



EDITION V2.9

THE ESSENTIAL

# Navy Rates Guide

— Complete Color Edition —

A Recruit's **UNBIASED** Rating Comparison Tool

*Ready to be printed for use at MEPS*

MEPS-READY · NO CELL PHONES NEEDED

## Choose Your Rate. Choose Your Fate.

MEPS does not allow cell phone use. This printed booklet puts every rating, real sailor opinion, bonus figure, and recruiter vs. reality check in your hands — so when the classifier asks “which rate?”, you already know.



Shipmate  
Supporter



Admiral  
Access



Fleet  
Patron

Real Opinions · Recruiter vs. Reality · Horror Stories  
Watch Stories · Career Progression · Full Data Tables

*For offline reference at MEPS, on ship, or with your recruiter.*





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# The 45 Minutes That Decide the Next Four Years.

You will sit at a desk in a windowless MEPS office. Your phone will be locked in a bin at the front of the building. A Navy career classifier will read down a filtered list, ask you to pick, hand you a contract, and ask you to sign — usually in under fifteen minutes. What you decide that morning will shape the next four to six years of your life.

**This booklet exists so you walk into that room ready.**

 <b>15–45</b> MINUTES Average classifier meeting length.	 <b>4–6</b> YEARS Length of the contract you'll sign at that desk.	 <b>0</b> PHONES Cell phones are locked away the moment you walk in.	 <b>91</b> RATES Every Navy enlisted rating, sourced and ranked, in your hand.
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## WHAT'S ACTUALLY HAPPENING ACROSS THE DESK

### WHAT THE CLASSIFIER WILL DO

Read down a list filtered to the ratings the Navy needs to fill for your ship-date window — not the ratings best for your life. Skip the rates that look “closed” without showing them. Apply calm, professional pressure to pick “something” today instead of waiting. Frame an open / undesignated contract as a harmless shortcut. Promise things verbally that are not in the contract language. Suggest you cannot back out after signing.

*None of this is unusual. All of it is documented in our MEPS walkthrough article and on Navy Dads, Navy For Moms, Quora, and Reddit threads from real applicants.*

### WHAT THIS BOOKLET PUTS IN YOUR HAND

The full list of every Navy rating — not just the ones offered to you today — with side-by-side scores across pay, lifestyle, promotion velocity, civilian return, happiness, and manning. Recruiter-vs-reality callouts pulled from the fleet, not the recruiting playbook. Real horror stories. Bonus figures with the originating NAVADMIN cited. ASVAB cutoffs so you know what you qualify for. The exact training pipeline and washout rate for every rate on the list.

*Bring it in your folder. Flip to the rate the classifier offers. Compare. Decide.*

## WHAT'S INSIDE EVERY PAGE YOU'RE HOLDING

- 1 Comparison Summary Table**  
All ratings ranked by Overall Score in one landscape spread — with color-coded sub-scores so weak axes jump off the page.
- 2 Per-Rate Scoring**  
Burnout risk, lifestyle, civilian ROI, happiness, pay, and manning — normalized 1–10 against the website's exact methodology.
- 3 Training Pipeline + Washout**  
Visual stage bars with attrition % per stage and A-school difficulty rating. You'll know going in which pipelines wash out 30%+ of starters.
- 4 Career Progression Timeline**  
Estimated months to E-4, E-5, E-6, and Chief — computed from real advancement quotas, not a brochure.
- 5 Promotion-by-Paygrade Trends**  
Selection-rate line graphs across recent NAVADMIN cycles, broken out by E-4, E-5, and E-6.
- 6 Bonuses + History**  
Current SRB amount, the NAVADMIN it cites, and the 4–6 year bonus history so you can see if a number is rising or evaporating.

**7** **Civilian Outcomes**  
BLS-sourced salary ranges, transferability scores, year-1/5/10 trajectory, and the free Navy COOL credentials this rate unlocks.

**8** **Retention & Burnout**  
First-term reenlistment % and a 6-factor burnout index built from watch intensity, hours, deployment tempo, manning, morale, and attrition.

**9** **Top 5 Duty Stations**  
For every rate, ranked by family impact: schools, spouse employment, childcare, medical, and overall family score per station.

**10** **Real Sailor Voices**  
Curated opinions, recruiter-vs-reality callouts, horror stories, and Life on Watch accounts pulled from r/navy and r/newtothenavy.

## HOW TO USE THIS IN THE CLASSIFIER'S OFFICE

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**1** **Have your top 5 rates already flagged.**  
Before MEPS day, pick five rates from the comparison table and dog-ear the page. When you sit down, you already know your priority order.

**2** **When the classifier offers an alternative — flip to it.**  
Rate not on your list? Read its profile. Check the bonus, the washout rate, the civilian outlook, and what veterans actually say about it. Then decide.

**3** **When you hear “that rate isn’t available” — ask when seats next open.**  
It almost always means “not for your current ship-date window.” You can request a later ship date and wait for the rate you actually want.

**4** **When the bonus number looks off — verify against the bonus column.**  
If the contract bonus doesn’t match the figure printed in this booklet for that rate, ask for the NAVADMIN citation. If it’s not in the contract, it does not exist.

**5** **When the pressure ramps up — say “I’d like to wait.”**  
You are never legally required to sign on the day. You can leave. You can come back. You can switch recruiters. The four-year commitment is worth the inconvenience.

### WHERE EVERY NUMBER IN THIS BOOKLET COMES FROM

NAVADMINs for bonuses and advancement quotas. MyNavyHR for training pipelines and ASVAB requirements. Navy COOL for civilian credentialing. BLS and O\*NET for civilian salaries and demand. The Navy’s own duty-station family-impact data. And tens of thousands of curated, manually-reviewed sailor accounts from r/navy and r/newtothenavy. **Not from a recruiter’s pitch.**

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*Choose your rate. Choose your fate. **Choose with your eyes open.***

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FROM THE FOUNDER

# Our Mission

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myNavyRates.org is an educational tool to help prospective and current sailors make informed career decisions. Choosing a Navy rating is one of the most consequential decisions an enlisted servicemember will make — it shapes training, duty stations, deployment patterns, civilian marketability, and long-term earning potential. Our goal is to surface the data that makes that choice clearer.

## WHY THIS GUIDE EXISTS

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This project was created by a Navy Lieutenant Commander with extensive shipboard and deployment experience across multiple platforms. Over the course of numerous deployments, he had the opportunity to work alongside and interact with sailors across a wide range of enlisted ratings — witnessing their day-to-day struggles, hearing their stories, and learning how they ended up in their rates.

A recurring theme emerged: many of these sailors had joined the Navy with a massive information gap. They were making one of the most important career decisions of their lives essentially blind — relying on a recruiter's limited guidance or a brief conversation at MEPS. The consequences were real. Sailors ended up in ratings that severely impacted their lifestyle, limited their pay potential, or were a complete mismatch for their actual personality and goals.

The hardest part was watching what happened once these sailors finally got just a little bit of information — a conversation with a veteran in a different rate, a Reddit thread, a chance encounter with someone who had the job they wish they had picked. Almost without exception, they expressed deep regret, wishing they had known what was available before they signed their contract.

*myNavyRates.org was built to bridge that information gap — so the next generation of sailors can make that decision with their eyes wide open.*

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## SUPPORT THE MISSION



Shipmate Supporter



Admiral Access



Fleet Patron

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## Individual Rate Profiles (91 Total) — Sorted Alphabetically

*Click on the page number to jump to the rate.*

ABE — Aviation Boatswain's Mate - Launch & Recovery	14	GM — Gunner's Mate	479
ABF — Aviation Boatswain's Mate Fuels	21	GS — Gas Turbine Systems Technician	491
ABH — Aviation Boatswain's Mate Handling	27	GSE — Gas Turbine Systems Technician Electrical	502
AC — Air Traffic Controller	34	GSM — Gas Turbine Systems Technician Mechanical	512
AD — Aviation Machinist's Mate	41	HM — Hospital Corpsman	522
AE — Aviation Electrician's Mate	53	HN — Hospitalman	541
AG — Aerographer's Mate	67	HT — Hull Maintenance Technician	546
AM — Aviation Structural Mechanic	74	IC — Interior Communications Electrician	557
AME — Aviation Structural Mechanic – Equipment	86	IS — Intelligence Specialist	568
AN — Airman	95	IT — Information Systems Technician	578
AO — Aviation Ordnanceman	101	ITE — Information Systems Technician Submarines – Electronic Warfare	595
AS — Aviation Support Equipment Technician	111	ITN — Information Systems Technician Submarines – Network	604
AT — Aviation Electronics Technician	119	ITR — Information Systems Technician Submarines – Communications	613
AW — Naval Aircrewman	134	LN — Legalman	623
AWF — Aircrewman Helicopter	144	LS — Logistics Specialist	629
AWO — Aircrewman Operator	155	LSS — Logistics Specialist – Submarines	638
AWR — Aircrewman Tactical Helicopter	165	MA — Master-at-Arms	645
AWS — Aircrewman Helicopter	175	MC — Mass Communications Specialist	654
AWV — Aircrewman Avionics	183	MM — Machinists Mate	662
AZ — Aviation Maintenance Administrationman	191	MMA — Machinist's Mate Auxiliary	675
BM — Boatswain's Mate	198	MMN — Machinist's Mate Nuclear	684
BU — Builder	206	MN — Mineman	695
CE — Construction Electrician	214	MR — Machinery Repairman	705
CM — Construction Mechanic	222	MT — Missile Technician	713
CN — Constructionman	232	MU — Musician	723
CS — Culinary Specialist	237	NC — Navy Counselor	731
CSS — Culinary Specialist Submarines	244	ND — Navy Diver	737
CTI — Cryptologic Technician Interpretive	251	OS — Operations Specialist	746
CTM — Cryptologic Technician Maintenance	266	PR — Aircrew Survival Equipmentman	757
CTR — Cryptologic Technician Collection	277	PS — Personnel Specialist	765
CTT — Cryptologic Technician Technical	289	QM — Quartermaster	771
CWT — Cyber Warfare Technician	302	RP — Religious Program Specialist	778
DC — Damage Controlman	318	RS — Retail Services Specialist	784
EA — Engineering Aide	326	RW — Robotics Warfare Specialist	791
EM — Electrician's Mate	333	SB — Special Warfare Combatant-craft Crewman	799
EMN — Electrician's Mate Nuclear	347	SN — Seaman	810
EN — Engineman	357	SO — Special Warfare Operator	816
EO — Equipment Operator	370	ST — Sonar Technician	829
EOD — Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician	379	STG — Sonar Technician Surface	834
ET — Electronics Technician	389		
ETN — Electronics Technician Nuclear	411		

ETV — Electronic Technician Submarine	421	STS — Sonar Technician – Submarines	848
FC — Fire Controlman	431	SW — Steelworker	858
FCA — Fire Controlman – Aegis	448	TM — Torpedoman's Mate	866
FN — Fireman	464	UT — Utilitiesman	874
FT — Fire Control Technician	470	YN — Yeoman	882
		YNS — Yeoman – Submarines	889

## All-Rate Comparison Summary Table — Sorted by Overall Score

*Click a rate name to jump to its profile page.*

Highest Overall Score first · 91 ratings · Scores on a 1–10 scale · Color: green  $\geq 7.0$  · yellow  $\geq 4.5$  · red  $< 4.5$

Rate	Overall Score	Enlistment Bonus	SRB Max	Civilian Salary	Advancement Outlook	Burnout	Lifestyle Score	Civilian ROI	Happiness Score	Pay Score	Ship / Shore %	DeploymentA-School Frequency	A-School Weeks	A-School Location	Clearance Level	Manning %	Work Environm
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**All 91 rates unlock with Admiral Access — \$3 lifetime**

## TRAINING PIPELINE — ~86 WEEKS TOTAL (20 MONTHS)



- Boot Camp** — 8 weeks  
RTC Great Lakes, IL
- A-School** — 26 weeks **24.4% washout** **Difficulty: 5.9/10**  
NNPTC Goose Creek, SC
- Nuclear Power School** — 26 weeks  
NNPTC Goose Creek, SC
- Nuclear Prototype** — 26 weeks  
Charleston, SC or Ballston Spa, NY
- Fleet Assignment** — 0 weeks  
First duty station

## CAREER PROGRESSION (EST.)

Timeline from enlistment — computed from advancement quotas, pipeline weeks, and manning. Each colored segment shows the time spent at that career stage before reaching the next milestone.



- Training Complete** · 1 yr 8 mo from enlistment  
Pipeline finished (~20 mo) — NNPTC Goose Creek, SC
- First Duty Station** · 1 yr 9 mo from enlistment  
Likely sea duty assignment
- NEC Specialization Options** · 3 yr 2 mo from enlistment  
36 specializations available
- Shore Duty Rotation** · 5 yr 2 mo from enlistment  
First shore rotation opportunity

## ADVANCEMENT OUTLOOK

### E-2 to E-4 Advancement Pathway

TIME TO E-4 · 30 MONTHS TOTAL · AUTOMATIC

<b>E-1 » E-2</b>	9 months at E-1	<b>Automatic</b>
<b>E-2 » E-3</b>	9 months at E-2	<b>Automatic</b>
<b>E-3 » E-4</b>	12 months at E-3	<b>Automatic</b>

Per NAVADMIN 168/23, E-1 through E-4 promotions are driven by time-in-service (TIS) only. Competitive advancement (NWA/E / FMS / BBA quotas) starts at E-5.

#### HOW TO ADVANCE FASTER TO E-4

Recruiters can process you in at E-2 or E-3 on day one if you qualify. Each rung skipped shortens the path to E-4 by months. Official transcripts / certificates required at enlistment.

- E-2** **Easy** **2 years of JROTC** — Completed through high school NJROTC/JROTC. Easiest common path.
- E-2** **Moderate** **24+ semester hours college credit** — Below associate's threshold. Roughly one full year of college.
- E-2** **Moderate** **Civil Air Patrol Billy Mitchell Award** — Achievable with consistent cadet participation, testing, and leadership time.
- E-2** **Moderate** **Sea Cadet Corps E-2** — Reach the Sea Cadet E-2 rate (join by age 17).
- E-2 to E-3** **Moderate** **Boot-camp leadership — Honor Recruit / Hall of Fame** — Honor Recruit pins to E-2; Hall of Fame pins to E-3 (one award only, not stacked).
- E-3** **Hard** **Associate's degree or higher** — AA/AS or above from an accredited institution, official transcript required at MEPS.
- E-3** **Hard** **Scouting — Eagle Scout / Girl Scout Gold Award** — Documented award; the program officer verifies at MEPS.

#### RATE-SPECIFIC AUTO-E-4 PROGRAMS

##### Nuclear Field (NF) Program — automatic E-4

MMN Sailors advance automatically to E-4 upon completion of Nuclear Power School (NPS) + Nuclear Power Training Unit (NPTU) + 6 months TIG at E-3. Entry is at E-3 on accession. Per MILPERSMAN 1510-030 §3a / §9d.

##### STAR Reenlistment — C-schools unlocking automatic E-5

Selective Training and Reenlistment (STAR) candidates who commit to one of the following C-schools at first-term reenlistment lock in automatic E-5 advancement upon completion. Pulled from the Navy Career Schools Listing (CSL).

### Nuclear Propulsion Plant Operator - Mechanical · NEC N150/N250

OBLISERV 6 yr

### Nuclear Propulsion Plant Operator - Engineering Laboratory Tech · NEC N160/N260

OBLISERV 6 yr

### Radiological Control Maintenance Supervisor · NEC N76Z

OBLISERV 6 yr

Shared across EMN / ETN / MMN.

### Basic Enlisted Submarine School (BESS)

OBLISERV 6 yr

Open to all submarine rates. Sub Sailors must complete Enlisted Submarine Warfare Qualification in addition to STAR OBLISERV.

## E-5 and E-6 Advancement Outlook

**Average** (1 of 4 factors in your favor · 1 against)



#### ▼ Manning

At/above authorized strength. Expect competition.

91% — Overmanned

#### ▲ Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB)

Substantial retention bonus — senior billets staying empty.

\$120,000 max

#### ▶ Initial Enlistment Bonus

No active enlistment bonus for this rate.

No

#### ▶ Billet-Based Advancement eligibility

Legacy exam cycles — advancement still runs through the NWA/E/FMS system. Project Compass: Not available for this rating — work directly with your detailer.

Legacy exam cycles

Sources: Manning NAVADMIN / N12 Community Health Indicator briefs · FY26 SRB NAVADMIN (N13 SRB 002/FY26) · Billet-Based Advancement Handbook (NAVADMIN 255/24, updated via NAVADMIN 112/25).

## BONUSES — CNRC ENLISTMENT INCENTIVES

### All Active CNRC Enlistment Incentives **ACTIVE DUTY**

Source: CNRC GENADMIN 10 APR 26 — effective Apr 12, 2026, contracts authorized through Dec 31, 2026 (NDAA 2026).

Active Component only. Reservist (SELRES) shipping bonuses are set by a separate CNRF incentive message — ask your recruiter.

Bonuses can stack up to the rating's EB cap; LRP is independent. Footnote numbers match the source GENADMIN.

#### Shipping Bonus (EBSHP)

Earned at RTC graduation. Cannot be recouped post-RTC. AFQT >= 31 required.

**ALL—**

April FY26 – July FY26

**\$5,000** [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9]

#### EBSHP NOTES

1. EBSHP eligibility exists only while the FS is in DEP — they may not reclassify at RTC. Earned and payable upon RTC graduation. Cannot be recouped due to post-RTC reclassification or separation.
2. NRC classifiers must list EBSHP separately on the NAVCRUIT 1133/52 Enlistment Guarantee.
3. EBSHP fills shipping gaps during the authorized window. Recruiters should not advise FSs to roll out and back in to chase a bonus.
4. Future Sailors must have an AFQT score of 31 or higher to be eligible for EBSHP.
5. If the Navy itself moves a Sailor's ship date to align with an A-school class convening date, EBSHP entitlements are preserved on the Annex and SOU.
6. FSs scheduled to ship after the designated period who roll into an authorized month, OR who sign a new contract / reclassify into the rating to ship in the designated month(s), are eligible.
7. This universal EBSHP applies to all Future Sailors scheduled to ship during the designated period and may be combined with any rating-based EBSHP for which the FS qualifies.

#### CROSS-CUTTING POLICY NOTES

1. Future Sailors with Tier 3 education credentials (e.g., HiSET / GED / alternative credential) are NOT authorized any EB.
2. Prior-service members re-enlisting onto Active Duty must enter at pay grade E-4 or below, must not have received a bonus on their first enlistment, and (Navy prior-service) must have been separated from active duty for at least 12 months before shipping.
3. EBHS (EB for High School) is currently NOT AUTHORIZED in this message — distinct from prior cycles when EBHS was offered.
4. During lapsed appropriations, classifiers may still include EB on a contract if the DD 1966 carries the funding-availability disclaimer; payment is then subject to a future appropriation.
5. Bonuses are paid in installments. Only the unearned portion of EBSR is eligible for recoupment; EBSHP/EBPST cannot be recouped after RTC graduation.

Always verify with a recruiter before signing — eligibility depends on AFQT, education tier, security-clearance adjudication, ship date, and program availability. Funding subject to congressional reauthorization of 37 USC § 331; appropriations are funded through Sep 30, 2026.

## YOU MAY QUALIFY FOR A NAVY ENLISTED CLASSIFICATION (NEC)

Specialties within this rate you can select — some with additional compensation. Each NEC has its own training, bonus potential, and career path. Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB) zones for this rating's NECs are inlined below from the FY26 SRB Chart (N13 SRB 002/FY26).

### NEC N15O/S

#### Nuclear MMN Operator / Supervisor (Plant Type N15)

Nuclear-qualified Machinist's Mate (MMN) serving in an operator (O) or supervisor (S) role on the N15 Naval Reactors plant type. Earned through Naval Nuclear Power School (NNPS), Nuclear Power Training Unit (NPTU) qualification, and plant-specific qualification. See NAVPERS 18068F Vol II.

##### SELECTIVE REENLISTMENT BONUS (SRB) — ZONE BREAKDOWN

FIRST REENLISTMENT (17 MO TO 6 YRS ACTIVE DUTY)

**\$100,000** MAX  
Active (unchanged)  
Multiple: 5.0

SECOND REENLISTMENT (6 TO 10 YRS ACTIVE DUTY)

**\$120,000** MAX  
Increased  
Multiple: 8.0

THIRD REENLISTMENT (10 TO 14 YRS ACTIVE DUTY)

Not eligible

### NEC N16O/S

#### Nuclear MMN Operator / Supervisor (Plant Type N16)

Nuclear-qualified Machinist's Mate (MMN) serving in an operator (O) or supervisor (S) role on the N16 Naval Reactors plant type. Earned through Naval Nuclear Power School (NNPS), Nuclear Power Training Unit (NPTU) qualification, and plant-specific qualification. See NAVPERS 18068F Vol II.

##### SELECTIVE REENLISTMENT BONUS (SRB) — ZONE BREAKDOWN

FIRST REENLISTMENT (17 MO TO 6 YRS ACTIVE DUTY)

**\$100,000** MAX  
Active (unchanged)  
Multiple: 5.0

SECOND REENLISTMENT (6 TO 10 YRS ACTIVE DUTY)

**\$120,000** MAX  
Increased  
Multiple: 8.0

THIRD REENLISTMENT (10 TO 14 YRS ACTIVE DUTY)

Not eligible

### NEC N25O/S

#### Nuclear MMN Operator / Supervisor (Plant Type N25)

Nuclear-qualified Machinist's Mate (MMN) serving in an operator (O) or supervisor (S) role on the N25 Naval Reactors plant type. Earned through Naval Nuclear Power School (NNPS), Nuclear Power Training Unit (NPTU) qualification, and plant-specific qualification. See NAVPERS 18068F Vol II.

##### SELECTIVE REENLISTMENT BONUS (SRB) — ZONE BREAKDOWN

FIRST REENLISTMENT (17 MO TO 6 YRS ACTIVE DUTY)

**\$100,000** MAX  
Active (unchanged)  
Multiple: 5.0

SECOND REENLISTMENT (6 TO 10 YRS ACTIVE DUTY)

**\$120,000** MAX  
Increased  
Multiple: 8.0

THIRD REENLISTMENT (10 TO 14 YRS ACTIVE DUTY)

Not eligible

### NEC N26O/S

#### Nuclear MMN Operator / Supervisor (Plant Type N26)

Nuclear-qualified Machinist's Mate (MMN) serving in an operator (O) or supervisor (S) role on the N26 Naval Reactors plant type. Earned through Naval Nuclear Power School (NNPS), Nuclear Power Training Unit (NPTU) qualification, and plant-specific qualification. See NAVPERS 18068F Vol II.

##### SELECTIVE REENLISTMENT BONUS (SRB) — ZONE BREAKDOWN

FIRST REENLISTMENT (17 MO TO 6 YRS ACTIVE DUTY)

**\$100,000** MAX  
Active (unchanged)  
Multiple: 5.0

SECOND REENLISTMENT (6 TO 10 YRS ACTIVE DUTY)

**\$120,000** MAX  
Increased  
Multiple: 8.0

THIRD REENLISTMENT (10 TO 14 YRS ACTIVE DUTY)

Not eligible

### NEC N51Z

#### Submarine Nuclear Propulsion Plant Emergency Welder

Performs emergency weld repairs on propulsion plant piping and components.

##### REQUIREMENTS

- NEC code is assigned to personnel holding PNECs N15O, N15S and N59X only.