

The American Tugboat, Towboat and Barge Industry: **A GREAT CAREER CHOICE**



"Building a career in the towing industry is one of the best decisions I ever made. I advanced through the ranks and now pilot a modern towboat that can handle the biggest jobs. The pay and benefits are excellent and I like the flexibility of the lifestyle that allows me to spend extended periods of time with my family."

- **Scott Stewart, Pilot**
AEP River Operations
Chesterfield, MO

A career in the tugboat, towboat and barge industry offers great opportunities:

- Competitive pay and benefits
- A skilled profession that doesn't require a college degree
- An exciting alternative to a 9-to-5 job
- A chance to learn a trade
- Extended time off
- Opportunities for advancement
- Flexibility to live where you choose
- The rewarding experience of being part of a team
- Pride in being part of an industry that is vital to America



FACT:

Today's modern fleet of nearly 4,000 tugboats and towboats and more than 27,000 barges moves over 800 million tons of America's commerce each year.



"This job is a real adventure. Every day is different and I enjoy being out on the water and among nature. I am a valued member of the crew because they respect my work skills and teamwork. I like the challenge of dealing with the elements of sea and sky to accomplish the job. It sure beats sitting at a desk from 9 to 5."

- **Lauren Lahners, Deckhand**
E.N. Bisso & Son, Inc.
Metairie, LA

Competitive Pay and Benefits:

Many companies offer excellent pay and full benefits, including:

- Health insurance
- Life insurance
- 401(k) Savings Plan
- Dental insurance
- Employee stock ownership
- Merit pay
- Vision care
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Long-term and short-term disability benefits
- Reimbursement for Coast Guard and company-required training



FACT:

Tugboats, towboats and barges operate on America's 25,000 mile waterways network, a system that is the envy of the world.

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"This job allows me to have a lot of time off with friends and family. I like being an important part of a team, working together to get the job done. We take a lot of pride in that. The members of the crew are more like family than coworkers."

- Kenneth Brooks, Deckhand
McAllister Towing & Transportation
New York, NY

Entry level applicants must:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Have two forms of ID, such as a driver's license and birth certificate
- Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident alien
- Be able to read and comprehend the English language
- Pass a drug and alcohol screen
- Pass a security background check
- Pass a physical examination



FACT:

Towboats and barges move over 60% of U.S. grain exports, helping American farmers compete with foreign producers in the world market.

Consider a rewarding career in the American tugboat, towboat and barge industry!



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Tugboat and Towboat Industry Positions and their Qualifications



The tugboat, towboat, and barge industry offers many exciting employment opportunities working on America's inland rivers; the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf coasts; the Great Lakes; and ports and harbors around the country. A typical tugboat or towboat carries anywhere from three to 10 crewmembers and includes a mix of highly skilled, experienced personnel and entry-level deckhands.



The entry-level position on a towing vessel is called a **Deckhand** on inland towboats or an **Ordinary Seaman** on coastal tugboats. These crewmembers prepare barges for loading and unloading cargo, build tows and perform basic vessel maintenance and housekeeping duties. More experienced deckhands may be called **Lead Deckhands** (or **Mates** in the inland towing industry) and have leadership duties as well. Experienced **Ordinary Seamen** on coastal tugboats graduate to **Able Bodied Seamen**, or **ABs**. *On most towing vessels except those operating on rivers, deckhands require a Coast Guard-issued **Merchant Mariner's Document**, or **MMD**.*

The **Cook** buys and prepares food for the crew. Some cooks also work on deck between meal preparations, in which case they may be called **Cook/Deckhands**. *Cooks on towing vessels other than those working on rivers require a Merchant Mariner's Document.*

Tankermen work on towing vessels moving liquid cargo in tank barges, and are specially trained for the environmentally sensitive job of transferring oil or chemical cargoes between barges and tanks on shore. *Tankermen require an MMD with a Tankerman endorsement, which entails training and experience in handling liquid cargoes.*

The **Engineer** is in charge of the operation and maintenance of the boat's engines, machinery, and the barge cargo pumps. A **Deck Engineer** is an engineer who also performs deckhand duties. *Engineers are well trained, experienced personnel who may or may not be required to hold a Coast Guard-issued license, depending on the size and location of the vessels on which they work.*

(continued...)

Tugboat and towboat crews work varying schedules, but most crews live aboard the vessel for two to four weeks and then have one to three weeks off. In most segments of the towing industry, crewmembers stand two six-hour watches daily. Crewmembers on some harbor tugs go home at night and often work a single 12-hour shift.

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The crewmembers who “drive” the towing vessel are the **Master** (or **Captain**) and his or her second-in-command, known as a **Mate** on coastal tugboats and a **Pilot** on inland towboats. The Master and Mate or Pilot alternate shifts navigating the vessel. The Master is the manager of the vessel, responsible not only for operating the boat safely and efficiently, but for managing the crew as well.

Nearly all towing vessel Masters, Mates, and Pilots started their careers as deckhands and worked their way into the wheelhouse, obtaining the necessary training and Coast Guard licenses along the way. Obtaining a Coast Guard license as Master of Towing Vessels is normally a three-step process requiring passage of a written examination, four years of experience, and a practical demonstration of navigation skills. An individual working his or her way up to Master first obtains an Apprentice Mate (Steersman) license – in effect, a learner’s permit that allows for practice in the wheelhouse under the supervision of an experienced mariner. The next step is Mate (Pilot), and finally, Master.

Shoreside Positions

Tugboat and towboat crews are supported by staff on land as well. These shoreside positions vary widely by company, but below are a few of the more common ones.

The **Port Captain** works with the Captains to supervise and manage boat crews. Most Port Captains are former Vessel Masters.

The **Dispatcher** assigns boats to guide barges or ships, and also assigns crews to man the boats.

The **Port Engineer** is responsible for keeping boats and barges on a regular maintenance schedule.

The **Safety Manager** is responsible for the safety of the crew and vessel. He/She is in charge of training programs, vessel inspections and compliance with regulations.

The **Mechanic** performs inspections and repairs on the vessel, and reports to the Port Engineer.

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For more information, visit www.americanwaterways.com

Another day at the office...



The tugboat, towboat and barge industry is a critical part of our nation's economy that transports everything from petroleum to pineapples. It's also a dynamic work environment full of rewarding challenges and exciting opportunities.

For more information, contact

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