



May 26, 2026  
JAPAN COAST GUARD

**SAPPHIRE26**  
**JCG-USCG-CCG Joint SAR Exercise in 2026**

~Toward the realization of FOIP~

The Japan Coast Guard, the United States Coast Guard and the Canadian Coast Guard conducted a joint SAR exercise off the coast of Victoria, Canada on May 21, 2026.

**1. OUTLINE**

- ( 1 ) Date and Time  
May 21, 2026, 09:00 (Local time)  
May 22, 2026, 02:00 (JST)

- ( 2 ) Location  
Off the coast of Victoria, Canada

- ( 3 ) Assets  
○Japan Coast Guard  
Training vessel "ITSUKUSHIMA"  
○United States Coast Guard  
87-ft cutter  
45-ft cutter  
Helicopter

- Canadian Coast Guard  
CCGS Tanu87-ft cutter  
47-ft Search and rescue lifeboat

- ( 4 ) Exercise Contents

A yacht was assumed to capsize off the coast of Victoria, Canada, and a report was received that crew members had fallen overboard. The Japan Coast Guard (JCG), the United States Coast Guard (USCG) and the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) jointly conducted search and rescue operations.



## 2. EXERCISE RESULT

- Through this exercise, the three organizations confirmed methods of coordination for joint search and rescue operations and shared the necessary skills and knowledge.
- This exercise provided a valuable opportunity for cadets of the Japan Coast Guard Academy aboard the training vessel “ITSUKUSHIMA” and trainees from the Canadian Coast Guard Academy (who have been on board since departure from Canada) to learn the importance of cooperation with foreign coast guard agencies.
- The JCG will continue to promote cooperation with the USCG through “SAPPHIRE” and with the CCG under the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC), toward the realization of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP).



### 3. BACKGROUND

#### ( 1 ) Background of the Exercise

- In recent years, cooperation with foreign coast guard agencies has become increasingly important in promoting efforts to maintain and strengthen the maritime order based on the rule of law toward the realization of FOIP.
- In this context, in order to further enhance cooperation, this joint exercise was conducted, taking the opportunity of the port call of the training vessel “ITSUKUSHIMA” in Canada.

#### ( 2 ) SAPPHIRE (“ Solid Alliance for Peace and Prosperity with Humanity and Integrity on the Rule-of-law based Engagement ”)

- The JCG and the USCG have been building deep relationship since the JCG was established in 1948. On several occasions, the JCG and the USCG have strengthened their relationship, including in 2010, when the two organizations signed and exchanged the MoC.
- Therefore, the two organizations are striving to promote joint operations and joint exercises, having signed an ANNEX to the MoC in 2022.
- These joint efforts of the JCG and the USCG are named “SAPPHIRE”

#### ( 3 ) Signing of a MoC to Promote Information Sharing among the JCG and Canadian maritime agencies

- In February 2026, the Commandant of the JCG and the Ambassador of Canada to Japan signed a MoC to Promote Information Sharing among the JCG, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the CCG.
- Based on this MoC, the parties aim to further strengthen cooperation between the Japanese and Canadian coast guard authorities toward the realization of FOIP by promoting information sharing.

#### ( 4 ) Overview of the Global Ocean Training Voyage of the Training Vessel “ITSUKUSHIMA” in 2026

- Every year, the JCGA conducts a training voyage for cadets to acquire the knowledge and skills required for their duties, while enhancing practical capabilities, leadership skills, and an international perspective.
- During the 2026 training voyage, the vessel has already called at Victoria and Vancouver in Canada, San Francisco in the United States, and will call at Honolulu in the United States, Sydney in Australia, Singapore, and Manila in the Philippines.
- Period: May 1 to July 28, 2026 (89 days)
- Total Distance: Approximately 22,000 nautical miles (approximately 41,000 kilometers)
- Personnel on Board: 58 cadets (including 16 women) and 55 crew members and others (including 6 women)

#### ( 5 ) Overview of the United States Coast Guard

- The USCG is a maritime law enforcement agency under the Department of Homeland Security. In addition to its headquarters organization, it has two area commands, the Pacific Area and the Atlantic Area, and nine districts under these commands.
- Its primary missions include law enforcement, ensuring maritime safety, search and rescue, marine environmental protection, and national defense.

( 6 ) Overview of the Canadian Coast Guard

- The CCG is a maritime organization under the Department of National Defence. In addition to its headquarters, it has four regional organizations: the Atlantic, Central, Arctic, and Western regions.
- Its primary missions include ensuring maritime safety, search and rescue, marine environmental protection, ice monitoring and icebreaking operations, as well as supporting maritime security through contributions to maritime domain awareness, support to enforcement and security partners, and the collection and sharing of intelligence.