



CIVIL ENGINEER CORPS Frequently Asked Questions



1. What will I do in the Navy Civil Engineer Corps?

You'll find the Naval Officers of the Civil Engineer Corps working on: construction projects, infrastructure repairs and maintenance, facility support contracts, real estate management, natural resource management, environmental planning and management, and many other facilities engineering areas. The majority of new CEC Officers will find themselves working in one of these three areas: Construction Management (to include contract management), Public Works (facility management), or Expeditionary.

2. What is a "Construction/Contract Management" job like?

About 30% of new CEC Officers work as construction managers. Although exact details differ from job to job, the basic task is to ensure that Navy construction projects are built safely, as designed, on time, and within budget. Tasks include ensuring that construction is in accordance with the project plans and specifications, resolving design problems, coordinating construction schedules with Navy operations, ensuring that payments correctly reflect progress, and managing the project budget. It's difficult to create a comprehensive list of everything that a construction manager may encounter. Anything that affects safety, quality, and the timely completion of the project is a concern for the construction contract manager. That includes not only technical problems, but contractual and business issues as well. In this job you will be working in the Facilities Engineering and Acquisition Division (FEAD) of Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC).

3. What is a "Public Works" job like?

To a large extent, public works involves operating and maintaining all of the Navy's facilities. We do many of the same things that facilities managers do in every city, at every hospital, and on every college campus: power distribution, heating, air conditioning, water and wastewater, grounds maintenance, telecommunications, transportation and equipment, environmental issues, and facilities maintenance. We have many of the same concerns and encounter many of the same problems as our civilian counterparts. Public Works touches every member of the Navy/Marine Corps team. Aviators, submariners, ship-drivers, SEALs, Marines and scientists all have public works concerns, and it is our job to address them. Because of the inherently diverse nature of public works, CEC officers are in a variety of public works jobs located at Public Works Departments (PWD) all over the world, and approximately 40% of junior officers will fill these positions. Some work in the planning and execution of various projects, and others may work with the operating forces to help coordinate and prioritize public works concerns.

4. What is an “Expeditionary” job like?

Unlike public works and construction management, an Expeditionary job is something unique to the Navy. About 30% of CEC Junior Officer jobs are Expeditionary, but these jobs offer a chance to gain skills and experiences that cannot be found elsewhere. The majority of these jobs are with the Seabees. The Seabees are a force of highly skilled enlisted personnel, trained in both construction and defensive combat, under the leadership of CEC officers. At any given time, Seabees are deployed around the world to perform contingency construction, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief. The Seabee’s motto, “We Build, We Fight” sums it up. Seabees can be found in Naval Mobile Construction Battalions (NMCB), Amphibious Construction Battalions (ACB), or Underwater Construction Teams (UCT). Each of these units exemplifies the unique spirit of the Seabees, provides a different construction capability for the Navy and presents unique leadership challenges for CEC officers. A new CEC officer will be expected to lead Seabees through the successful completion of any number of missions. Developing leadership skills is imperative in everything a CEC officer does and the leadership lessons and experience gained in the Seabees are particularly powerful.

5. I’m not a civil engineer. What will I do in the Civil Engineer Corps?

The same things all other CEC Officers are doing. In the eyes of the Civil Engineer Corps, a good engineer is a good engineer, regardless of what discipline they have studied. In addition to civil engineers, the CEC needs mechanical engineers, electrical engineers, environmental engineers, architects, and other engineer majors (with an ABET accredited engineering degree), or accredited architecture degree (NAAB). The CEC expects all of its engineers and architects to perform in all areas, across disciplines, with equal proficiency.

6. What is the CEC Collegiate Program and am I eligible? Will the Navy pay back loans I’ve already incurred?

The Collegiate Program is for students pursuing their accredited ABET or NAAB degree to apply for and potentially be selected to be in the CEC while they are still in school for up to 24 months if pursuing a Bachelors or 18 months if pursuing a Master’s degree. The minimum requirements are to be a US Citizen between the ages of 19 and 42, working towards their accredited degree, and have a minimum 2.7 GPA. If selected, the student will receive an average salary of \$3,900 per month and full medical and dental insurance. There are no uniforms, haircuts, drilling, or military classes required while in college. The Collegiate Program does not pay for school or loans already incurred. If you join the CEC after earning your Bachelor degree, you could go back to graduate school as a Lieutenant, paid for by the Navy (see additional information in question 14).

7. What training will I get right after I graduate?

You will first attend Officer Candidate School (OCS) in Newport, RI, which is a 12 week basic training program for officers. After OCS, new CEC Officers attend the Basic Course at the Civil Engineer Corps Officer School (CECOS) in Port Hueneme, CA. The Basic Course is a total of 16 weeks, comprised of training in CEC orientation, government contracting, and Seabee missions. The course is a non-technical (no calculus or physics) introduction to the many roles performed by CEC officers, along with some specialized training relating to your first assignment. However, the best way to develop necessary skills and become proficient in what we do is “on-the-job” training, which is recognized as the most significant portion of any CEC officer’s training.

8. Do I get to choose where I will go or what I will do?

Prior to every assignment you will speak with a detailer (the person responsible for assigning jobs) regarding your choices for your next job. You can specify your top three choices for geographic location and job type based on what jobs are available at the time you are scheduled to rotate. The detailer will then use your requests and balance it against the needs of the Navy and your career development to determine your next duty assignment. You are expected to rotate between facilities management, expeditionary, and staff jobs throughout your career. The important thing is to make your preferences known. The smaller size of our community (about 1,200 officers) also works in our favor. It allows us to make the whole process a little more “personal.”

9. When will I find out where I’ll be working?

During OCS, your detailer will meet with you or get in touch with you by email or phone, and based on your input and the needs of the Navy, you’ll be given your first assignment before you graduate from OCS.

10. Will I go to CECOS right after OCS?

It depends on when you graduate OCS. While OCS classes are graduating every few weeks, there are only two CECOS classes each year (beginning in February and August). There is a good chance there will be a time gap between OCS graduation and the start of the next CECOS class. If that happens, you will go to your first duty station to begin learning about the CEC and what will be expected of you in your first job. Having a good understanding of what your responsibilities are before going to CECOS makes the training you receive in Port Hueneme a lot more meaningful. You will have a lot more questions!

11. What are the chances I’ll go overseas?

Since most Navy bases are in the United States, the majority (about 70%) of the junior officer CEC jobs are located here. We do have bases overseas, and about 17% of the junior officer jobs in the CEC are located outside of the contiguous United States. The remaining jobs are in the Seabees, who deploy overseas on a regular basis. Unlike deployments with the Seabees, the overseas jobs must be requested.

12. How do my duties as an officer change from peace time to war time?

CEC officer’s rotate through the three CEC job types mentioned above (Public Works, Construction Management, and Expeditionary). We deploy in peace time and war time in order to maintain a state of readiness. Public Works and Construction Management positions won’t change as these two roles are at all Navy and Marine Corps bases in the US and permanent bases worldwide. Expeditionary roles will change; the locations and type of construction we do will depend on the mission.

13. How many years will I be obligated to the CEC community?

You will be obligated for a total of eight years of service. However, only four years of that eight are active duty service. The remaining four (or the balance if you serve more than four on active duty) will be Inactive Ready Reserve (IRR). This means you have no annual obligation but can be, in the event of a national emergency, recalled into service.

14. Will the Navy send me to graduate school? If so, where and when will I go?

The Navy sends all career minded CEC Officers to fully-funded graduate school. That means that tuition is paid AND the Officer receives all of his/her pay to go to school full time without any additional duties. Normally officers are selected to go to graduate school after they have been in the Navy at least six years but before they have reached ten years of service. Deciding which school to attend and degree type is left to each individual officer, subject to Navy approval. There is an additional obligation (typically about three years) associated with going to graduate school. For a list of approved schools, consult your Accessions Officer.

15. Will CEC jobs count toward the minimum experience required in order to sit for the Professional Engineers or Registered Architects examinations?

Individual states have their own experience requirements, but all states recognize serving in the CEC as good engineering experience. Since getting a PE/RA is a requirement for senior CEC Officers to get promoted, there are ample registered engineers and architects within the CEC to act as mentors and help you to meet all requirements. All CEC Officers are expected to pursue professional licensure.

16. Will I get to design anything?

Most design is performed by Navy civilian employees or contracted A/E firms. CEC officers are involved in defining project requirements, supervising and executing designs, but not in the “hands-on” creation of the designs. In the Seabees, where there are no civilians, CEC officers do make design decisions, but they tend to be “on-the-job” decisions that reflect the time sensitive nature of the Seabees’ mission. To ensure that CEC architecture majors are able to gain the requisite hours of experience in AXP Experience Setting A, the CEC has developed the IADP (Intern-Architect Development Program) which sends a CEC junior officer architecture major to a 12-18 month internship under the direct supervision of a registered architect working under NAVFAC. Please refer to the CEC Architect Fact Sheet for additional details.

17. How do deployments work? How long are they? Where are you deployed to?

You will only deploy when you are assigned to an expeditionary billet, and will not be stationed on a ship or deployed out at sea. Seabee battalions typically spend 10-12 months at home in training with a follow-on deployment that typically lasts 6-8 months. The main deployment sites are Rota, Spain and Okinawa, Japan. From these locations, small detachments can be launched anywhere in the world.

18. When will I get promoted?

CEC promotions mirror those in the rest of the Navy. Currently, you can expect to be promoted to Lieutenant Junior Grade (O-2) two years after commissioning and to Lieutenant (O-3) two years later. Promotions beyond the rank of Lieutenant are subject to selection boards that take into account annual evaluations, professional qualifications, etc.

19. What is the starting salary while in the Collegiate Program and for an Ensign (O-1)?

Your pay is broken down into Base Pay, Housing Allowance, and Sustenance Allowance. The military pay charts can be found through an online search, or you can use this website to calculate your pay based on rank, your time in the military, if you have dependents, and your location: <https://militarypay.defense.gov/calculators/rmc-calculator/>. We are paid twice a month and only the Base Pay is taxed. For example, pay for an E-3 is as follows (students start out as an E-3 in the Collegiate Program):

Salary:	\$1,981.20
Housing:	\$1,488.00 (this is for the Denver area)
Sustenance:	\$ 369.39
=	\$4,207.78 per month

20. How does leave work and how much time is allotted per year?

We have all federal holidays and weekends off, which is considered "liberty". We are given 30 days per year of leave, which can be used by putting a request in to your supervisor. You can accumulate up to 60 days of leave to carry over to the next year (the number of days allowed to be carried over is higher when you are stationed in a deployable unit).

21. Where can I expect to be stationed? Can I stay in one geographical area?

CEC officers are stationed at every Naval and Marine Corps base worldwide. There are over 140 different locations. Expect to relocate every two to three years to get experience in different regions.

22. What is the housing situation like for an officer?

While in training at OCS and CECOS you will live in the officer barracks which are similar to a college dormitory. At your permanent duty stations you can choose whether you would like to live on base in military housing or off base. If you choose to live on base your housing allowance stipend will be used in its entirety to pay the rent. If you live off base you will be given the full amount of your housing allowance stipend even if your rent is less than that amount.

23. This sounds interesting. Who do I contact for more information?

Your first source of information should be your local Navy Officer Recruiter. Search "Navy Recruiting" online or call 1-800-USA-NAVY and you will be directed to the closest Navy Recruiting Office in your area. For more detailed information about the Civil Engineer Corps contact one of our CEC Accessions Officer in your area at:

https://www.navfac.navy.mil/jobs/students_and_grads/CEC_Collegiate_Program/how-to-apply.html