



Captain Zeita Merchant

Deputy Sector Commander, Sector New York



Captain Zeita Merchant assumed the duties of Deputy Commander, Sector New York in May 2020, overseeing the daily operations of Sector New York's over 900 personnel, seven cutters, three small boat stations, two aids to navigation teams, and vessel traffic management system. Prior to joining Sector New York, Captain Merchant was a National Security Fellow at Harvard University's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

Enjoying over 23 years of active duty service, Captain Merchant is a recognized authority in the complex maritime safety and security and emergency management fields. She has served in a variety of assignments at the operational and strategic levels and has been certified as one of the Coast Guard's top Emergency Managers leading large-scale, multi-jurisdictional incident responses from Texas to Puerto Rico.

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 Corp.

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.