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

Learning Objectives

- Participants will understand the importance of crew complement as it relates to mission activities (Mission analysis).
- Participants will understand the need to fully assess the health and/or limitations of the crew. (Leadership, Assertiveness, Mission Analysis)
- Participants will understand the need to remain alert to all conditions during the mission both operational and crew related. (Communication and situational awareness).
- Participants will understand that the Coxswain AND the Crew are responsible to ensure that all crewmembers are well and fit for duty. (Assertiveness and communication).
- Participants will understand that the mission needs to be staffed with the right team with the right responsibilities and ability/temperament to handle the assigned tasks. (Leadership, Mission Analysis)
- Participants must understand that when conditions change, especially due to injury or apparent illness, the GAR must be quickly re-examined and a safe decision made. (Assertiveness and adaptability)
- Participants must understand that incident reporting (when appropriate) should always be considered during any mission. (Mission Analysis, Situational Awareness)

Participants will identify at least three examples of good decision making by this crew and others.

Participants will identify at least three examples of poor decision making by this crew & others.
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:

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 2017 Team Coordination Training Refresher. Please share your thoughts about this training and the format with us!

Complacency
Although not one of the 7 basics of TCT. Complacency is a real factor in safety and mishap incidents. Do not ever get so “comfortable” in your own marine backyard that you fail to follow all the rules of good seamanship as well as TCT.
The Patrol

Mission: Routine MOM/Training patrol with night patrol training in prep for a Coxswain signoff check ride

Facility: 30 ft. cabin cruiser with twin 225hp gas outboard engines.

Weather: Visibility was 10 nm or better
- Winds 5-10KT
- Seas 1-2 ft.
- Air temp 80F, Water temp 84F
- High tide of 0.8 ft. expected at 1823
- Sunset at 2042
- Moonrise at 0020, waning full moon going on to last quarter

CREW

- Coxswain Mac 3 years as a Coxswain
- Crew #1, Alex 2 years as certified Crew. Also the owner of the vessel and training for Coxswain
- Crew #2, Lois 7 years as certified crew
- Crew #3, Tim 3 years as certified crew (Tim has a problem with night vision, that all the other crew are aware of)

All crew members were qualified and maintained currency, with the exception that Alex who had not yet had his required TCT refresher. The Ops workshop was not required that year, and only Mac and Lois had taken it.

Venue: Port Aransas, TX

Scenario: The mission was to be a routine MOM (Maritime Observation Mission) in support of station Port Aransas. Its secondary purpose was to serve as the required night patrol prior to Alex’s coxswain check ride.

All four crew members had just put in a full day’s work — Lois as an ICU nurse, Alex as a trial lawyer, Mac as a rigger in a local boatyard, and Tim as a teacher at a local Middle School — before coming home, changing into ODUs, and immediately driving 20-40 miles to the marina.

At 1730 on the evening of Monday 8JUN 2015, four Auxiliarists met at a Port Aransas TX marina for a pre-patrol briefing on board CGAUX facility 014302. On board vessel 014302, Mac conducted a short but comprehensive pre-patrol briefing.

Complete the first GAR
As part of this briefing, Mac presented a GAR (General Assessment of Risk, commonly referred to as the Green-Amber-Red) sheet to the crew that he had completed the night before.

The GAR score Alex came up with (the night before) was 18, having given a score of 2 each for supervision, planning, and, team selection and 4 each for environment, event complexity and team fitness, partly because a good portion of the patrol would be under conditions of darkness, and Tim has just received news that his night vision had deteriorated to the point where he was legally blind in low light. This score was well in the Green.

At 1755 AUX014302 got underway from its berth at the marina with Alex at the helm under Mac's supervision. From 1800-2000 they conducted VS, or Vector SAR (small area search and rescue) patterns and MOB (man overboard) drills. At 2025 they put in at station to refuel, and suspended patrol to eat dinner at a restaurant ashore. While at dinner, Lois informed her crew mates that during their transit to station, she had taken the opportunity to compare 014302's GPS with a new GPS application she'd just installed on her cell phone. The results were cause for concern — not only was the heading on 014302's GPS erratic, but it displayed a discrepancy of at least 15 degrees from her phone app, most noticeably at slow speeds (Situational Awareness, Adaptability and Flexibility, Communication, Assertiveness). Alex said he had noticed his GPS's erratic behavior on his last trip out on her the week before, but there hadn't been time to get it repaired before the night patrol he needed before he could take his scheduled check ride, and he didn't want to inconvenience everyone by rescheduling. Anyway, the weather was predicted to be clear tonight with a full moon, and he knew this AOR well enough to navigate by eye.

Lois didn't want to insult Alex by saying that she believed that operating without a reliable GPS might be cause for suspending the patrol (after all it was Alex's boat, and he claimed to know the area 'by heart'). She also remembered that Alex had Radar on his boat, but it had not been turned on and she had never been trained on how to use it. So she offered to help install the new app on her crew mates' phones while they were eating dinner.

Because there was a long wait to be seated, their break was approximately 2 hours long. During this time, the sun had set, and it was full dark by the time they returned to the boat.

**Complete a second GAR**
At 2200, AUX 014302's crew updated its GAR adding 2 points each to environment and complexity for a total of 22, still in the Green but bordering on the Amber, or moderate risk bracket, to take reduced visibility after dark into account, though no mention was made of Tim's deteriorated night vision in order not to hurt his feelings and resumed patrol enroute to her mooring at the marina at an average speed of 30 KT.

During this transit, Lois was the designated bow lookout. Tim, the stern lookout (because Alex didn't want to make him feel useless, and the stern lookout 'wasn't that important, anyway') was seated on the stern, port side. Alex resumed the helm, while Mac, the coxswain, was seated on the stern, starboard side while they fiddled with Tim's phone, trying to get the new GPS app to work.

Meanwhile, Aux vessel 014302 was approaching the marina Inlet North Jetty at a speed of 30 KT. Mac, the qualified coxswain, sensed how fast the vessel was going and thought it was excessive for safe operation at night. However, he reasoned, vessel 014302 was Alex's boat, he knew how it handled at speed, and was more familiar with the approach to his home marina than Mac was. Also, because Alex tended to take criticism personally, Mac decided not to risk insulting him, especially when they were so close to the end of the patrol. For her part, Lois, who had taken the opportunity to review the chart, later recalled 014302 being aligned correctly between the number 1 flashing green and number 2 flashing red buoys as they entered the channel at approximately 2240, but then she saw the number 4 marker a few seconds later on the port side and realized they were no longer correctly aligned in the channel. Before she could yell “Rocks!” to Mac and Alex, facility 014302 had crashed into the North jetty at approximately 24 KT.

Alex was able to make a Mayday call on VHF channel 16. Sea Tow responded and relayed the call to CG Sector. Sector then launched a 45 ft. patrol boat, which evacuated all 4 victims to the pier where they were met by ambulances for transportation to local hospitals. All crew members sustained injuries that required hospital treatment, two of them (Lois and Alex) so serious that they may be disabled for the remainder of their lives. Sea Tow dewatered 014302 and towed her to a boatyard, where it was determined that the cost of repairing 014302 would amount to more than her estimated value.
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.

To all participating crews, some final questions:

- We all operate in AORs we could consider our “bath tubs.” Nevertheless you must always fight complacency and remain alert.
- How many of you as Coxswains will leave the helm station when you have to a highly qualified crew taking the helm? How about if that “crew” is actually the owner and may know even better than you how to handle the vessel and where the navigation risks are in the area?
- On night patrols do you even think to ask if any of the crew have night vision issues?
- If your facility is equipped with radar do you remember to brief the crew on how to use it?
- As crew do you ask to be shown how to use the radar if one is on board?
- Did any of you feel that the stern watch “isn’t that important”? We just had an incident in my AOR. Private citizen, at night, hit from behind. 4 people to the hospital one eventually died. The boat hitting them just kept going.

Send your comments to:
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Thank You
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