



The ultimate guide to working on Superyachts

How to start your new career as a Deckhand, Steward or Stewardess

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What is a Superyacht?

The term “Superyacht” is used to distinguish larger, more luxurious vessels from regular yachts. A Superyacht is a professionally crewed motor or sailing yacht, ranging from 24 metres to more than 180 meters long. Today there are over 10,000 [privately owned Superyachts](#) sailing around the world.

Owning a Superyacht is the ultimate status symbol for the ultra rich. Superyachts are not cheap, a 90m yacht will set you back around EUR 130 million.

The Captain and crew provide the ultimate holiday experience from

anywhere in the world.

Superyachts require a crew of motivated Officers, Engineers, Chefs, Deckhands, Stewards and Stewardess all under the watchful eye of the Captain who has overall responsibility for the yacht and everyone on board.

Like any commercial ship a Superyacht is bound by legislation laid down by Governments. The Superyacht industry is highly professional and operates under strict health and safety regulations, known as COSWOP.

Is working on a Superyacht right for me?



Most crew who work on a Superyacht started out because of the travel and adventure the industry offers. Yes, travelling the world meeting like minded people on a beautiful yacht can't be all bad! However, you do need to ask yourself a few questions before you make the leap...

Can I face hard work? - Make no mistake working on a Superyacht is hard work. Although it may seem like fun in the sunshine, Superyacht crew work long hours for their money. While the boss or guests are onboard you may find yourself working 14 hour days for weeks at a time.

Am I happy living away from home? - One attraction to working in yachting is the travel, however being away from home for months at a time is not everybody's cup of tea. If you are a home bird and a family person then think carefully about starting a career working on Superyachts.

Can I deal with living in cramped conditions? - The crew cabins can be on the small side and you will be sharing with fellow crew mates. Superyacht crew live, work and socialise together so finding a quiet corner can be difficult.

Am I medically fit to work at sea? - It's important to remember to get your ENG1 Medical. The ENG1 Medical is compulsory for all seafarers who want to work commercially on a yacht.



How do I get into Yachting?

Traditionally a career in yachting was not something that you would see at a college career event. Today the industry has grown 10 fold, there are many more yachts, requiring qualified professional crew. If you want to get into yachting then we have a couple of tips for you:

1. **Continue reading this guide**, as you will learn lots of useful information about working in the industry.
2. Decide what role you would like to do. Everybody starts out working as a Deckhand, Steward, or Stewardess. Whether you choose Deck or Stew will depend on your background.
3. You will need some formal training as a [Deckhand](#) or [Stewardess](#).
4. Create a cracking CV.
5. Look for work either through Superyacht recruitment agents, online or via Social Media.

Here are some useful links to give you a taste of the Superyacht Industry.

[Begin a career on a Superyacht](#)
[Jarad Whatney](#), life on a superyacht
[Below decks](#)





Who is in charge?

Having an understanding of yacht crew positions helps you know who to report to, but also aids your focus of career progression and what path you should take.

In general there is a hierarchy of yacht crew positions, but the role itself and job descriptions will vary from yacht to yacht.

The larger the yacht the more crew is needed, where additional staff will be required to ensure the smooth operation of the yacht.

On smaller yachts, roles can cross over and be more varied, which suits some crew. You could be combined Deck/Stew.

Captain – They have ultimate responsibility for the safe running of the yacht and liaising with the guests and owners.

Chief Engineer – Responsible for all things mechanical and electrical on the yacht.

Officer of the Watch (OOW) – The second in command to the Captain. The OOW run a watch (shift) when on passage and usually looks after the navigation. Responsible for the day to day running of the deck.

Chief Steward/ess – In charge of the yachts interior, service and laundry. The Chief Steward/ess makes sure the guests or owners receive a 5* service 24 hours a day.

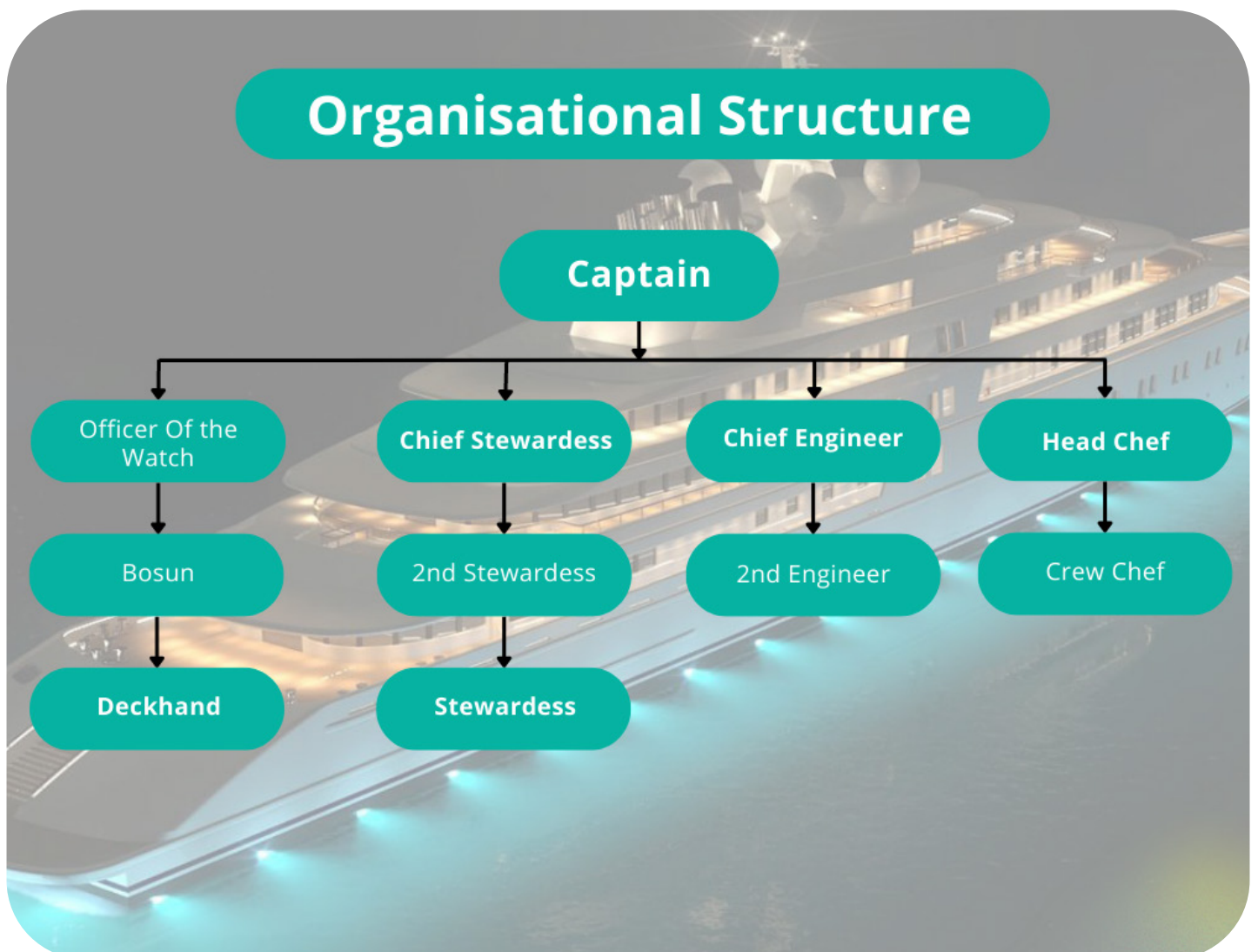
Chef – Provides high quality food for the guests, owners and crew. Having a well fed crew makes for a happy boat! Large yachts will employ a separate crew and guest chef.

Bosun – Also known as Senior Deckhand, and often has a few seasons experience. He or she will take charge of daily cleaning and maintenance tasks. They will also drive the yachts tenders.

Deckhand – Involved with all the maintenance and cleaning to ensuring that the yacht is in perfect condition all the time. Will be involved in deck operations, mooring, anchoring watch duties, tender driving, help with the yacht toys, and sometimes security duties.

Steward/Stewardess – Responsible for the interior of the yacht, service, cabin preparation and for ensuring the guest and owners have everything they need.

The yachts hierarchy





Typical working day

A typical working day on a Superyacht will start with a briefing from the head of department around 08:00. You will complete your daily tasks and work through the jobs list. There will be two breaks plus lunch before finish around 17:00.

When the owner or guests are onboard then the days can be long and hard work. There is no set finish time so expect 12 - 14 hour days. It has been known for crew to work weeks without a day off.

The perks do outweigh the long hours and hard work, which is why working in the Superyacht industry is so attractive.



Your role onboard

The best place to start for most people is with an entry-level position on the yacht. This often means your first job on a yacht will be working as a deckhand or stewardess.

Deckhand

A Deckhand is a vital member of the yacht crew, who (among other tasks) is in charge of looking after the exterior of the boat.

Daily tasks can include; wash-downs, polishing, varnishing, teak cleaning, sanding, painting and general maintenance. You may be asked to drive or assist on the yacht tenders.

Depending on the size of the yacht, you may be part of a team of Deckhands, or you could be the only one. Your daily tasks are likely to be given to you by the Bosun or First Officer.

During busy times you may even help other departments, for example, the Stewardesses may need a hand to prepare for guests or the arrival of the owners. So your tasks could even include arranging tables or serving meals.

Having qualifications and skills such as being a dinghy instructor, carpenter or mechanic could make you more employable, especially on bigger yachts.

Steward or Stewardess

Providing a 5-star service to the owners and guests, your main responsibility is to maintain the interior of the yacht and provide the highest standard of hospitality possible.

Taking direction from the Chief Stewardess, you will need a keen eye for attention to details, be able to learn new skills quickly and be confident in your ability to perform any job in an exceptional manner.

Every yacht is different but generally you would start at around 08:00 with a crew briefing, then your day will begin around 08:30.

Your duties may include cabin preparation and detailing to a very high standard, laundry, setting tables, arranging flowers and cleaning all areas of the interior of the yacht.

On some yachts you will help the deckhand team moor (park) the yacht. When guests or owners are on board you will serve food and drinks, prepare beach parties, pack and unpack luggage and be on call for anything that the guests want anytime day or night.



What qualifications do I need to work on a Superyacht?

Qualifications show more than just the skills they certify. By stacking up qualifications on your CV, you show commitment to the industry.

The minimum qualifications required to work on a Superyacht are:

ENG1 Medical

If you are planning to work at sea then you must have a Medical Fitness Certificate to prove you don't have any serious conditions that could prevent you from performing your duties.

We find colour blindness is the most common reason why customers fail the ENG1 medical, so many people do not know that they are colour blind. We always recommend getting your [ENG1 Medical](#) before you start training.

STCW

STCW stands for 'Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping'. STCW Basic Safety Training is compulsory for ALL seafarers who are looking to work at sea. STCW Basic Safety Training is a 5 day shore-based course.

Although shore-based, the course is made up of mostly practical elements, including fire fighting, sea survival and first aid training.

STCW and ENG1 are the minimum legal requirements however, the qualifications do not teach you how to do your day job.



On top of the mandatory qualification just mentioned, budding Deckhands, Stewards and Stewardesses should have experience in the job that you are to do. Each yacht is different but all will expect to see the basics, some of these skills include:



For Deckhands

- Powerboat level 2
- PWC (jet ski) qualification
- Able to tie knots
- Basic boating experience
- Good communication skills
- Good at cleaning boats
- Happy to/used to working long hours

Steward & Stewardesses

- Hospitality experience
- Food safety qualification
- Barista, wine, flower arranging experience/ qualifications
- Excellent customer service and communication skills
- Happy to/are used to working long hours



Superyacht salary guide

Working as a crew member on a Superyacht has some incredible perks, from being on the ocean, seeing new countries to brushing shoulders with the rich and famous, and of course...the amazing salary.

Yacht crew salaries start from €2,000 a month for Deckhands and Stewardesses, rising to €4,000+ for more senior roles. A Captain can make €12,000+ per month, depending on the size of the Superyacht.

You live on board the yacht so there are no living expenses. Meals are prepared by the Chef and you very rarely need to buy any groceries or toiletries.

Another huge benefit that contributes to the amazing Superyacht salary is the potential for your earnings.



Salary guide

The figures are gross figures, paid in Euros. Note that some yachts may pay more or less than described and remember, this is only a guide.

* Stew or Deck with at least one seasons experience.

Your salary will almost certainly be paid in Euros

Position	20-30m	30-40m	40-50m	50-60m	60m+
Captain	4,000-8,000	5,000-10,000	7,000-14,000	10,000-16,000	14,000 +
First Officer	3,000-3,500	3,000-5,000	4,300-5,700	5,000 +	6,000 +
Bosun			3,200-3,500	3,500-4,500	6,000 +
Chief Stewardess	3,000-3,500	3,500-4,500	4,000-5,500	5,000-6,000	6,000 +
Steward/ess*	2,200-2,800	2,200-3,000	2,500-3,000	2,500-3,500	2,500+
Deckhand*	2,200-2,800	2,200-3,000	2,500-3,000	2,500-3,500	2,500 +
Junior Deckhand	2,000-2,500	2,000-2,800	2,000-3,000	2,500-3,000	2,500 +
Junior Steward/ess	2,000-2,500	2,000-2,800	2,000-3,000	2,500-3,000	2,500 +
Chef	3,000-4,000	3,500-4,500	4,000-6,000	5,500-7,000	6,000 +

Paying tax

Like any job you will be paid a salary each month.

When you start working on a Superyacht the Officer, Management Company or person in charge will ask for your bank details.

Your employer will then pay your salary into that account at the end of each month.

If you have been employed before you may be used to your employer deducting Tax, National Insurance (Social Security) and maybe pension contributions from your monthly salary.

It is worth bearing in mind that on a Superyacht you are paid your monthly salary without deductions, what is called "gross" salary. Therefore, each crew member is required complete a Self-Assessment tax return each year.

Understanding your tax position on a yacht is really important. There are many crew members who do not complete a tax return, as they do not understand their responsibilities.

Do not try and hide from HM Revenue and Customs, if you don't complete your tax return then at some point they will catch up with you. The fines can be hefty!

If you are British and working on a Yacht then you must complete a tax return at the end of each tax year.

Seafarers Earning Deduction (SED) scheme

For UK residents employed on board a yacht (or ship) operating outside UK waters you may qualify for the Seafarers Earning Deduction Scheme.

After 365 days working at sea, UK residents can qualify for SED and do not pay Tax or National Insurance on the income they receive from the Yacht.

Can I get help with paying my tax?

Applying for Seafarers Earning Deduction is not an easy process, especially when you are travelling the world on a Yacht. We recommend getting the paperwork sorted before you start.

Along with our Superyacht Crew Training, Flying Fish run a Seafarers Tax Service to provide peace of mind that your tax affairs are in order.

This means we complete your tax return to HM Revenue and Customs and make sure everything is in place so you can legally pay no tax whilst you work on Superyachts.

Our [Seafarers Tax Service](#) currently costs £210 per year.



Getting your first job

A Superyacht's yearly schedule is decided by the yacht's owner; if it is a charter yacht then it will most likely spend the summer in the Mediterranean and winters in the Caribbean or USA.

Typically, a Superyacht will arrive in the Mediterranean from the Caribbean between February and May to start the summer season. It is during this period that crew leave, enrol on a training course or move to a different boat. The Med season finishes September to October time.

Not all yachts will make the crossing to warmer climates, some will stay in the Mediterranean over the winter for scheduled maintenance and surveys, this is called a "yard period".

When is the best time to look for work?

Traditionally, crew start looking for work anytime between February and May, which is when the majority of yachts will be returning from the Caribbean.

As the yachts get bigger and bigger they require more Deckhands and Stewardess to keep it running. We have noticed that the employment window is growing too, with new crew finding their dream job in the middle of the summer season.

Where to find work

If you are serious about getting a job then it's a good idea to fly down to Antibes in France or Palma in Mallorca to find work. Most new crew find work this way. By staying in a crew house you will mingle with others looking for work. Yachts will see you are committed to finding work and you are more likely to pick up day work.

Whether you choose Palma or Antibes depends on what type of yacht you are looking to work on. Antibes, in the South of

France is generally where the larger motor yachts can be found. The transport network is excellent providing access, via train, to ports from Monaco to St Tropez.

Palma is home to sailing yachts and motor yachts. There are fantastic services in Palma so sailing yachts are more likely to spend winters undergoing refits or repairs.

Dock walking

Historically, crew looking for work on a yacht of any kind would wander up and down the dock or pontoon asking Captains if they need crew. This tradition still exists today and is called dock walking.

It is perfectly normal to see job seekers walk up and down the dock talking to crew and handing out CV's. It's a great way to meet people and get to know which yachts may need help.

Go prepared with a backpack, a change of clothes and a few copies of your CV. A yacht that is looking for day work may ask you to start straight away!



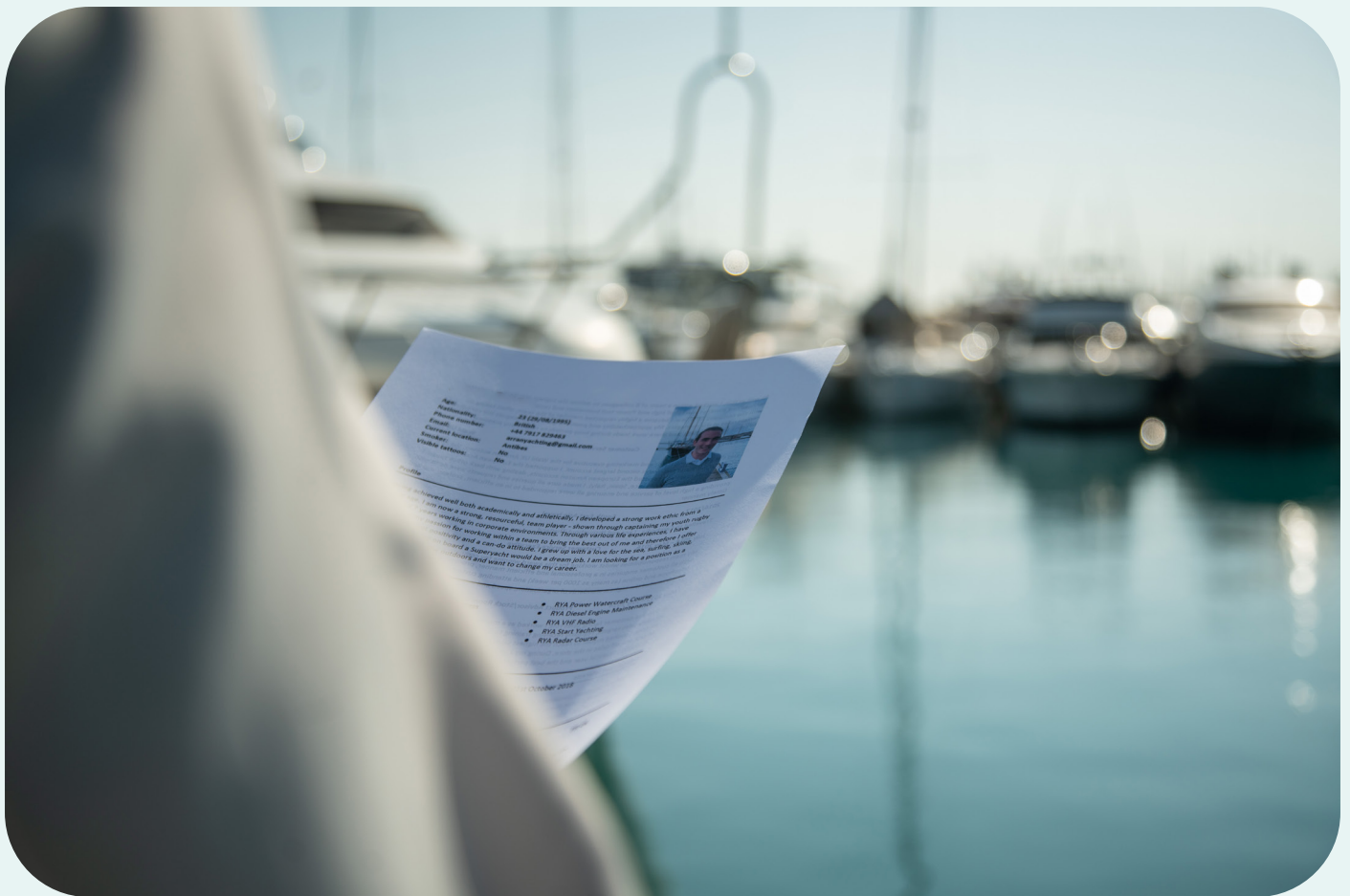
Finding a job online

There are hundreds of positions advertised online each day. Whether through a recruitment agent, website or Facebook there are a whole host of applications to look for that perfect job. We recommend signing up to all the recruitment agents in Antibes or Palma (depending on where you are going).

The recruitment agents will want a completed CV, a copy of your STCW certificates and your ENG1 plus one or two references. Do a quick Google search of "Superyacht recruitment agents" to bring up a list. Facebook - Sometimes used by Superyachts to find crew or day workers. As you can imagine there are lots of groups and some are better than others.

Remember, you must have ENG1 and STCW as a minimum. If you are looking start a career as a Deckhand or Stewardess then we can get you qualified and start your new career.

There is a lot of competition and if you are considering a career on a Superyacht, then the more experience you can get before you head out the better.



Your CV

Your personality and experience

How do you get experience without a job? Don't be put off by "must have one year experience", if you have the right qualities and qualifications then yachts will want to interview you.

If you're looking to become a Stewardess, do you have experience working in hospitality, childcare, massage, beauty therapy or hairdressing? Any job that involves working with the public or unsociable hours counts as experience.

To become a Deckhand, having skills such as carpentry, water sports instructor, yachtmaster, mechanic or electrician will

help when looking for work. As well as skills there are three very important things to remember:

1) **Attitude** - Probably the word that is heard the most in this industry. Crew must have a good, positive attitude to their work. Captains don't want to hear "it's not my job". This is not the attitude they like and you will soon find yourself in hot water.

2) **Personality** - Superyacht crew not only work onboard the yacht, but it is also your home where you eat, sleep and socialise. Living with your work colleagues and interacting with guests requires somebody with a great interpersonal and social skills. Are you somebody that can get on and have a conversation with anybody?

3) **Work ethic** - Working hard, attention to detail and a positive work ethic are all qualities that captains look for. If you are somebody that clocks off at 5:00pm on the dot each day then you won't last long in this industry.

Once you have finished the task you have been set, then ask for more. Ask questions, be enthusiastic about your work. Remember it's what you can do for the yacht not what the yacht can do for you...

CV template

Writing your Yachting CV can be stressful and from our experience people find it hard to write about themselves. CV's are so important that we allocate a whole day of our Deckhand and Stewardess course to writing a [Yachting CV, interview techniques, photos](#) and how to find that dream job.

Your yachting CV is no more than two-pages long. Remember, the CV is a brief snapshot into your life so far, it is not a book about everything you have done and achieved.

Captains are more interested in your hobbies than your high school grades. Unlike a normal CV, a yachting CV requires you to detail gender, age, nationality, an image and even if you have any tattoos. This is considered discriminatory on a normal CV but it is normal practice to include this information on a yachting CV.

Social Media

Please make sure what you say about yourself on Social media is the same as your CV. For example, if you say you are a non-smoker on your CV, then we would not expect to see photos of you smoking on Social Media. Any disparities will cast doubt in the reader's mind about your honesty.



Sample CV photo image

CV photo

Your photo is one of the most important parts of the CV. The reader will, rightly or wrongly, form an impression based on your photo. Ideally you will be in a white or blue polo shirt (boys) and white blouse or polo (girls).

Girls, have your hair tied back and boys, shave and hair looking neat. Look straight at the camera, no side on pose. No sunglasses on heads and girls only minimal makeup.

Take your CV photo when the sun is out, ideally in the morning or evening is best when the sun is low to avoid squinting.

You want to look professional but casual at the same time.



The next step

By completing this guide you have taken your first step on your journey to an exciting new career. For the next stage of your journey you will need to get qualified. As a minimum you will need to complete the following:

- ENG1 Medical
- STCW Basic Safety Training
- Write a yachting CV
- Head down to the South of France

Flying Fish is pleased to offer customers on our Superyacht Deckhand and Stewardess Courses the option to spread payment over 12 months in the form of an interest-free loan, organised through our finance partner.

Keeping more money in your pocket will come in handy when starting a new career.

Want to find out more?

If you are new to the Superyacht industry and want to gain some experience then Flying Fish run a two week [Deckhand](#) or [Stewardess Course](#) which includes all the qualifications you need, and more.

We are here to help, so get in touch for all the latest support and advice.