

# TEAM COORDINATION TRAINING 2007 REFRESHER PARTICIPANT REFERENCE

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- **Describe** how stress, fatigue and hazardous thought processes can affect judgment and mission performance.
- **Review** the decision making strategies and **illustrate** these styles using the case study.
- **Discuss** the importance of risk assessment and management in the preparation and execution of a patrol.

## TASK

- Describe the elements in the story where you feel that the principles of TCT were not followed.
- Suggest a course of action or change in behavior that might correct the problem or align this crew's activity with TCT principles.

## THE PATROL

This Auxiliary Operational Facility (OPFAC) in question is a 24 foot center console I/O, equipped with radar and GPS.

The crew consists of the following members:

- A coxswain with 15 years experience in surface operations, the last 11 years as a Coxswain who is very familiar with local waters and conditions. He also serves as the FSO-OP.
- The crewmember has 2 years of experience in surface operations and about 5 years experience in the local waters.

The weather today:

- Air temperature: 79 ° F with 91 % humidity,
- Water temperature: 71° F, seas 1 to 2 feet. The winds are calm, 3 to 7 mph out of the southwest
- Coastal fog is approaching from the southwest, but the visibility at launch is 5 miles.

One of the purposes of this multi-mission patrol was to run two boat training evolutions to complete currency maintenance requirements. Two Auxiliary OPFACs were practicing evolutions of man overboard drills, side tows and stern tows in the relative safety of a protected harbor. The OPFAC coxswain (who, as noted, was the FSO-OP) was not happy with the forecast that predicted thick fog was approaching. However, it was already mid June and some of the crewmembers needed to get their yearly currency maintenance completed, so they were anxious to practice their skills.

The coxswain completed the Risk Assessment portion of the Boat Movement Record (BMR), used the "marginal" score of "5" for the environment factor, and decided to continue with the training despite concerns about the weather. He faxed the BMR to the station officer of the day and they were underway by 0800. The two boats completed the training exercises by about 0930 and return to their respective areas to complete the multi-mission patrol.

At 0945 hours, a distress call was received by the Coast Guard station. A collision had occurred between a party boat (for hire) and a small pleasure craft some 10 miles from the mouth of an inlet leading to the Atlantic Ocean. A Coast Guard 41foot utility boat (UTB) was dispatched and, once on scene, found a 23 foot cuddy cabin vessel had collided with a party boat in the fog. There were some serious injuries to passengers onboard the 23 foot pleasure boat. The officer of the day considered a medivac via CG helicopter, but the ceiling and visibility precluded launch. The UTB coxswain decided to transport the injured to the town dock for medical treatment and transport to the local hospital.

Given the deteriorating weather conditions and poor visibility the CG UTB coxswain radioed the remaining Auxiliary OPFAC. She asked if the Auxiliary vessel could precede the UTB through the inlet to clear the way. This area is known as a high traffic corridor for both pleasure and commercial vessels. There were also anchored small boats fishing in the harbor area which is a regular occurrence, especially in bad weather.

The Auxiliary coxswain immediately responded to the call, agreeing to proceed to the ocean to await the UTB at the mouth of the inlet. His plan was to lead/escort the UTB through the waterways to clear a path. The UTB was spotted within 10 minutes. The Auxiliary OPFAC took the lead and quickly achieved a speed in excess of 15 kts as he re-entered the inlet towards the harbor, the CG UTB on a course set to follow. The OPFAC struggled to maintain its position, trying to navigate by RADAR as they

headed for the town dock. The Auxiliary boat was thrown to and fro from the confused seas created by the confined area and vessel traffic. The lone crewman was doing double duty, acting as forward lookout while attempting to alert boaters in their path with the handheld loud hailer. The crewman finally entered the cockpit after nearly falling overboard from a sudden change in vessel position.

Eventually the CG UTB passed the OPFAC and moored at the town dock, where an ambulance was standing by to transport the injured to a medical facility. The Auxiliary coxswain moored behind the UTB. He loosened his "death grip" on the helm, gathered himself, and began working on the SAR Incident Report while the crewman secured the vessel at the pier.

## REVIEW OF TCT BASICS

A short summary of the key points of Team Coordination Training is provided to assist with your analysis of the case. This information is accessible to all members on the Coast Guard's TCT website: <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-w/g-wk/wks/TCT.htm>.

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### THE ESSENTIAL ***CRUX*** OF EACH TCT MODULE *Jeanette Wells, M.Ed*

#### Communication

1. Communication is a loop – it's not done until it has come back correctly, full circle.
2. The sender is responsible for making the message understood.
3. The receiver controls what happens to the message.
4. Both have a responsibility to overcome the barriers in sending and/or receiving messages to insure accurate and effective communication.
5. The biggest error people make is taking the attitude...."I told them – now it's up to them" ....and walk away thinking the communication and their responsibility with it is over.

#### Decision Making

1. Decision strategies, (minimize, scan, muddle, moralize and deny), when used alone are recipes for disaster.
2. When they are used in concert, they help prioritize and order tasks.
3. Each decision we make creates the playing field we enter into next.
4. Making good decisions instinctively encourages the continuation of making good decisions.
5. Making bad decisions instinctively encourages the continuation of bad decisions.
6. It is critical to be able to discern between *symptoms* and *root causes*.

7. Deciding to address the root causes will facilitate the elimination of the symptoms.
8. Time analysis studies of mishaps show that in critical moments, there was actually time to consider other options for action.
  - Our instinct: There isn't time to consider any other options.
  - Fact: There IS time.
  - Therefore: TAKE TIME TO DO IT

### Leadership

1. Leadership is not just about commanding and controlling. Leadership is about creating and maintaining an environment where everyone can thrive and do their best.
2. Leaders need to know when to give orders and when to strive for collaboration and consensus and how to achieve it.
3. Leaders need to know how to recognize, develop and utilize knowledge, talent and abilities in their folks.
4. Leaders' behavior, policy and actions need to manifest the Coast Guard's core values so that others can see those values in their leaders.

### Mission Analysis

1. Always go through a risk assessment process even if you go anyway under high risk conditions. This process will show where your hot spots are so everyone can be exceedingly vigilant with regard to those areas.
2. Examine every category to reduce risk.
3. Develop contingency plans.
4. Continually reassess risk through out the mission.

### Adaptability & Flexibility

#### *Stress:*

1. Stress is created by various categories of events:
  - Bad things
  - Good things
  - Fearful things
  - Exciting things
  - Change in things
2. Using a stress survey/inventory with your folks will let them know how much stress they are actually dealing with.
3. If you do the above, follow up with a coping with stress inventory so they can see how much durability they have to withstand the stress they can't eliminate or reduce any further.
4. Stress creates fatigue and effects individual and team performance.
5. Complex tasks are better done under lower stress. Simple tasks can be done effectively when people are under greater stress.
6. Work in teams to come up with a variety of ways to:
  - improve tasking and performance for individuals and teams
  - adapt size, structure and cohesion factors to improve team performance
  - develop ways to fight, control and predict fatigue

### *Hazardous Thought Patterns*

1. Anti-Authority, Impulsiveness, Invulnerability, Macho and Resignation all distort judgment, decision-making and good outcomes.
2. Each person has a tendency to fall in one of these categories. Most of the time people keep themselves under check, operating in a thoughtful mid range.
3. Under extreme stress and/or fatigue, people will default to their natural thought pattern tendency and that is where mishaps are more likely to occur.
4. Each person should know their default thought pattern tendency.
5. Everyone should know some effective ways to pull their team members out of a hazardous thought pattern when they fall into that rut.

### Assertiveness

1. The Coast Guard wants assertive people, not passive or aggressive behavior.
2. It is imperative that people know where the dividing line is between assertive and aggressive behavior.  
(Because these terms are used interchangeably in our culture, this water is very muddy for our folks.)\*

### Situational Awareness

1. Definition: KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON AROUND YOU
2. Two Challenge Rule: This is an optional tool to use if a team wants to take advantage of it.
3. Three Levels of Human Error:
  - Slips.....Miss Speak
  - Mistakes.....Bad Plan
  - Errors.....Flawed Execution
4. The earlier an error is caught, the less damage is done. Better to catch a slip before it becomes a mistake. Better to catch a mistake before it becomes an error.

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\* It is helpful to distinguish between those behaviors which are **respectful** of the other member's position or point of view (assertive), as opposed to behaviors that are demeaning, sarcastic or dismissive (aggressive). The volume of the voice may be loud or soft; it is the *tone* of the voice or temperament of the individual that distinguishes between the aggressive behavior and the assertive behavior.

Thank you for your participation in the 2007 Team Coordination Training Refresher. Please share your thoughts about this training and the format with us!

***Bruce Pugh, DVC-OE***  
***Division Chief Operations Projects and Educational Outreach***  
***US Coast Guard Auxiliary***  
[DVC\\_OE@yahoo.com](mailto:DVC_OE@yahoo.com)