



Captain Zeita Merchant

Commander, Sector New York
Captain of the Port
United States Coast Guard



Captain Zeita Merchant assumed command in May 2021, and directs all Coast Guard missions in the Port of New York and New Jersey. She is responsible for ensuring the safety and security of one of the Nation's busiest and most economically important port complexes. Sector New York's area of responsibility spans over 6,000 square miles from 200 miles offshore and inland to Albany, NY, and includes facilities and waterways moving hundreds of billions of dollars in cargo and tens of millions of passengers annually. Prior to joining Sector New York as Deputy Sector Commander in 2020, Captain Merchant was a National Security Fellow at Harvard University's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

Enjoying over 24 years of active duty service, Captain Merchant is a recognized authority in maritime safety and security, and crisis management. She has served in a variety of assignments at the operational and executive levels and has been certified as one of the Coast Guard's top Emergency Managers leading large-scale, multi-jurisdictional incident responses across the Nation.

Her operational assignments include commanding maritime operations across the southern tip of Lake Michigan at Marine Safety Unit Chicago. She also directed operations as the Executive Officer of Marine Safety Unit Texas City, Chief of Port Operations at Sector Miami and as a Marine Inspector and Port Operations Officer at Marine Safety Office New Orleans.

Her previous staff assignments include serving as the Special Assistant to the 27th and 28th Vice Commandants of the Coast Guard, Congressional Fellow on the Committee of Oversight and Reform and Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and Executive Strategic Planner for Coast Guard Flag and Senior Executive Service Corps.

Captain Merchant holds a Doctorate of Business Administration and Master of Quality Systems Management from the National Graduate School at New England Institute of Business, as well as a Master of Public Administration from George Washington University and a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Tougaloo College. In addition, she is a graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government's Executive Education Leadership in Homeland Security Course and a Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Seminar XXI National Security and Foreign Affairs Fellow.

She has been honored with numerous professional, academic, and community service awards, including the 2019 Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration Outstanding Achievement in Public Service, 2018 Chicago Federal Executive Board J.F. Kennedy Leadership Award, 2018 USCG Captain Jarvis Inspirational Leadership Award, 2017 USO LTC James M. O'Rourke Service Salute Award and many more. Her personal military awards include three Meritorious Service Medals, six Coast Guard Commendation Medals, three Coast Guard Achievement Medals, three Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medals, and four Commandant's Letters of Commendation, Marine Safety Insignia and Commandant's Staff Identification Badge.