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**Coast Guard Policy Concerning Auxiliary Come-Ups**

By COMO Lew J. Wargo Sr., DVC-RS

There is much confusion about Auxiliary Facilities handling non-distress disabled vessels that they come upon while operating under orders. To help clarify this confusion I would encourage all coxswains to become familiar with the following two excerpts from Commandant Instructions (Please read the Note taken from the end of the paragraph from COMDTINST M16130.2D):

U.S. Coast Guard Addendum to the National Search and Rescue Supplement (NSS) to the International Aeronautical and Marine Search and Rescue Manual (IAMSAR), COMDTINST M16130.2D, paragraph 4.2.6.4 which states: **"Cases Discovered By Auxiliary Facility.** When an Auxiliary vessel on routine safety patrol or otherwise on orders discovers a vessel requesting assistance, but not in radio contact with the Coast Guard, the Auxiliarist will relay the request for assistance to the Coast Guard operational commander and may undertake to provide assistance if capable. If a tow is undertaken, the Auxiliary vessel is required to notify the operational commander of the identity of the vessel, the location of the vessel, and the destination to which the vessel is being towed. No Auxiliary vessel may undertake the tow of another vessel

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**NEW DVC-RS**

COMO Lew J. Wargo Sr., DVC-RS

COMO Taylor has moved on to become the Deputy Director for the Response Department and I have taken on the position of Division Chief, Surface Operations (DVC-OS) on the National Staff and I would like to introduce myself to you and give you some of my background.

For the past five years I served as the Branch Chief for Surface Operations – Qualifications. In that capacity I chaired the National Auxiliary Surface Operations Standardization Team (STAN), which is responsible for reviewing and recommending policy and regulations concerning Auxiliary Surface Operations. This is a very interesting and challenging position that allowed me to have input to the very core of our Boat Crew Qualification and Auxiliary Surface Operations programs. It is a position that I hesitated giving up but as DVC-RS I will still have a seat on the STAN Team.

I have been a member of the Auxiliary for over 33 years, been active in operations since joining the Auxiliary in 1976 and have served as a QE since the start of the Boat Crew Program in 1984 and CQEC for 9ER since 1996. Since 2000 I served as the DSO-OP for 9ER and served the Ninth Eastern Region as District Commodore in 1994-5.

In my civilian career I was an engineering manager from New York Telephone (now Verizon) doing network planning. My wife tells me that I didn't retire I just changed jobs and now work full time for the Auxiliary.



## ELECTRONIC NAVIGATION

COMO Lew J. Wargo Sr., DVC-RS

As a QE and a member of the Auxiliary Surface Operations STAN Team I have been in a position to evaluate Auxiliary Boat Crews. One area of concern is electronic navigation. Some coxswains are not capable of using their electronics to the extent required to meet Coast Guard standards, reaching a Commence Search Point (CSP) within 100 yards. Too many coxswains are still relying on "Dead Reckoning." For Boat Crews to be a reliable asset for search and rescue, they must be able to navigate to a CSP and arrive within 100 yards of datum. Accuracy in navigation is also required to run other Search Patterns like the Parallel Track and Creeping Line.

Throughout the Auxiliary eighty-seven percent (87%) of the Operational Facilities are equipped with GPS or some other form of electronic navigation. A concern arises when the coxswain is not familiar with the use of the electronic navigation equipment on their facilities. Many just use their GPS to give them LAT & LONG or as a Chart Plotter. When training our boat crews, we need to emphasize the method to enter waypoints and use them for setting up routes and search patterns on their GPS. This becomes very important when people's lives are dependant on our ability to find them. Coxswains must master these skills.

The Auxiliary has a Public Education GPS course that does an excellent job of teaching the use of this equipment. If the course is not available in your area, boat crews should spend time going through their GPS manual and learning these skills. I highly encourage all of our boat crews to train with their electronic navigation equipment every time they are underway. Every time we conduct a Ready for Operations exercise or other similar event we should include electronic navigation wherever possible. The GPS is an excellent tool for laying out and running precession search patterns like the Parallel Track and Creeping Line. Many of us may not get to run

precision search patterns very often, but when we do, someone's life could depend on our ability to lay them out quickly and run them accurately.

To continue to be the premier boating organization, we must learn to master these skills along with all the others. If we cannot navigate accurately and quickly, we loose the "Search" in Search and Rescue! Practice, practice, and more practice.

### Editor's Note:

The publications listed below are resources every Division Library should have available for their crews. These publications provide practical knowledge and information the GPS operation manuals generally do not provide. These also have useful teaching information and graphics for use in PE classes. These as well as several others are available thru U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Association Books.

**"Captains Quick Guide, Using GPS"** by Robert Sweet

**"GPS for Mariners"** by Robert Sweet

**"The Weekend Navigator"** by Robert Sweet

## Patrol Safety

By Hank Demler BC-RES

How safe is your patrol? In this article let's talk about the "Towing Evolution". This article is not intended to teach towing but rather to discuss risks we see during a towing evolution. At the start of each patrol we must come up with a risk assessment for the days patrol, and we may need to adjust that number as the events of the day unfold.

There is inherent danger in the towing evolution. So we should add to the risk assessment number when we are about to get into a tow. Today, we don't usually get involved in towing unless we are patrolling on inland lakes or rivers. So for many of us our tows are to gain or maintain qualification; in which case we are usually using another Auxiliary facility as the disabled vessel. This should reduce the risk factor; however, that fact alone does not insure safety.

One major risk associated with the tow evolution is the chance to fall overboard while towing. This happens when attempting to grab the bow eye of the disabled boat; when paying out the tow line while taking the disabled boat in astern tow; when the "Man overboard" drill begins; when a "Break the Tow" command is given we are off into a high speed Racetrack turn and then suddenly we really do have a MOB. Remember to warn the crew and hang on. Finally the tow evolution is a success, but we now need to lean over the side to remove the snap hook from the disabled boats bow eye and over someone goes.

Next on the risk list is getting entangled in lines. This concern arises when throwing a heaving line, when paying out the tow line and bridle, when moving the towline to the bow when transferring to an alongside tow, while rigging the alongside tow and while docking the disabled boat.

Another risk involves getting body parts caught where fenders should be used. This can be while using your arm or leg to fend off the disabled boat or grabbing a rail on one of the boats and not seeing the rail coming at you from the other boat.

Another risk involves tangling fingers in bits or Sampson posts while trying to secure a line especially when putting the reverse twist in the line while putting a half hitch over the bit.

There are of course other risks, such as breaking a tow line that has been over stressed, or when maneuvering a distressed boat to the dock. I am sure you can come up with many other risks that I may have missed.

## **USCG AUX. Special Event Radio Day 2009**

**Daniel F Amoroso, BA- RTP**

The US Coast Guard Auxiliary Special Event Radio Day was held on October 17, 2009 to commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the

USCG Aux. This year sixty-four USCG Auxiliary high frequency (HF) amateur radio stations were operational across the nation from almost all USCG Aux. districts.

The Event has many purposes:

1. Commemorate the anniversary of the USCG Auxiliary
2. Inform the public of the good works of the Auxiliary
3. Practice H.F. communications within the Auxiliary
4. Promote interest in the USCG Aux. Communications Program
5. Bring new members into the Auxiliary
6. Enjoy a fun day of fellowship

Most stations commented on the good will they received during the Event. One Special Event station report stated: "It was interesting how many stations had so much praise for what the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary do. It makes me feel proud to be part of Team Coast Guard!" Another mentioned: "Many stations expressed thanks to the Auxiliary and the Coast Guard"

During the Special Event, amateur stations operated by Coast Guard Auxiliary members contacted over 2,300 other HF radio stations in all fifty states. Event station K1G made 535 on air contacts.

Auxiliary members spoke to thirty-four countries over the air, including: Spain, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, France, Greenland, Sweden, England and Poland. One station contacted Australia and explained the USCG Auxiliary to several people 'down under'.

Some of the more memorable contacts" were with: USS Yorktown, USS Pampanito, Station - W5CGC US Coast Guard Radio Club, Coast

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Station KSM and Boy Scout Stations from as far away as Scotland.

Thanks to all the Special Event stations for participating in this year's event and the National Telecommunications Division Staff for all their support. Please join us next year to help commemorate the US Coast Guard anniversary.

**Note:** The 2010 event has been set up to go on Saturday – 23 October. For more information as the 2010 plans are made check the [Response Communications news on the web site](#).

**Come-Upon - Continued from P 1**

unless the Auxiliarist is reasonably assured of the safety of both vessels and the persons onboard. If the Auxiliary vessel cannot safely tow a disabled vessel that is standing into danger, it may endeavor to remove the persons from the threatened vessel and stand by until a more capable resource arrives on scene."

"Note: Cases discovered by the Auxiliary are a particularly sensitive section of the policy. How the situation is dealt with is the end product of sustained negotiations and compromise effort on the part of all concerned parties. It is intended that the Auxiliarist, not the SMC, will make the judgment as to whether the Auxiliarist can safely assist. When the Auxiliarist notifies SMC that they intend to assist the vessel, it's not "Asking for permission". The Auxiliarist has already determined that he/she can safely provide assistance, and the notification to SMC is a courtesy. This policy does not reduce the operational commander's authority and responsibility to exercise command and control over all assigned forces, including Auxiliary vessels on ordered patrols. The operational commander may override the Auxiliarist's decision if warranted by an evaluation of the circumstances. However, unless there is a specific reason to do so, such as an indication of unusual risk or hazard, or an operational

need to assign the Auxiliary vessel to a higher priority mission, the decision to assist should be left to the Auxiliarist."

Auxiliary Operations Policy Manual, COMDTINST M16798.3E, paragraph 4.E.9.a which states: "When an Auxiliary vessel on routine patrol or otherwise on orders discovers a vessel requesting assistance, but is not in contact with the Coast Guard, the Auxiliarist will relay the request for assistance to the Coast Guard Operational Commander and may undertake to provide assistance, if capable."

If you run into a problem with your local Station or order issuing authority over a "Come Upon" while on patrol, please follow their instructions. After the mission is completed, report the incident via your chain of leadership to your OTO or Director. They should be able to clarify this policy with your local station or OIA.

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