



TEAM Coordination Training 2009 Refresher Participant Reference

Learning Objectives

Review & discuss the key risk factors from this patrol that may impact our judgment and decision making.

- ❖ Complexity of the mission; this is not the usual SAR or safety patrol mission
- ❖ Planning and contingency planning needs for the mission
- ❖ Leadership issues among the participants (all Coxswains); who was in charge and was the 'crew' instructed appropriately by the assigned Coxswain?
- ❖ Situational Awareness – can lead to success or to injuries
- ❖ Was the focus of the mission on safety or on completing the mission?
- ❖ Assertiveness – where was it when risks outweigh the benefits of the mission?

Discuss how operational risk assessment can contribute to the success of this mission

- ❖ Knowledge and experience of the crew - was it used to assess risk
- ❖ Application of risk assessment and updating that assessment throughout the mission
- ❖ Should this mission have been delayed or even called off?

YOUR TASK

Discuss at least 3 errors, and 3 good decisions made by this crew during the mission.

- Review the TCT basics starting on page 4, then read the sea story
- 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.
- Make any assumptions you and the rest of the crew deem necessary to fill in any details not specifically stated in the sea story.

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 large 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 15 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. This year 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 on the southern marina site on which will be positioned 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

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position about $\frac{3}{4}$ 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.

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/cg3/cg3pcx/training/tct/default.asp>.

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>

Mission Analysis

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

Situational Awareness

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 what we encounter during the mission. Stressful situations, complacency and boredom will inhibit our situational awareness and increase the likelihood of poor decision making.

Adaptability

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

Communication takes many forms. We have verbal and non-verbal (facial expressions, etc.) communication that everyone uses to convey thoughts and ideas. 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 involves closing the "feedback" loop. We can ask for feedback, or we can observe behavior to be sure the message was received. The key is a two way expression, either verbally or non-verbally, that confirms the communication process was completed.

Leadership

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. Since we cannot "order" anyone to do anything, we must strive to achieve the respect, confidence and loyalty of those entrusted to our care...all Auxiliarists have this opportunity to lead, regardless of their position.

Assertiveness

The Coast Guard values people who are assertive, but not aggressive. The difference between these two characteristics is sometimes hard to see. The aggressive person seeks to bully his/her way through situations for their own ego or self image....while an assertive person cares about the "mission" more than themselves and their ego. They 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

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? 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. 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.

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

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