Team Coordination Training 2009 Refresher Facilitator Resource

Introduction

The 2009 Operations Team Coordination Training Refresher will follow the same format as the 2008 workshop. We will focus on group, or "crew" problem solving activities rather than a lecture presentation format. As always, the 7 components of TCT will be the guiding principle for you to emphasize as you lead this problem solving session. The facilitator should be someone familiar with the operations program, a trained instructor and familiar with the TCT program.

Note: This TCT refresher session should last about one hour.

This Team Coordination Training (TCT) Refresher reflects an emphasis on the 7 components of Team Coordination that you have previously been introduced to:

- *Leadership*
- *Mission Analysis*
- *Adaptability*
- *Situational Awareness*
- *Decision Making*
- *Communication*
- *Assertiveness.*

This training is part of the mandatory annual currency maintenance requirements for the USCG Auxiliary Boat Crew program.

The format, as in prior years, takes the form of a group problem solving session, rather than facilitated discussion. This approach will emphasize your role as a facilitator and, hopefully, make the training interesting for both you and your participants. **Do not** deliver this as a straight lecture, the key learning objective is with the interaction of small 'crews' in solving the problem presented.

Facilitator's Role

As the facilitator, your role is to help participants discover new knowledge or discover new applications for knowledge you may already have. This is not accomplished by lecturing. Lecturing is one of the least effective ways to promote learning that can be utilized. If you find yourself talking a lot and teaching numerous techniques and required actions in detail, you are probably talking too much. Trust that the participants have the answers, and you are there to help them discover new relevance for a familiar concept.

A facilitator creates a positive, interesting and challenging environment for the participants in the classroom so that **they, as a crew**, can learn to solve problems and make better decisions that will keep the crew safe, the public safe, and accomplish the mission.

A facilitator leads the learning, but allows the participants to go their own way…***to a point***, always gently steering the process so that learning objectives are met…but also insuring that participants learn to make decisions in a "team format", similar to the "crew" that exists onboard our air and surface facilities. Let the discussions happen but do not hesitate to step in if they get "off topic".

Note:

The patrol story presents a scenario with several sub-plots that describe problems, incidents or situations. This scenario paints a picture that, with some analysis, will lead the team to recognize core problems or issues among the crews in the scenario. The process is similar to what a physician goes through who must diagnose the disease in a patient from a list of specific "symptoms." In this case we want the participant groups to identify the symptoms (incidents or situations) that point to the underlying TCT component that is missing or dysfunctional and therefore threatens the success of the patrol. In addition we want participants to suggest a course of action for the scenario group to take to correct this deficiency.

We have intentionally made the crew less efficient and effective than normal to help stimulate the discussion.

Facilitator Responsibilities

1. (10 min) At the outset of the session, organize the participants into "crews" of 3-5 members that will work together on the patrol story (case study). Tell them to appoint a recorder/reporter to take notes.

2. (5 min) Provide each group with one piece of paper and pencil. Tell them that the group is to:
   - **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.**

3. (10 min) Present the patrol story (see page 7). Be sure that everyone is clear on the scenario but be careful not to give away any answers. If possible hand out a copy of the story to each group (See the 2009 TCT Participant Resource guide).

4. (15 min) Redirect the session into small groups. During the small group work, **circulate among the crews** and **listen**. Make notes for yourself, if needed. Allow the groups to struggle (discuss/disagree) a little in making their lists. They are developing a problem solving relationship with their fellow crew members. Leaders may emerge in the groups (they usually do). Your job is to **keep the groups focused on their question list and determination of dysfunctional TCT** components, and to assist them by asking questions if and when they get off track or bogged down. Use the definitions of the TCT components below, your knowledge of the boat crew program and the targeted questions that accompany the scenario (see pages 9 & 10) to refocus groups that have gone astray. Try to insure that everyone participates, and that no one "hijacks" the process because they are more experienced, or louder, or because others seem willing to just go along. *If you hear something that is inappropriate or not consistent with good practice, intervene with a gentle comment so that the group recognizes the problem. Try not to take control of the session away from the crew* but get them "back on course," then let them continue.

5. (15 min) Lead a focus session during which the participant group reporters present their group solutions to the other participants. Don't try to discriminate between solutions! Simply be a clerk and record, in brief, the reports. When all groups have reported, ask the group, at large, to choose the best three solutions (there's rarely one "right" answer) or to rank order the best solutions. Use the last 2-3 minutes to summarize the group results (groups almost always find good answers, as a group) and, if necessary, interject one or two considerations that might have been missed.

6. (5 min) Thank the participants for their participation and assist with any final questions or concerns. If there are suggestions from the group on how to improve the course, jot those down as well and forward them to the **DVC_OE, email** address is at the end of this guide.

Review of TCT Basics

A Team Coordination Training student guide is available on the Coast Guard site at http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg3/cg3pcx/training/tct/intro.pdf. You can also get additional information from the Coast Guard TCT web site at http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg3/cg3pcx/training/tct/default.asp.

Mission Analysis

1. Always conduct a risk assessment prior to a patrol, no matter how routine you believe the mission to be. Every mission is unique, contingency planning based on experience should include complexity of mission, environmental factors, crew fitness factors and any other circumstance that could impact the mission & your safety
2. Develop escape/contingency plans for potential risk scenarios.
3. Reassess risk when conditions change.

Situational Awareness

1. We must **know what is going on around us** to make good decisions. Plans are critical to success, that is for sure…but we must be ready to change those plans, use contingency plans if necessary, based on <u>what we encounter during the mission</u>.
2. Stressful situations and complacency and boredom will inhibit our situational awareness and increase the likelihood of poor decision making. Remember the 3 levels of human error:
   a. Slips ….. Miss Speak
   b. Mistakes ….. Bad Plan
   c. Errors …. Flawed execution
3. Catch the slip before it becomes a mistake. Catch the mistake before it becomes an error.

Adaptability & Flexibility

1. Adaptability is the ability to react to changes in conditions, crew fitness, equipment failures, etc. and is based on the "situational awareness" we mentioned above. How flexible are we? How receptive are we to different opinions? Leaders do not necessarily have "all the answers". Leaders do take advantage of everyone's ideas and experience and remain adaptable to new conditions and challenges.

Communication

1. Communication takes many forms. We have verbal and non-verbal (facial expressions, etc.) communication that everyone uses to convey thoughts and ideas.
2. The key of course is to ensure that the person or persons we communicate with have a clear understanding of what we wish to convey. This is the 'senders' responsibility.
3. Good communication involves closing the "feedback" loop. We can ask for feedback, or we can observe behavior to be sure the message was received.
4. This is a two way expression, either verbally or non-verbally, that confirms the communication process was completed. Both parties are responsible for insuring the message received is accurate, understood, and effective.

Leadership

1. Leadership is not about giving orders. Leaders do find ways to obtain the willing participation of others towards accomplishing a goal. That goal, in this case, must be consistent with the Coast Guard's core values as well as consistent with the mission at hand.
2. Since we cannot "order" anyone to do anything, we must strive to achieve the respect, confidence, collaboration and loyalty of those entrusted to our care.
3. Remember all auxiliarists have this opportunity to lead, regardless of their position.

Assertiveness

1. The Coast Guard values people who are assertive, but not aggressive.
2. Know where the dividing line is. The difference between these two characteristics is sometimes hard to see. The aggressive person seeks to bully his/her way though situations for their own ego or self image….while an assertive person cares about the "mission" more than themselves and their ego.
3. The assertive person will always communicate their concerns but they also try to get a reasonable resolution when ideas are in conflict without stepping on top of those who may disagree.

Decision Making

1. Making good decisions is really at the heart of TCT. How do we ensure that we act or perform in a manner that maximizes mission success and minimizes risk to ourselves, our crew, the public, etc?
2. The other elements of TCT all play a role in improving those decisions. We define a problem or condition, seek information about that problem, analyze that information, identify alternatives and select one or a range of alternatives.
3. Then we measure our success or failure in order to adjust our course of action. This process can take us 20 seconds in the case of routine decisions, or 20 months in the case of large complex problems. The process is the same, ... the depth of analysis and level of importance is always changing.
4. There is always time to consider other actions, use that time before you act.

Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to identify key risk factors from this mission that may impact our judgment and decision making.

- ***Complexity of mission - this is not the usual SAR patrol***
- ***Leadership issues among various participants***
- ***Situational awareness that can lead to success or to injuries***
- ***Planning issues, especially contingency planning needs for this mission***
- ***Need to be assertive when risks outweigh benefits of mission***

Participants will identify at least three examples of good decision making by this crew and others.
Participants will identify at least 3 examples of poor decision making by this crew & others.
Participants will be able to suggest alternative actions to avoid high risk situations
Discuss at least 3 errors, and 3 good decisions made by this crew during the mission.

THE PATROL

Mission: Conduct a safe tow of a decorated barge past a reviewing stand of dignitaries during a ceremony that opens the boating season on a fresh water lake.

Facility: 23 foot cuddy cabin with a single 175 HP outboard

Weather: Air temp 92 degrees, 78 percent humidity, winds out of SW at 10-15 knots. Scattered large cumulus clouds throughout the area…forecast possible pop-up thunderstorms in late afternoon and evening.

Venue: Fresh water lake approximately 3 miles long and one mile wide; depths range to a maximum of 12 feet, used extensively for fishing and pleasure boating. Two large marinas located at the northern and southern ends of the lake service over 150 vessels from 12 foot skiffs to 30 foot plus cabin cruisers.

Scenario: Each Memorial Day weekend, the local community association sponsors a boating season opening ceremony and barbecue to herald the 1st boating weekend of the summer. The local Flotilla is requested to tow a small barge that is decorated with flowers and displays that will pass by a reviewing stand that was erected at the southern marina that includes the local mayor, community leaders, and the minister of the church who will bless the fleet of pleasure boats as part of the season opening ceremony. A crowd of about 100 local boat owners and families is in attendance. The OPFAC is assigned by the Flotilla commander to tow the barge from the northern marina to the reviewing stand at the opposite side of the lake; the crew consists of the Coxswain, and two crew members who also hold Coxswain qualifications. The Flotilla commander is on the reviewing stand, and the Flotilla OPS officer is positioned on the barge. Both these auxiliarists have hand held radios to communicate with the OPFAC.

As the barge and tow vessel travel across the lake from the opposite marina, the Coxswain sees that the fair weather cumulus clouds are beginning to grow in height, a sure sign to

him that conditions are changing for the worse. He notices an occasional gust of wind that exceeds the forecasted velocity. As the OPFAC and barge reach a position about ¾ of a mile from the reviewing stand, a fast moving squall strikes the OPFAC and barge being towed. The relatively shallow water, and the configuration of the lake creates a suddenly rough water condition that heaves the OPFAC fore and aft, and side to side, stressing the tow line with each sudden movement of the tow vessel as the Coxswain struggles to maintain even pressure on the tow line.

The Coxswain radios the OPS officer on the barge that he is having difficulty maintaining station in the tow position; the OPS officer on the barge is not overly concerned, telling the Coxswain that the squall will pass quickly and to continue on because the ceremony must go on as planned. The Coxswain is not happy with the situation; the tow line alternately slacks and then snaps taut as the waves push the towing vessel up and down, and side to side in the storm. The Flotilla commander on the reviewing stand sees little of the situation, noticing only an occasional gust of wind on shore. He monitors the radio communications between Coxswain & Ops officer on the barge and he urges the Coxswain to "get it together" and complete the tow because the mayor and the crowd expect the Auxiliary to complete their mission, not run and hide from a little windy weather. The Coxswain feels the pressure from his peers and decides to "gut it out".

10 minutes later, making slow progress, the storm continues to cause him difficulty; the OPFAC rises on a swell, causing the tow line to slacken and become entangled in the prop of his motor. The Coxswain heatedly yells to release the tow line; his crew reacts slowly because they are all fixed on the marina and reviewing stand that is now about one quarter mile ahead. The Coxswain again yells to cut the tow line, while the crewmembers slowly turn away from watching the reviewing stand. One crew member starts trying to untie the tow line from the aft cleat. The frustrated Coxswain sees the crewmember's slow reaction to the situation. He leaves the helm position and cuts the tow line just as the stern is violently forced sideways by the pull of the towline as the barge swings to the starboard side of the OPFAC on a large swell. The Coxswain returns to the helm. He maneuvers away from the

barge as best he can, cuts his motor and begins untangling the tattered tow line from his prop.

The Flotilla commander on the reviewing stand observes the situation and orders the tow to be aborted, several minutes after the tow was terminated by the coxswain. The OPFAC passes another tow line to the stern of the barge as a precaution in case the barge becomes a problem, but remains clear and waits out the storm.

NOTES for Facilitator to Discuss

Because this was an unusual mission, it presents problems of leadership because we have a coxswain on the facility, the FC on the marina, and the FSO-OPS on the barge. A clear chain of management and leadership was not established before beginning the mission that could have contributed to the leadership breakdown.

Also a second issue… because the crew consisted of all coxswains on the facility, this may have contributed to a reluctance on the part of these 'crew' coxes to respond quickly; they are used to "giving orders", not taking them?

Thirdly, the FSO-OPS challenged the Coxswain's manhood in a way by accusing him of not "gutting it out" when faced with risky conditions.

What did the crew do correctly during this mission?

1. Good communication planning by placing qualified personnel with radios at each key venue. The OPFAC, the barge and the reviewing stand.

2. Weather forecast was included in planning that included information about possible pop up T-storms.

3. All crew members were qualified and experienced to perform a complicated mission of this type.

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4. The coxswain recognizes the change in the weather while underway & realizes the threat posed to the tow line & crew safety by the rough water conditions.

5. Coxswain ultimately made a good decision to disregard wishes of others in order to safeguard crew by aborting the tow.

What did this crew do incorrectly during this mission?
(Mission Analysis, Leadership, Communication)

1. Coxswain initially goes along with the Ops officer's desire to "gut it out" in bad conditions even though his own judgment was to abort. Should have made his feelings known to Ops officer.

2. Crew members reacted slowly to coxswain's initial commands and felt they could react in their own way, and in their own good time. Leadership problems between coxswain & crew.

3. Crew members did not maintain situational awareness of the weather change & the impact that those changes had on the tow. Also no tow watch seemed to be taking place.

4. Poor contingency planning by crew who knew that T-storms were possible, but did not review procedures for a quick reaction to storm conditions while underway, or establish an alternative plan for the mission in case of storms.

Thank you for your participation as a facilitator for the 2009 Team Coordination Training Refresher. Please share your thoughts about this training and the format with us!

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