

Yacht Crew Job Roles

The Who's Who Of Yachting

Superyachts come in all shapes and sizes and with those come different yacht crew job roles. Whilst some smaller yachts out there operate with just a Captain and partner, at the other end of the spectrum are yachts that operate with in excess of 30 crew. Yacht crew are the cogs that keep the yacht moving, in every aspect. From safety and logistics to systems maintenance, cooking, cleaning, hospitality service, and guest experience.

Whether a yacht is private or charter, motor or sail, the crew ensures the yacht is run to both the safest and highest luxury standards. Whilst smaller yachts may not have all of the roles detailed below, the requirements often remain the same and responsibilities will overlap. A yacht's crew can comprise full-time crew members, rotational crew, seasonal crew, and even day workers to fulfill the below roles:

The Captain (The boss...)

The Captain has legal and ultimate responsibility for the yacht. A captain's primary duty is to ensure the overall safe manning, movement, and operation of the yacht. They must have overall knowledge of the operations within each department and ensure the whole crew works well as a team. The Captain is usually the central contact point between the owner, guests and crew, as well as any yacht management company. The Captain's decision is final.

"Being a yacht Captain is about ensuring you are totally immersed in the overview of everything concerning the vessel, including but not limited to the owner's wishes, the

motivation and well-being of the crew, and streamlining the program to be as efficient as possible. It's a constant challenge with ever-shifting components.

Despite the huge commitment you need to have, how much time and how much work it requires, there are many rewards coming in many different forms. For me, it's during guest operations, when you can take a step back, and watch the trained team in action, good crew energised in a good state of mind, delivering next-level service for seriously impressed guests. When you can see the guests truly taken aback, and you know the crew have absolutely nailed it, it's what you're here for and it makes you proud to be their Captain." – Captain Charlie Rowlands, [@MYAxioma](#)

Video by Jared Watney

"Running a superyacht is fun, stressful, and the ultimate challenge. Dealing not only with the owners or charter guests and their needs but with Agents, Ports, and suppliers to arrange for everything to align smoothly is the ultimate task." – Captain Sean Victor, [@YachtBina](#)

Chief Officer/First Mate (The Captain's right hand...)

The specific duties will vary dependent on a yacht's size and other crew roles aboard. In general, the Chief Officer is responsible for the safe manning of the yacht as well as passage and planning to assist the Captain. The Chief Officer will oversee crew operations and maintenance schedules. They also must have the knowledge, skill, and qualifications to step in for the Captain if need be.

Chief Engineer (Fixer of all things...)

This crew member heads up the engineering department.

Dependent on the size of the yacht, there will be one or two, 2nd and 3rd engineers below the Chief, assisting with maintenance and servicing tasks. They are responsible for all technical aspects and equipment, along with general maintenance and servicing of systems. The engineering department is the go-to when anything breaks and needs to be fixed, from the main engine through to the crew mess TV. Generally, they don't have much contact with guests but will need to hold up guest relations for when onboard.

<http://www.instagram.com/p/CZ44U8qIck-/>

ETO (Gadget officer...)

The ETO is responsible for all things electrical onboard, from the electronics equipment to the communications systems. They must have excellent skills in AV and IT, from re-booting the WiFi router to making an emergency call halfway across the ocean, they are the tech guru.

"The role of an ETO/ITO on board a yacht is a unique position not often well understood or defined. The typical ETO should be the 'Jack of all trades, master of all as well' kind, a conundrum to say the least. The job demands knowledge and experience of so many different aspects, ensuring the internet is operational, looking after complex entertainment and automation systems along with having a solid Information Technology foundation covering many subsets. Also, often required is a comprehensive understanding of electrical systems, mostly to fix those LED lights which are meant to last almost a lifetime! Finally, tying these all together and still having good people skills sets one up to fulfill possibly one of the most diverse roles, which provides an interesting job that promises to keep one continuously learning. It would be hard to provide any negatives, apart from hearing that most common of questions – 'Is the Wi-Fi down?' Well no, the Wi-Fi is always 'up' but as for the link to the internet, that is questionable." – Alan Yeld, ETO

[@MotoryachtCloudbreak](#)

http://www.instagram.com/p/B_FSp20gl1b/

Bosun/Lead Deckhand (The chamois leader...)

Responsible for the deck and exterior team and all deck operations, the Bosun should have a keen eye for detail and take pride in keeping the exterior of the yacht pristine. The Bosun tends to be the main tender driver but will have a team of qualified tender driving deckhands on hand to help. They are responsible for the overall maintenance of the exterior.

“My role onboard is to supervise the deck crew maintaining the exterior of SY Black Pearl in immaculate condition, organising all storage of deck equipment and consumables, and the maintenance of all tenders and associated equipment. I also decide what jobs need to be done and allocate them to the deck department, which then needs to be checked by myself at the end of the day. The only downside to this is that if the job hasn’t been done to my satisfaction, I then have to ask my friend/colleague to redo the job.” – James Benning, Bosun [@SYBlackPearl](#)

Video by Dutch Yachting

Deckhand (The chamois expert...)

Depending on the size of the yacht, there may be a number of deckhands onboard to ensure the exterior of the yacht is maintained in spotless condition. Along with the general cleanliness, wash downs, polishing, and ongoing maintenance of the exterior, deckhands will also be qualified in maintaining and driving the tenders. Additional skills for deckhands include varnishing, carpentry, sanding, etc. They are vital in the docking of the boat and need to be confident with line handling and yacht maneuvers. The deck crew will also be involved in taking watches whilst at sea.

"My role onboard is as the bosun's right-hand man, and the deck department's first port of call when anything needs to be done. I am to ensure I am always presentable, as well as the exterior of the yacht, and always with a microfibre cloth in hand or close by! I am part of a cohesive team that ensures the safety of all crew and guests as well as ensuring everyone onboard is enjoying themselves as much as possible. From chamois to jet skis, the job is painless and rewarding but most certainly not for the faint-hearted." – Tristan Morgans, Deckhand aboard – [@DB9Yacht](#)

<http://www.instagram.com/p/CTbwemcFkHx/>

Purser/Chief Stew (The organiser...)

Dependent upon the size of the vessel, the Purser/Chief Stew has the responsibility of running the interior department. This means ensuring that the interior team adheres to an extremely high, luxury standard whereby the stewardesses anticipate the guests' needs and go above and beyond to ensure the comfort and positive experience of the guests. As a Purser/Chief Stew, the role also includes paperwork surrounding crew management and general admin – inventorying, purchasing, provisioning, accounting, and guest logistics.

"As a Chief Stewardess, I oversee the interior of the vessel, including all guest and crew areas. Leading a team of stewardesses I ensure everything is maintained and detailed to a 7-star standard. From a full-service laundry to immaculate housekeeping and providing bespoke service, no detail is overlooked. All budgeting, provisioning, hiring and training is the responsibility of the Chief Stewardess. The ultimate goal is to ensure every member of the team feels confident providing the highest standard of service for the guests. My highlight is watching the stewardesses learn their keen eye for detail, and to be able to execute a perfect dinner service." – [@theyachtstew](#), 75m M/Y

<http://www.instagram.com/p/CIJje-ARag/>

Steward/ess (The inside magicians...)

Working under the Purser/Chief Stew, a Steward/ess will work on the interior, ensuring the cleanliness and organisation of all parts. Their main focus is the owner, when onboard, and any guests or charterers. They will rotate job responsibilities between housekeeping, service, and laundry. Roles include service, bar, cleaning, cabin preparation, detailing, flower arranging, and table decoration. Depending on the size of the yacht, they may also be called upon to help with galley provisioning and docking. They are also responsible for safely storing items when the boat goes to sea.

"I always thought being a Stewardess and 'stuck inside' wouldn't be a role for me but I have now been working on yachts for 4 years and have recently moved onto sailing yachts, which I love. There is so much more to our job role than simply making the yacht look pretty and keeping it clean, my focus has always been to make sure the guests are enjoying every second."- [@gemmaharris3](#), S/Y 30m

Head Chef/Sole Chef/Crew Chef (The feeders...)

Depending on the size of the yacht there will be either one or two chefs onboard. The Head Chef has sole responsibility for the galley, and the chefs cater to both the owner/guests and their fellow crewmembers for all meals and snacks. They are responsible for menu planning to all preference types, sticking to a budget for provisioning and delivering gourmet creations. For the crew, the chefs have responsibility of ensuring they always have a meal on board, even on days off. Dependent upon the size of the yacht they may also be called

to help out on the deck with docking.

“Catering to different tastes has its challenges in itself without the added feat of provisioning in different places, remote islands, and at foreign supermarkets, but with these tasks come the perfect aspect of the job as a yacht chef: amazing adventures. Being flexible is key in this role, be it adapting menus to suit different tastebuds or transforming a dinner for two into a last-minute dinner party for 12, whilst facing the probability of different dietary requests. The highlights are not only the travels but also the people you get to meet along the way. Cooking for celebrities might be fun, but making people happy through food is what I love the most, and that certainly also counts for the crew alongside me throughout the journey. Equally as important as pleasing guests is always making sure the crew’s bellies are full and they’re getting a good variety of deliciousness!”- [@sailingfooddiaries](#), 31m M/Y



More, specialised yacht crew job roles;

There are also a number of more specialized yacht crew job roles that are usually teamed with a deck/steward/ess role. These include fitness trainers, yoga instructors, water sports instructors, beauty therapists, nannies, helicopter pilots, chauffeurs, and nurses.

For more on the crew mess career and training, [click here](#)