

**Team Coordination Training  
2011 Refresher  
Participant Reference**

Department of Response

**Learning Objectives**

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

- **Identify the special challenges this mission presented.**
- **Understand how those challenges affect how we prepare the pre-underway risk assessment (GAR).**
- **Understand how crew selection/experience issues impacted the outcome of this situation.**
- **Define the leadership and decision making issues that arose when the emergency call was received and acted upon.**
- **Demonstrate how to complete a GAR risk assessment for this mission.**
- **Based on the outcome of this mission, suggest how the GAR should have been revised to accurately assess the potential risk.**

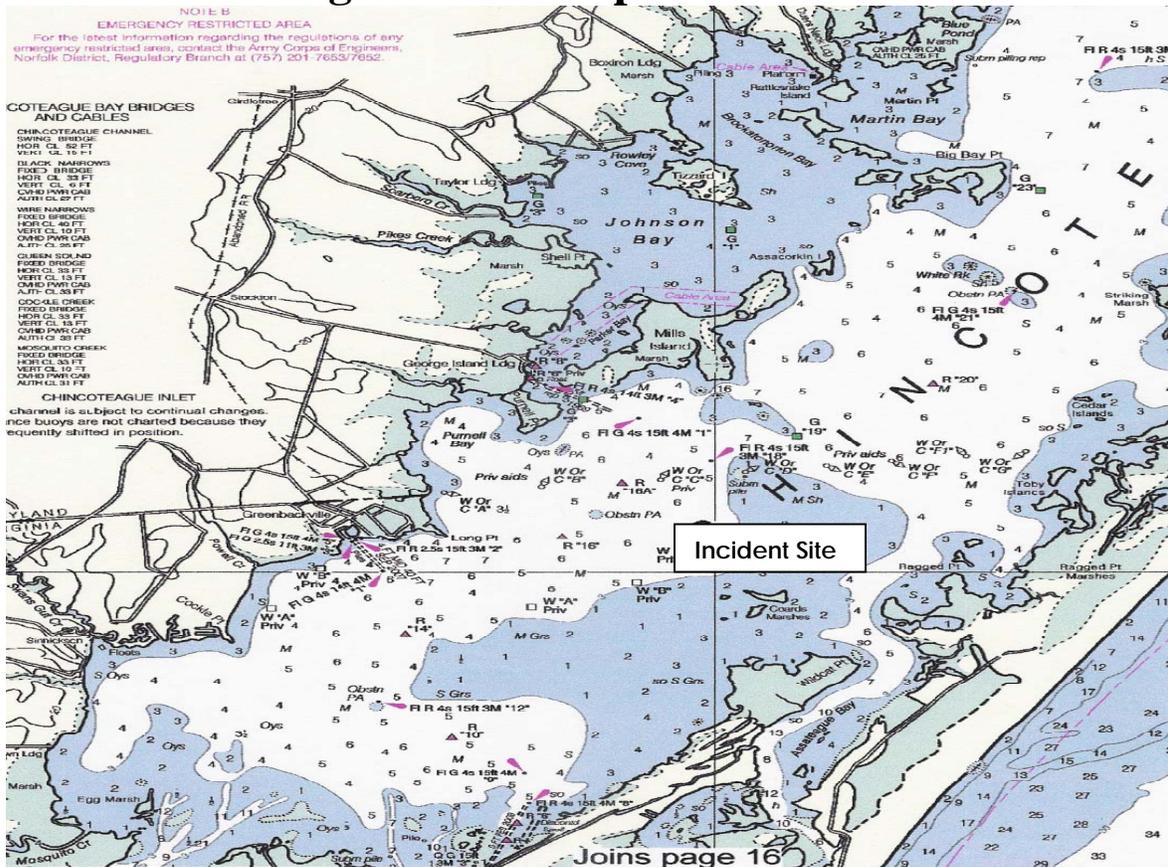
# The Patrol

**Mission: Assisting Coast Guard and Virginia Marine Police vessels, provide a safe perimeter and exclusion zone during the annual fireworks display in Chincoteague Bay between mainland Virginia and Assateague Island during the week of the festival held on the last Wednesday of July each year.**

- **Facilities: 24 foot center console with a single 175 HP outboard  
1 coxswain with 2 crewmembers.**
- **Weather: 88°F and hazy ...wind: W at 16 mph...Humidity: 82%...Low tide  
8:23PM**
- **CREW  
Coxswain Jim with 1 year experience at that qualification (10 overall).  
Crewmember Mary with 15 years experience, 3 previous fireworks displays.  
Crewmember Will with 4 years experience with no night time experience.**

**Venue:** Each July, the annual pony swim from Assateague Island to the mainland includes a fireworks display that originates on a small island just west of Latitude 38 degrees, 40', 38" and Longitude 75 degrees, 18', 45" in Chincoteague Bay. Over 100 pleasure craft gather near the island in the afternoon to get the best viewing site. The display begins at about 9:00PM, and ends by 9:40PM.

# Enlarged Area of Operations



**Scenario:** Prior to the mission, coxswain Jim expressed some reservations about the water depth in Chincoteague Bay to Mary. They discussed his fears and Mary assured him that she would keep him “out of trouble” as he completed the initial GAR risk assessment form. Although an experienced seaman and crewmember, he lacked confidence at night in shallow waters, especially as a new coxswain.

A total of 4 boats were to take part in the operation; one CG 23 footer as command vessel, and three Auxiliary facilities. Their mission was to deploy two hours before the fireworks display, maintain a safe perimeter at least 200 yards from the island beach where the fireworks were to be launched, and conduct routine safety patrols within their assigned stations until relieved by the CG command vessel.

Jim’s facility was posted at the extreme southern point of the perimeter, about ¼ mile from the fireworks launch site; the perimeter extended another ¼ mile north of the site and was patrolled by the other 2 facilities. The CG 23 footer roamed the area of the line that separated the boaters from the beach launch site.

**STOP...**

***ALL “CREW” MEMBERS COMPLETE A “GAR” RISK ASSESSMENT FORM INDIVIDUALLY...THEN COMPARE AND DISCUSS YOUR SCORES WITH FELLOW CREW MEMBERS.***

*Now...continue with the story...*

At about 9:25 PM, the fireworks display had been in progress for several minutes, when Jim heard an excited voice on channel 16 announcing an emergency...”we ran aground and we may have damaged our engine!” At this point, the CG vessel was occupied with a report of an un-exploded star shell from the display on the opposite side of the island and Mary immediately grabbed the radio asking the vessel for it’s position and circumstances. The voice responded that they were just off the beach, on a shoal at the northern end of the island and he was afraid he was taking on water for some reason. Jim grabbed the radio back from Mary and asked if there were injuries, but no one responded to his question. Jim wondered why another closer facility did not respond, but at Mary’s urging, Jim immediately brought his boat up on plane and asked Mary to guide him through the various shoals to where he thought the stricken vessel was located. As Jim increased speed to 22 MPH, Mary directed him right and left through the darkness to avoid danger areas.

Jim engaged his safety lights as he repeatedly tried to raise the vessel by radio. At this point, he was weaving his way through a large group of vessels enjoying the display when he suddenly caught a flash of white forward and to his right just as Mary, who was positioned to his left near the console, yelled at him to turn hard to starboard to avoid a shoal. Jim backed down on the throttle and complied. Will was busy watching the fireworks as they sped through the group of vessels and saw nothing.

Mary then suddenly yelled “look out”, reached over and yanked the helm to port in an attempt to avoid the collision as Jim replaced the radio mike and returned to piloting the vessel just in time to see his boat collide with another boat...on it’s starboard side near amidships.



Bayliner Arriva model, 22' 8" cabin (cuddy) motorboat, fiberglass

Jim, Mary and Will were thrown forward against the center console and were momentarily stunned, while the other vessel heeled over dangerously on its port side. Jim heard yelling and a woman crying as his boat settled in the water a few feet away from the struck vessel. He checked for injuries among his crew and yelled to the other boat's occupants, asking if there were injuries, as he heard a siren approaching from the other end of the island.

The stricken vessel drifted towards shore and was aground within seconds having taken on water after the collision. Jim sent Mary forward to assess damage to his own vessel as the CG 23 footer arrived to take command of the situation. Jim's bow was heavily damaged, but his vessel seemed to be out of danger of sinking. The CG vessel edged over to the stricken vessel to assess the situation and attend to any injured. Jim called his FSO-OPS by cell to report the incident.

Another facility escorted Jim's boat safely back to the marina by 10:30PM, his crew awaited the beginning of the official investigation into the accident. Jim later learned that 3 occupants had been evacuated to the nearest hospital for evaluation of cuts and bruises; a 10 year old boy suffered a broken arm.

**End of Story**

## Participants

**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.**

\* A facilitator led general discussion of what was done well, and what mistakes were made should be conducted at this point. Remember the basic elements of Team Coordination Training and use those elements to guide your analysis.

**NOW... EACH CREW MEMBER SHOULD COMPLETE A NEW “GAR” FORM, BASED ON WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED FROM THIS WORKSHOP AND THEN DISCUSS ANY CHANGES THEY WOULD MAKE IN THE ORIGINAL GAR SCORES WITH THEIR CREW- AND THEN PRESENT THEIR FINDINGS, AS A CREW, WITH THE FACILITATOR AND OTHER PARTICIPANTS.**

### **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.

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## **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 Auxiliaries 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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