

CONTINGENCY PLANNING

By Lindy Harrison DVC-OE

Contingency Planning has recently been treated as if it were a new activity. It is not! It is an activity as familiar to Auxiliarists as search and rescue is to a coxswain. In fact, one type of contingency planning is search and rescue.

A search and rescue plan would be considered a failure if there were no communications, if someone other than the victim was hurt or if the coxswain and crew didn't know what to do. Similarly the execution of any contingency plan will be considered a failure if there is poor (or no) communication, if one of the responders is hurt or responders don't know what to do.

Because communication is an absolute necessity and one of the main reasons why response plans fail, certain terminology has been developed for use by responders working with very large events where several organizations must work together. This terminology is taught in courses available from FEMA.

A second difficulty with responses to very large events

or situations is that several agencies must work together. Workers in these organizations may not know what they are permitted to do, what other organizations are permitted to do or even what they CAN do. An effort to minimize failure because of these limitations has necessitated designing a structure for how different organizations are to work together when an event is REALLY BIG or crosses jurisdictions. Like the terminology, the structure is both a blessing and a curse because it requires responders to learn it. If they don't, it's one more stumbling block in the response process.

For some 20 years, there has existed some form of Incident Command System and for five years the Coast Guard has had an Incident Management Handbook (COMDTPUB P3120.17), which is available for download at <http://homeport.uscg.mil/myc/g/portal/ep/home.do> (follow this link to library ⇒ ICS ⇒ Job Aids). The Handbook is designed to assist Coast Guard Personnel in the use of the National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS) that is used during multi-agency response operations and planned events.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- ♥ **CONTINGENCY PLANNING**
- ♥ **LEADERSHIP NOT JUST FOR COXSWAINS**
- ♥ **PATROL PLANNING**
- ♥ **BOATING SAFETY LAWS GAINING NEW MOMENTUM**

During the writing of this Handbook, it was recognized that about 80% of all response operations share common principles, procedures and processes. The other 20% of the response operations are unique to the type of incident.

The Handbook includes a "generic section" that outlines and defines jobs, responsibilities and structure that appear in the response to all types of incidents. After that, it gives specific response plans for search and rescue (as in the case of the crash of TWA Flight 800), oil spills, law enforcement, terrorism, hazardous substance releases, marine fire and multi-casualty situations.

Should you wish to become highly involved in Contingency Auxiliary Assistant Contingency Planning, there is a Personal

Continued on Page 2

**CONTINGENCY
PLANNING**

Continued from Page 1

Qualification Standard called Preparedness Specialist (AUX-ACP), the workbook for which is downloadable from:

<http://www.auxmdept.org/Preparedness%20Specialist%20Final%206JAN05.pdf>

Contingency planning for a hazardous material spills is also challenging. If you are interested, you can access:

<http://cdis.missouri.edu/CourseInfo/DetailCourseInfo.asp?9038>

Well thought out contingency (response) plans can fail to be properly executed for the reasons indicated above or because people have not practiced their skills often enough to do them well (as second nature). Because of this, table top exercises and exercises in real time have been developed during which people can either describe their actions or actually carry them out while not under the stress of a real incident. Such practice is just as important to contingency planning as currency maintenance is to our skills as aviators or professional mariners! So get involved and practice for the next big event!

NUMBER 5

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**LEADERSHIP-
NOT JUST FOR
COXSWAINS**

By James McCarty BC-OEI

When we think about "leadership," we often visualize people who hold positions of some sort. They may wear distinctive insignia or devices on their uniforms, or they may have attained some particular level of qualification in their organization or group. The Auxiliary is somewhat unique in that, as volunteers, no member (irrespective of qualifications) has the authority to order us to do anything. We rely on the good faith and dedication of all members to "agree to be led."

Such is the true essence of "leadership." This concept of a willingness to be led is practiced every day by our boat and air crews who follow the instructions of the coxswain or aircraft commander because they want to and because they have confidence in the "leader." But what leadership responsibilities do crew members have in the Auxiliary?

The principles of Team Coordination Training (TCT) focus on improving the quality of decision making by appointed leaders. However, the TCT philosophy goes beyond just the coxswain and aircraft commander. Among the seven skills of TCT, "assertiveness" seems to receive little attention. In part, the Boat Crew Seamanship Manual states that individual crew members must take responsibility for the safety of all on board by "speaking up", and by "stating and maintaining a position until convinced by the facts that your position is wrong." In other words, it requires that individual crew members exhibit some qualities of "leadership" regardless of their "position."

Clearly, when engaged in air or sea operations, there is a time and place for discussion...and conversely, there is a time and place to simply comply with instructions. When we, as crew members, become aware of a potential risk or hazard, we are obligated to speak up; the "situational awareness" aspect of TCT demands that we remain constantly alert for risks, communicate our position to the coxswain or

Continued on Page 3

UP TOP IN OPERATIONS

LEADERSHIP- NOT JUST FOR COXSWAINS

Continued from Page 2

aircraft commander, and insure that sufficient discussion and analysis takes place before a decision is made.

When we see a fellow crew member having some difficulty, or when we notice a lapse in procedure that could be dangerous, or any other divergence from safe air or surface operations, we have an obligation to speak up. In some instances, this may feel awkward or uncomfortable, but if we fail to become actively involved in the decision making process, we risk the safety of our selves and our shipmates and the success of the mission. Thus, all crew members, whether coxswain or crew, have leadership responsibilities. This is where the "Team" in "Team Coast Guard" becomes truly meaningful!

PATROL PLANNING

By Hank Demler BC-OEE

Did you plan to fail? or did you fail to plan? The results are usually the same. As we schedule our next patrol, be it

air, surface or comms, pre-planning is essential for a successful patrol.

A major part of the pre-plan is a properly outfitted facility. Is a facility that just passed a facility exam ready to go? In most cases no way. The facility exam has no requirement for proper uniforms, provisions or training. What are the conditions of the electronics and back up plans? For instance is there a hand held VHF-FM radio aboard in addition to the primary radio? While there may be sufficient PFD's aboard for the crew, how about extras for our customers?

As our patrol day approaches, have you been watching the weather and keeping up with forecasts? As the person in charge of the patrol (coxswain or pilot) have you secured your official orders? Have you contacted your crew to inform them of the uniform of the day, date and location of patrol, as well as meeting time and place? This would be a good time to inform the crew of the anticipated patrol activities and weather. Communication with the crew ahead of time can cure potential problems before they become real problems.

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Now is the time to review your charts and plans. The type of missions planned will vary with the operational requirements, but planning ahead may save the day.

Well, patrol day is finally here! It is time to contact the controlling unit and find out what they have in store for the day, also to check the weather, and have a pre-patrol briefing. Is your crew ready? Is everyone in the same uniform? Is the weather as anticipated? **No!** Can you adapt? A back up plan is always essential. Next step, prep the facility. Pre-underway checks of fuel, oil, coolant, batteries, and so on. If you are going on an air patrol, your pilot will have a pre-underway (pre-flight) check list because that's the way he/she

Continued on Page 4

UP TOP IN OPERATIONS

PATROL PLANNING

Continued from Page 3

was trained from day one. It is standard procedure. Well, so it is for surface patrols.

So now that the planning stages are completed, the action stage is here. As the patrol unwinds so do the plans. Change is the order of the day. Can you adapt? Constant communication with your crew at all times keeps every one on alert, and a part of the plan. Job assignments are vital so the crew people know what is expected of them.

Risk Management and the precepts of TCT should be foremost in our thoughts and actions. Will this planning and training prevent accidents and mistakes? Unfortunately no, not completely, but it will reduce the occurrence and severity of them.

BOATING SAFETY LAWS GAINING NEW MOMENTUM

By James McCarty BC-OEI

The New Jersey Boating Safety Education bill that requires all boaters in the state to pass a boating safety course to operate most motorized

vessels was recently signed into law. The law applies to all people age 16 years and older who operate registered power vessels more than 12 feet in length. The law becomes effective over a staggered period of time, depending on the date of birth of the operator.

A quick survey indicates that there no boating education or operator licensing requirement in only 17/53 US states and territories. Of the 36 states/territories requiring boating safety education, eight states impose this requirement

for Personal Watercraft (PWC) operators only.

Many Auxiliarists believe that boating safety education is a key element in reducing boating related mishaps. Know your state regulations as well as the requirements of neighboring states. Try to use each encounter with boating public as an opportunity to educate about the value of boating education...they will listen while you are towing them to a safe harbor! Requirements can be found at: <http://www.boatsafe.com/nauticalknowhow/statereqs.htm>.

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