS personnel are available to assist with this process.

Are these positions full-time?

Yes, AMHS is recruiting for multiple full-time positions for Stewards in our Passenger Services Department.

Is this a seasonal/temporary position?

AMHS is recruiting for full-time year round positions. All state employees serve a probationary period, usually one year. For vessel employees it works differently and you are considered an on-call employee until you have earned 1,092 sea time hours. Once you have 1,092 assignment hours onboard a vessel you are considered a permanent full-time employee. This generally takes from six months to a year.

Is this position eligible for overtime?

Yes. All vessels position are eligible for overtime.

Is this a tipped position?

Per the Alaska Executive Branch Ethics Act, state employees may not accept tips. However, the state offers competitive starting pay and a full benefit package which includes; paid leave, low cost medical & dental coverage, retirement options and multiple opportunities for advancement.

Are there any incentives for new hires?

Yes, AMHS is currently offer a hiring bonus and moving and housing assistance for qualified candidates. The hiring bonus can help assist with the initial expense of obtaining your needed documentation or relocation to a change port. Please refer to the Job Posting for details.

How soon can I go to work?

Becoming a Steward requires obtaining your basic new mariner documentation before you can report to work. Documents are issued by different agencies including the US Coast Guard, TSA and the State of Alaska and applications can be processed on different timelines. It may take a month or slightly longer to obtain the required documents from the issuing agencies before you can go to work. As soon as we receive and verify your documents you will be scheduled for new hire orientation and added to our dispatch schedule.

How do I get to work? Do I need to relocate?

Once you have been officially hired and entered into our scheduling system you will be eligible for dispatch aboard a vessel. Our dispatch office will contact you to schedule your first assignment. AMHS has four dispatch locations, or change ports in Alaska; Ketchikan, Juneau, Homer and Valdez. Unless you live within the vicinity of one of the change ports you may need to relocate. Employees are responsible for travel expenses between their residence and the change ports they select for dispatch.

Will I live onboard the vessel the whole time?

AMHS crews work on a rotating schedule. Most crews work on a 2 week on and 2 week off rotating schedule. This means you will need to disembark the vessel once your assignment is over and remain ashore until your next assignment.

How long are the assignments?

Assignments vary by vessel and route. Most crews work on a 2 week on and 2 week off rotating schedule. On the Southwest route, crews work until they are ready for a relief so that route is not on a regular rotation schedule so assignments can be longer depending on how much relief is needed.

What hours will I be scheduled to work once onboard?

Onboard you will be scheduled to work an average of 84 hours per week during your assignment. Your daily schedule during your vessel assignment may vary from 8 hours to 12 hours and sometimes you may be required to work split shifts.

How will I obtain the required documents?

Required documents to work can be obtained from each issuing agency. Each agency has their own application process. The job posting has a section listing the five (5) required

new hire documents. The list contains the document description, approximate cost and a link to the issuing agencies website. All applications for the documents may be completed on line or in person.

Do I pay for the required documents or does AMHS pay for these?

Cost associated with obtaining the required documents is the prospective hire’s responsibility. AMHS is currently offer a hiring bonus and moving and housing assistance for qualified candidates. The hiring bonus can help assist with the initial expense of obtaining your needed documentation or relocation to a change port. Please refer to the Job Posting for details.

What if I cannot obtain the required documents in time to get to work?

Keep in touch with the AMHS hiring team with regular updates on your documentation progress. It takes some time to work through each issuing agency and sometimes delays are experienced. We will work with you if assistance is needed and get you to work as soon as possible.

Are the required documents accepted by all maritime employers?

Yes, all new mariners obtain at a minimum a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Merchant Mariner Credential (MMC) booklet with the entry level ratings that include “Steward (Food Handler)”, an USCG Medical Certificate (validates the MMC ratings) and a Transportation Worker’s Identification Credential (TWIC). These three (3) documents may be required by all maritime employers.

- TWIC’s are through the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and the USCG. A TWIC needed to gain access to secure maritime and other security-sensitive transportation facilities; e.g., airlines, maritime shore-side facility personnel, truck drivers, longshoreman, and others requiring unescorted access

The second set of documents needed are regulated by the State of Alaska for individuals employed in the food and beverage service industry. All new hires obtain an Alaska Food Worker Card and an alcohol server card.

- An Alaska Food Worker card is needed by all employees in food facility and/or restaurants who are directly involved in the storage, preparation, or service of *unpackaged* foods; i.e. chefs, cooks, servers, bartenders, dishwashers, butchers, etc.
- An alcohol server card or TAPs – Training for Alcohol Professionals- is required for personnel in the Alaskan hospitality industry – you must be 21 years of age to obtain one. If you are under 21, please contact your hiring manager for more information.

What can I expect in career advancement?

AMHS crew members have opportunities to advance to supervisory positions and/or specialize in maritime careers through experience, sea service and classes. The AMHS Passenger Services Department is responsible for hotel management (pursers and chief stewards) & restaurant management (head cook/chef). The AMHS Deck and Engine Departments require USCG ratings and must be licensed in advanced seamanship (Ordinary Seaman/Watchman to Able Seaman to Third Mate) and mechanics (Wiper to QMED (Qualified Member of an Engineering Department) Oilers/Jr. Engineers to Third Assistant Engineer).

- AMHS provides on the job training to accrue required USCG sea service and may authorize tuition for USCG approved courses needed for advancement.
- All AMHS new hires complete comprehensive training in safety, security and vessel familiarization through online training, on-the-job training and USCG approved classes (UAS Maritime Department in Ketchikan or AVTEC in Seward).