

**MERCHANT VESSELS OF THE UNITED STATES**  
**Revised January 7, 2008**

Merchant Vessels of the United States is a data file of merchant and recreational vessels documented under the laws of the United States by the U.S. Coast Guard. The source for this file is the U.S. Coast Guard's Marine Information for Safety and Law Enforcement (MISLE) and Vessel Documentation System (VDS) databases, a comprehensive system serving many Coast Guard marine safety units, including the National Vessel Documentation Center. The data file of merchant vessels has been specifically prepared from several data tables contained in MISLE and VDS.

The data file consists of vessel particulars and managing owner identification information. Vessels in this file have a valid Certificate of Documentation. Foreign vessels are not contained in this file. The file contains vessel information through **January 5, 2008**.

**A new field is added to the Vesdoc file with information on ship builders. This field was originally positioned in the builder file on the CD-ROM. By moving this field to the Vesdoc file, we do away with the need to load a second file. This simplifies the data loading process and reduces the amount of computer code for data retrieval.**

**The field ship builder differs from the ship yard field in that the ship yard refers to the facility or site where the vessel was constructed while the builder refers to the individual or company that constructed the vessel. The ship yard field has not been updated since 2001, please refer to the ship builder field for the individual or company that constructed the vessel.**

Vesdoc File Specifications:

Record Size:	2,514
Records:	331,973

Three file formats are included on your CD-ROM. The file vesdocjan08tab.txt uses tab stops as field separators while the file vesdocjan08fix.zip is arranged in fixed-length fields. New on the CD-ROM is a version in Microsoft Access format. The fixed-length and Access files are compressed using WinZip® utility to conserve space. The documentation provided on the CD-ROM is compatible with both data structures.

**RECORD LAYOUT FOR MERCHANT VESSELS OF THE UNITED STATES.  
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<u>Data Element Name</u>	<u>Data</u>		
	<u>Type</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Position</u>
Vessel ID	AN	10	1 - 10
Vessel Database Key	AN	10	11 - 20
Name of Vessel	AN	33	21 - 53
Call Sign	AN	8	54 - 61
Official Number	AN	10	62 - 71
IMO Number	AN	30	72 - 101
Hull Number	AN	30	102 - 131
Hull Identification Number	AN	30	132 - 161
Vessel Service Type	CH	30	162 - 191
Flag	CH	2	192 - 193
Self Propelled Indicator	Logical	1	194 - 194
Registered Gross Tons	DS	7	195 - 201
Registered Net Tons	DS	7	202 - 208
Registered Length	DS	7	209 - 215
Registered Breadth	DS	6	216 - 221
Registered Depth	DS	6	222 - 227
ITC Gross Tons	DS	7	228 - 234
ITC Net Tons	DS	7	235 - 241
ITC Length	DS	7	242 - 248
ITC Breadth	DS	6	249 - 254
ITC Depth	DS	6	255 - 260
Measuring Organization Name	CH	50	261 - 310
Hailing Port	CH	50	311 - 360
Hailing Port State	CH	2	361 - 362
Hailing Port Province	CH	50	363 - 412
Trade Indicator - Coastwise Unrestricted	CM	1	413 - 413
Trade Indicator – Limited Coastwise Bowaters Only	CM	1	414 - 414
Trade Indicator – Limited Coastwise Restricted	CM	1	415 - 415
MARAD Waiver			
Trade Indicator – Limited Coastwise Oil Spill Response Only	CM	1	416 - 416
Trade Indicator – Limited Coastwise Under Charter to Citizen	CM	1	417 - 417
Trade Indicator – Limited Coastwise Trade Fish Products	CM	1	418 - 418
Only			
Trade Indicator – Fishery	CM	1	419 - 419
Trade Indicator – Limited Fishery Only	CM	1	420 - 420
Trade Indicator - Recreation	CM	1	421 - 421
Trade Indicator – Limited Recreation Great Lakes Use Only	CM	1	422 - 422
Trade Indicator – Registry	CM	1	423 - 423
Trade Indicator – Limited Registry Cross Border Financing	CM	1	424 - 424
Trade Indicator – Limited Registry No Foreign Voyage	CM	1	425 - 425

by Sea

Trade Indicator – Limited Registry Trade with Canada Only	CM	1	426 - 426
Trade Indicator - Great Lakes	CM	1	427 - 427
Vessel Complete Build City	CH	50	428 - 477
Vessel Complete Build State	CH	2	478 - 479
Vessel Complete Build Province	CH	50	480 - 529
Vessel Complete Build Country	CH	64	530 - 593
Vessel Build Year	CH	4	594 - 597
Vessel Hull Build City	CH	50	598 - 647
Vessel Hull Build State	CH	2	648 - 649
Vessel Hull Build Province	CH	50	650 - 699
Vessel Hull Build Country	CH	64	700 - 763
Party Identification Number	AN	10	764 - 773
Organization Name/Company Name	CH	80	774 - 853
Organization Type	CH	30	854 - 883
Person First Name	CH	30	884 - 913
Person Middle Name	CH	50	914 - 963
Person Last Name	CH	50	964 - 1013
Person Name Suffix	CH	10	1014 - 1023
Street Address Line 1	CH	255	1024 - 1278
Street Address Line 2	CH	255	1279 - 1533
Street Address Line 3	CH	255	1534 - 1788
Street Address Line 4	CH	255	1789 - 2043
City	CH	30	2044 - 2073
State	CH	2	2074 - 2075
Province	CH	30	2076 - 2105
Country	CH	64	2106 - 2169
Postal Code	CH	30	2170 - 2199
Main HP Ahead	IS	7	2200 - 2206
Main HP Astern	IS	7	2207 - 2213
Propulsion Type	CH	30	2214 - 2243
Hull Material	CH	30	2244 - 2273
Ship Yard	CH	50	2274 - 2323
<b>Ship Builder</b>	<b>CH</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>2324 - 2403</b>
Hull Configuration	CH	30	2404 - 2433
Hull Shape	CH	30	2434 - 2463
COD Status	CH	30	2464 - 2493
COD issue date	CH	10	2494 - 2503
COD expire date	CH	10	2504 - 2513
Filler	CH	1	2514 - 2514
*CR/LF	CH	1	2515 - 2515

\*Carriage return line feed terminates each record

Data Types:

AN - Alpha Numeric  
IS - Integer  
DS - Decimal (Floating)

CH - Character  
Logical - 1/0  
CM - "X"/ blank

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**Explanation of Data Fields:**

Vessel Id is a unique field used by the U.S. Coast Guard's Marine Information for Safety and Law Enforcement System (MISLE) database to identify a vessel record. This element is primarily used for joining data tables in the MISLE database. (Other data tables may be obtained under the Freedom of Information Act from the U.S. Coast Guard.)

Vessel Database Key is a unique field used by the U.S. Coast Guard's Marine Safety Information System (MSIS) database to identify a vessel record. Although the MSIS system was replaced in December, 2001 with the MISLE system, many data elements from MSIS were back loaded into MISLE. This element is primarily used for joining data tables with other MSIS data. (Other data tables may be obtained under the Freedom of Information Act from the U.S. Coast Guard.)

Official Number is a six or seven digit number that has been awarded to each merchant and recreational vessel of the United States. In this data file, 'D' does not precede the official number as was the case in MSIS. The official number is permanently marked on some structural part of the hull interior. A vessel's official number should not be confused with the manufacturer's hull identification number.

Hull Material is one of the types listed below or may be blank indicating unknown.

ALUMINUM  
CONCRETE  
FRP (Fiberglass Reinforced Plastic)  
OTHER  
PLASTIC – MSIS Legacy  
PLASTIC (non-reinforced)  
STEEL  
WOOD

Self-Propelled. The indicator field is '1'/0' data type, but may be blank. A '1' means the vessel is self-propelled, a '0' means not self-propelled. If a vessel is propelled by sail and machinery, it is considered self propelled.

Trade Indicator Fields. Trade describes the use for which the vessel is licensed. A vessel may be licensed for more than one use. An 'X' in the field indicates an authorized trade. **MORE SO THAN THE SERVICE FIELD, THE TRADE INDICATORS ARE THE BEST AVAILABLE MEANS TO IDENTIFY SPECIFIC TYPES OR USES OF VESSELS THAT ARE NOT COAST GUARD INSPECTED.** While some vessels may have multiple trades authorized a great majority of fishing and recreational vessels will have only one specific trade authorized. Most commercial vessels will have coastwise, registry or Bowater in combination with one or more other trade types. A brief explanation of the trade authorities is provided below.

- Coastwise Unrestricted - The vessel is licensed, to engage in coastwise trade.
- Limited Bowaters Only - The vessel is licensed to engage in limited coastwise trade under 46 App U.S.C. 883-1. This license currently applies to about 500 freight barges and self propelled vessels under 500 gross tons.
- Limited Coastwise Restricted MARAD Waiver.
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- Limited Coastwise Oil Spill Response Only.
- Limited Coastwise Under Charter to Citizen Fishing.
- Fishery - The vessel is licensed to engage in the fisheries trade in the navigable waters of the U.S. and on the Exclusive Economic Zone.
- Limited Fishery Only.
- Recreational - The vessel is licensed to use as a pleasure craft and may not engage in commerce unless it also has one of the other licenses.
- Limited Recreational - Great Lakes Use Only.
- Registry - The vessel is licensed to engage in trade between U.S. and foreign ports.
- Limited Registry Cross Border Financing.
- Limited Registry No Foreign Voyage by Sea.
- Limited Registry Trade with Canada Only.
- Great Lakes - The vessel is licensed to engage in trade on the Great Lakes.

Vessel Complete Build is filled when the vessel construction is completed at site different than the hull construction site.

Vessel Hull Build is the place where the hull and vessel was constructed.

Vessel Build Year is the year of completion of the vessel as shown by the builder 5 certificate.

Vessel Service Type indicates the general use of the vessel, but the accuracy of the data is limited. Service of vessel applies specifically to about 12,000 Coast Guard inspected vessels. Some uninspected vessels may not contain a service type. The following service types exist in the file:

- Commercial Fishing Vessel
- Fish Processing Vessel
- Freight Barge
- Freight Ship
- Industrial Vessel (e.g., Cable Layer, Dredge, Crane Barge)
- Mobile Offshore Drilling Unit
- Offshore Supply Vessel
- OIL RECOVERY (vessels designated to recover spilled oil)
- Passenger (More Than 6)
- Passenger Barge (6 or Fewer)
- Passenger Barge (More Than 6)
- Public Freight
- Public Tankship/Barge
- Public Vessel, Unclassified
- Recreational
- Research Vessel
- School Ship
- Tank Barge (barge regulated by 46 CFR Subchapter D)
- Tank Ship
- Towing Vessel
- Unclassified
- Unknown

Party Identification Number is a unique field used by the U.S. Coast Guard's MISLE database to identify a specific party involved with the operation or ownership of a vessel. These elements are used for joining data tables in the MISLE database. (Other data files must be obtained from the Coast Guard.)

Company Name and Person Name. These fields identify the vessel owner as the party designated as the managing owner of the vessel. The managing owner is the sole owner or, if there are two or more owners, one of the owners. Complete ownership information is available from the National Vessel Documentation Center. A Managing Owner name may be found either in the Organization Name field or in the Person Last Name, First Name, Middle Name fields. Generally, managing owners that are not individual persons are found in the company name field. Every effort has been made to properly classify owners as a company or individual, but there are instances in the file where an individual is listed in the company name field. There is an ongoing effort to correct these errors. If an owner's name is found in the Company Name field, then the Person Last Name, First Name and Middle Name fields will be blank, and vice versa.

Owner Address. The owner address consists of six fields for the street address, city name, state code (standard U.S. Post Office codes), province, foreign country name and zip code/foreign postal code field.

Hailing Port is displayed on the vessel's stern, and may be used to best determine the vessels geographic area of operation.

Home Port. Vessel records are held at the National Vessel Documentation Center in Falling Waters, West Virginia. Unless otherwise indicated, the vessel's homeport is the National Vessel Documentation Center.

IMO Number is the Lloyd's Registry "Register of Ships" 7-digit identification number. This is a unique number that has been assigned by Lloyd's Registry for the life of the vessel. Most vessels with an IMO number are self propelled, over 100 gross tons, and operate on ocean and/or coastwise waters.

ITC Gross Tons and ITC Net Tons are a vessel's International Tonnage Convention (ITC) gross and net tonnages.

NOTE on ITC tonnages: Some vessel records may have both national and ITC tonnages. The values for ITC gross and registered gross tons (as well as ITC net and registered net tons) may be the same or may differ.

ITC Length. ITC length in feet used on Certificate of Documentation.

ITC Breadth. ITC breadth in feet used on Certificate of Documentation.

ITC Depth. ITC depth in feet used on Certificate of Documentation.



Hull Configuration Values: Monohull, Trimaran, Catamaran, Unknown

Hull Shape Values: Box, Ship, Sail(Faired Keel), Sail(Distinct Keel)

COD Status Values: Canceled, Case Pending, Expired, Invalid, No Operation-PM, Revoked-PM, Unspecified and Valid

**Case Pending** refers to vessels undergoing documentation (primary redocumentation).

**No Operation-PM or Revoked-PM** are vessels that hold a maritime lien and are considered documented vessels of the U.S and are not available for state registration.

**Expired** vessels are granted a grace period before deletion and are considered a documented vessel of the U.S.

**Unspecified or Canceled** statuses are under review by the National Vessel Documentation Center and a determination on these vessels will be made at a later date.

**On Deposit** CODs kept at the Nation Vessels Documentation Center for vessels that do not have space to display the COD. Primary applies to barges.

**Valid** holds a current COD.

Vessels with the above statuses are considered documented vessels of the U.S.

COD Issue Date COD last issue date

COD Expiration Date COD expiration date