COAST GUARD
SOCIAL MEDIA

DOs and DON'Ts
for Instagram takeovers

Instagram takeovers allow for the unique ability to showcase our missions, operations and people to the American public. Enabling a different unit to "guest host" the account each week gives varying views of the diverse mission sets accomplished by the U.S. Coast Guard. Takeovers are scheduled and managed through the Headquarters Social Media Team (CG-0922). If you plan to host the account, below are some tips and tricks to have a successful week:

Do...

- **Introduce yourself and your unit:** An introductory post at the beginning of a takeover helps tell the audience what they can expect that week.
- **Clear photos through your CO/OIC:** They are the final releasing authority for all photos – ensure they know what you are posting.
- **Double check photos & captions:** Are people wearing the correct uniforms? Are the photos professional? Would you show this photo directly to the Commandant? Did you spell everything correctly? Did you avoid using military jargon that may not translate to the American public? These are all questions you should ask yourself with every post!
- **Use relevant hashtags:** At a minimum, use #USCG, but be creative – you can use #Alaska, #CoastGuard, #aviation, #GreatLakes...just make sure you look up the hashtag prior to use to ensure it is appropriate. If a hashtag links to inappropriate photos/videos, don't use it.
- **Share photos AND videos:** Feel free to share as many photos as you can – short videos can also be extremely compelling! We recommend sharing at LEAST one photo per day during the takeover – but actively encourage as many as possible!
- **Engage:** Some people may ask questions about your unit or the Coast Guard – feel free to answer yourself or ask us for help if it's outside your lane!
- **Have fun!** The takeover is a unique way to let the American public into the daily lives of Coast Guard men and women and let them see what we do. Enjoy it!

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Don't...

- **Violate OPSEC or share sensitive information:** The information you are posting is public and can be seen by anyone. If you have doubts, ask your CO/OIC.
- **Share things to the wrong account:** As many people have personal accounts, be cognizant of which account you are logged into when you are sharing photos.
- **Tag personal accounts:** A takeover is not a way for you to gain followers or share your personal account with others.

Frequently Asked Questions...

- **I made a spelling error in my post, what can I do about it?**
  - Don't worry! People make mistakes. Instagram has the ability to edit posts once they are live, so just go back in and edit it. Don't delete the entire post and re-do it.
- **Someone made an inappropriate comment – what do I do?**
  - Depending on the comment, you have a few options. You can delete it, but if you do, you must take a screen shot and send it to socialmedia@uscg.mil for record. Remember that only comments containing personal attacks or vulgar language should be removed. If you have ANY questions – email us and we will help!
- **Do I have to respond to every question or comment?**
  - No – a lot of times, our fans will answer questions for you! If there is something directed to the account directly, you absolutely should answer if you are able. You don't need to be the moderator for every comment, but should check them regularly.
- **Who should I contact if I have any questions?**
  - The Coast Guard social media team is ALWAYS here to help with your takeover. Email us any time at socialmedia@uscg.mil and we will get back to you ASAP!