

**Team Coordination Training  
2013 Refresher  
Participant Reference**

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

**Learning Objectives**

Participants will be learning to identify key risk factors that may impact judgment and decision-making. Some of those factors are:

- Importance of completing a GAR prior to getting underway, and amending the GAR at any time during the mission should circumstances change.
- Maintaining good comms is key to avoiding casualties.
- Complacency will weaken situational awareness, communication and adaptability, which then reduces the effectiveness of decision making.
- Crews need to be assertive when they believe a situation needs additional discussion or when they feel that unnecessary risks are being taken by the coxswain or crewmember.
- Crews need to be assertive in maintaining comms; they cannot wait for the CG duty officer to contact them, they must be proactive when maintaining constant communications with the CG station in command.

## The Patrol

### **Mission: Fireworks Safety Patrol**

- **Facility: AUX 24345, a 24 foot walk around cuddy; 175 HP outboard**
  
- **Weather: 85°F and hazy, Wind: W at 11 mph, Humidity: 82%, Low tide 8:23PM**
  
- **CREW**  
**Coxswain, Ed: 14 years' experience as boatcrew, 10 years as coxswain**  
**Crew #1, Bill: 7 years experience**  
**Crew #2, Howard: 3 years experience**  
**Crew #3, Doris: 15 years experience**

**Venue: Fireworks barge; Mississippi River, St. Louis Mo**



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Four hours prior to getting underway, Ed quickly fills out the GAR and then drives to the marina to meet his crew; they are all anxious to get started because they anticipate a great evening of fireworks.

As the crew gets underway at 2030 hours, Ed, the coxswain, contacts the duty officer at the CG Small Boat Station on the CG working channel 23A to inform them of his status and to conduct a radio check.

Although the noise of the boat and the lively conversations of the crew, who are shouting to be heard over the noise of the boat, makes the radio difficult to hear, when the watch stander at the Station instructs Ed, "When on station, contact PATCOM on channel 81A", Ed replies with a confident, "Roger, out".

Ed and his crew arrive at their designated station and settle in for the evening. They make a couple of sweeps along the safety line between the barge and the anchorage area as spectator boats arrive. Once the boats in the "front row" had anchored, they stand off to the side and monitor the spectator vessels as the time for the fireworks draws near. By 2200 hours, everything is going smoothly, the weather is comfortable, and everyone is very relaxed as the facility maintains station at the northern perimeter line.

During this time, unbeknownst to Ed and his crew, the PATCOM had been attempting to contact the facility by radio with no success since 2100 hours. The Small Boat Station had earlier reported to PATCOM that AUX 24345 was proceeding to their assigned station and would be checking in momentarily.

At 2145 hours, PATCOM notified the Sector duty officer that AUX 24345 had not checked in and that there was a loss of communications with the vessel. Sector advised PATCOM to task one of the other AUX vessels to go to 24345's assigned area to make a preliminary search. If the 24345 was not located, the situation would be escalated and additional resources would be called in. PATCOM immediately contacted AUX 36454, asked them to leave their assigned station, proceed to the area in which AUX 24345 should be stationed and report back in.

Around 2200 hours Ed suddenly has an uneasy feeling as it dawns on him for the first time that evening that he has not heard the station call for a report on his position and status. In fact, he has not heard much of anything on the radio since the mission started.

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About the time he was walking forward to pick up the radio microphone, AUX 36454 came alongside. “Hey, you guys! Is your radio broken? PATCOM has been trying to reach you for over an hour! What’s going on? Are you in trouble? If you’re not, you’re going to be! “

As Ed listens to the crew of the 36454, it sinks in that the instructions from the station (which he didn’t hear very well) were to contact PATCOM on another channel. No wonder he hadn’t heard from the station!

Ed glances over at his crew as they listened to the exchange. They all realized that they should be embarrassed that a SAR case had almost been initiated because of their “disappearing act”.

After assuring the AUX 36454 that they were all OK, and that they had just misunderstood their communications instructions, Ed contacts the PATCOM, and confesses the mistake.

The fireworks detail proceeds normally from that point forward, although a lingering feeling of embarrassment tarnishes the relaxed and lively feeling they had enjoyed earlier.

After the fireworks conclude, the mission is terminated by PATCOM. Ed and the crew draw a sigh of relief that the evening was finally over for them and they continue to discuss how the Comms problem should be explained in their report after their return.

At 2330 hours, the boat and crew easily find their way back to the slip in the dead of night and make fast all lines. While the lines are thrown out and the boat made secure to the dock, coxswain Ed contacts the Station duty officer by phone, and then breathes a sigh of relief that the night is finally over. Mission accomplished!

Ed goes forward to the cuddy cabin, where he can turn on some lights, and immediately sets to work completing the Patrol log. Bill and Doris join him and look over his shoulder, offering comments on how to report the communication issue in the best possible light. Howard begins unloading the boat, moving their coolers and equipment to the dock.

Ed, Bill and Doris are suddenly startled by a muffled yell immediately followed by a loud splash. As they look in the direction of the boat, Bill yells, “Howard?” A soggy “Help!” gurgles back in reply.

As Howard was getting off of the boat with an armload of equipment, his foot had caught in one of the mooring lines, and he tripped. Equipment

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flying from his hands, he fell from the dock, backwards into the small area of water between the dock and the stern of the boat.

At that point, the remaining crew stops their chatter and quickly moves to help pull Howard out of the water and onto the dock. They immobilize him until a visual check for injury is made. Howard assures them that he feels no ill effects (other than his damaged pride). After some additional assessment, and more assurances from Howard, the mission was finally secured.

Ed resumes writing his report about the Comms cell phone incident and then asks his crew if they think the MOB should be reported since it happened after the patrol ended for all intents and purposes. All chime in with their opinions.

What is your opinion?

### 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.**

### 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>

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### **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 Auxiliarists have this opportunity to lead, regardless of their position.

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### **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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