

International Maritime Staff Operators Course

Preparing for IMSOC

I. What to Bring

A. Passports and Visas

You will need to obtain a U.S. entry visa from the U.S. Embassy in your country. Because you represent your government, you will need an “A-2” visa category or “NATO-2” for students from NATO countries. To avoid difficult renewal problems, ensure your passports will be valid for the entire time you will be in the United States. Also make sure your “Multiple Entry” visa is valid for the same period.

When you enter the United States, the immigration official who examines your passport and visa will generate an electronic I-94 record. You will not be provided with a paper copy of your I-94 record. If you require a paper version of your I-94, it is available at www.cbp.gov/I94.

B. Invitational Travel Order (ITO)

The designated U.S. military representative in your country will issue an Invitational Travel Order (ITO) to you. You will need the original and three (3) copies of your ITO when you report to the Naval War College (NWC). Ensure all items on your ITO are completed correctly by the U.S. representative in your country before you depart. Ensure the following:

1. The inclusive dates are correct to include your specific arrival and departure dates.
2. The visa codes are appropriately marked as described above.
3. You completely understand the medical coverage.

Remember that YOU are the International Military Student (IMS), so if it says medical costs are the responsibility of the IMS, make sure you have medical insurance coverage. This is covered in more detail in the Medical Information section. Medical coverage varies by country, but regardless of the method, all students must have coverage before they arrive in the United States.

C. Weather

Temperatures in Newport vary greatly depending upon the season. In the coldest part of winter, November to March, temperatures can be as cold as 10 to 30 degrees Fahrenheit (-1 to -12 degrees Celsius). From January to March you can expect 1 to 3 snowstorms per month. April begins to warm up, but winter effects are not completely over; there may be a rare snowstorm early in the month. However, the last freeze typically occurs by mid-month. In May, daytime temperatures average near 70 degrees. Temperatures in June rise slightly and because of the warm moist air, fog can be expected to occur on about half of the days of the month.

In the hottest part of the summer, July to September, temperatures can be as high as 75 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit (22–30 Celsius). October is usually one of the best months of the year—warm, dry days and cool nights. In November, freezing temperatures are common by the end of the month with the possibility of the first measurable snowfall. December is characterized by moderate to strong outbreaks of cold polar air.

D. Uniforms and Attire Policy

1. Informal

- a. Daily uniform attire: National Working Uniform.
- b. Civilian attire:
 - i. Business – Trousers, jacket, shirt, and tie.
 - ii. Business Casual – jacket, no tie.
- c. Working uniform is the primary dress while attending academic classes.
- d. There will be a class photo and graduation ceremony.

2. Casual

- a. Collared shirt, casual slacks, and casual shoes.
- b. No blue jeans, shorts, or athletic shoes.
- c. This is the attire for conducting after-hours or weekend business/studies within the NWC complex; may be prescribed during designated holiday periods.

3. Athletic – Tee shirts, shorts, jeans, sports slacks; primarily for sports, picnics/cookouts.

E. Uniform Replacement

The Navy Uniform Shop does not carry any uniform supplies for non-U.S. Navy uniforms. You are allowed to purchase any U.S. Navy uniform item that is not distinctive such as, uniform trousers and coats without U.S. Navy insignia.

F. Civilian Clothing

Suits, dresses, or sport coats with ties and slacks are appropriate for all activities when the uniform is not required. Casual clothes, such as open-collar shirts, shorts in summer, sweaters in winter, etc., are appropriate during leisure time. Lightweight fabrics during summer and wool during the cool and cold months will be the most comfortable. A raincoat, a lightweight coat for cool weather, and a heavyweight coat for cold weather are necessary, as well as hat, gloves, and boots.

G. Buying Clothing in the Newport Area

There are numerous stores in Newport and Middletown with a variety of clothing prices. Even greater selections are available in shopping malls in Providence, Warwick, and Wrentham. The

Navy Exchange on base often has good prices and is tax-free. The Navy Relief Thrift Shop on base is also a good source of inexpensive, previously owned garments.

II. Finances

A. Personal Finances

All students are strongly recommended to obtain a major credit card before departing home or carry adequate funds to meet their needs. Even if you are reimbursed for your living allowances, you will need either a credit card or enough cash to initially pay for your lodging expenses in Newport. Visa, Master Card, and American Express are widely accepted in the United States.

If you do not have a credit card, it is highly recommended that you get one before coming to the United States since you may not be able to open a credit card account with a U.S. bank.

B. On-Base Housing Rates

1. NGIS – \$135 USD/Day
2. Navy Lodge – \$135 USD/Day

C. Living Allowances

The cost of living in the Newport area may require special living allowances from your government. For most FMS case students, these allowances are paid by the home government. For some IMET students, the U.S. government pays a living allowance. This allowance is a supplement to the student's regular pay and allowances. Make sure you know the facts from your own government as you make your plans.

D. Currency Exchange

There are several banks in the Newport area that will exchange international currency for a nominal fee.

E. Information Technology

Free wireless internet is available within on-base accommodations, classrooms, and at the Cybercafé on base.

F. Automobiles (Rental)

If required, rental car companies are available locally.

H. Driver's License

Each driver is required to always have a valid driver's license when driving. The easiest way to meet this requirement is to bring your valid driver's license from your home country. Obtaining a Rhode Island driver's license is prohibited.

I. Social Security Number

Applying for a Social Security Number is prohibited per the State Department to receive medical coverage or for being procured for a Rhode Island driver's license.

III. Medical Information

Medical entitlements vary from country to country, and private medical insurance can be very expensive. Each foreign government has entered into a bilateral agreement with the U.S. government regarding medical care for military personnel. These agreements vary from country to country, and even change year to year. Preexisting medical and dental issues should be treated **BEFORE** arrival in Newport.

Read the section in your ITO that covers medical information carefully and ask questions of your embassy to ensure you have complete answers BEFORE leaving your country. The ITO is the only authority for receiving medical entitlements, so it is important for the student to understand the provisions of their ITO.

The student will be expected to cover the cost of all expenses originating from routine medical visits and procedures. The Naval War College Independent Duty Corpsman (IDC) will be utilized (Monday through Friday) prior to visiting the Military Treatment Facility (MTF) for sudden and urgent medical and only urgent dental needs that arise during your stay at the NWC. However, medical care from the MTF is not always without cost. Consult with IMSO first.

Coverage for dental services is extremely limited. Dental care is an out-of-pocket expense. All students should ensure that all routine dental care is completed in the home country prior to departure. **ONLY URGENT DENTAL CARE IS AVAILABLE.**

The best time to ask health insurance questions is before you leave your country. It may be possible for your embassy in the United States to add you to their group insurance plan with a U.S. company, and in some cases, even pay for the coverage.