



# THE RESPONDER

Newsletter of the National Response Directorate

Volume 3

June 2015

## Breaking AOM News

**Submitted by: COMO Gary Taylor**

There is a new, comprehensive and up to date AUXDATA Order Management Overview Guide that has been developed by Operations Systems Center (OSC) and is now posted on the AOM Landing page at this link (<https://ordermgmt.uscg.gov/>) under the User Guides and Tutorials tab (top left of navigation bar).

Click on the AUXDATA Order Management Overview Guide link under User Guides and it will take you to this terrific user guide. It contains screen shots as well as good descriptions on "How To" topics within in each section. You can either open it or save it to your computer to review later. It is in Adobe PDF format so you will need to have at least Adobe Reader on your computer.

Since this is a comprehensive guide, it contains information

pertinent to Owners, Operators, and OIAs on order processing as well as information for use at the Coast Guard District (DIRAUX) and National Coast Guard Levels.

Depending on your user access level, you may or may not have access to the Owner/Operator, OIA, District and/or National level screens or functions.

Thanks to the OSC folks for getting this long awaited document out.

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## Crew Resource Management Is Now for Observers, Too

**Submitted by: Wilson Riggan DVC-RA**

The Coast Guard has long held the belief, backed by policy, that all who serve aboard an aircraft during flight should be trained in (Continued on Page 2)



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## Crew Resource Management Is Now for Observers, Too (cont.)

Crew Resource Management. This applies to the Auxiliary as well as to the active duty. However, until now, due to logistical and budget reasons, only Pilots and Air Crew were provided this vital training. That has now changed.

The Coast Guard's Crew Resource Management (CRM) course has been reinstated as a stand-alone C-School, Aux-17. It is no longer taught along with Aux-18, Spatial Disorientation (SD), in a central location. Instead, Auxiliary and active duty instructors now bring CRM training to the field. These sessions are set up and managed by your Auxiliary district aviation leadership. Several have already been established for this year and more are on the way.

This training is essential in understanding how to be an effective and productive part

of a flight crew. It is no longer enough to just ride along in the aircraft and leave the flying to the pilot-in-command. Our missions are too complex for that, and the stakes are too high as well. We depend on the active participation of all members of the crew to help keep up the safety level we need. This training will provide you with the knowledge and tools with which to be that active participant in a structured and useful way.

Please contact your district leadership to find out when Aux-17 is being offered in your area. If one is not yet scheduled, please encourage your leadership to contact the National Staff to set one up.

joined the Response Directorate Staff in the past 6 months.

### Aviation Division:

John Pallante – Branch Assistant – Training (BA-RAT)

Roy Savoca – Branch Assistant – Aviation Management (BA-RAM)

Steve Trupkin – Branch Chief – Flight Standards (BC-RAF)

### Education Division:

Lauren Pugh – Branch Chief – Editorial (Responder) (BC-REE)

Davida Kellogg – Branch Chief – Instruction (BC-REI)

### Surface Division:

Joseph Smith – Branch Chief – Safety (BC-RSS)

### Telecommunications Division:

Don Wellons – Promoted to Branch Chief – Integration (BC-RTI)

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## Welcome Aboard

Submitted by: **COMO Gary Taylor**

Please welcome aboard the following members who have stepped forward and have either been promoted or



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## Welcome Aboard (cont.)

Even with these welcome additions, we still have a couple positions to fill, two in Aviation and one in Telecommunications. Please check the help wanted ads on the Auxiliary National web site at:

<http://cgaux.org/members/wantads/index.php> or contact the respective division chief for those divisions for more information. You can find their contact information in this edition of the Responder, on the Response Directorate web site or use AUX Directory under the Response Directorate.



## S.T.A.F. Making Safety a Top Priority

**Submitted by: Robert Whyland BC-RSE**

In the everyday activities of an Auxiliarist there are many challenges to the completion of the mission at hand. Uppermost in our list of

objectives must be completing the mission safely. The S.T.A.F. is not a misspelling, but the initials of one of the most prevalent of pitfalls in safe task completion. Slips, Trips and Falls rank at or near the top of most accident and injury causal lists. In our everyday lives and our Coast Guard Auxiliary activities, the prevention of slips, trips and falls will pay great dividends.

**Lauren Pugh, Editor**  
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The environment we are in for many of our missions puts us in constant need to watch our footing and the obstacles we and others have left in our way. It is not uncommon for us to be on very slippery surfaces at boat ramps, on boat decks and docks. These surfaces call for our utmost care and caution to assure we safely complete the boat launch, or whatever we are trying to accomplish. How

*The Responder* is produced by the National Response Directorate, United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, at no cost to the U.S. Coast Guard or the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Please submit articles for Publication, via the chain of leadership and management, to the editor:  
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many crews consider the condition of the launch area, boat ramp, and dock in the evaluation of their mission safety? The beginning and end of each day in an operational activity is at this location and it plays a vital part

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## S.T.A.F. Making Safety a Top Priority (cont.)

in the safety of the patrol or training activity.

While on the patrol how often do we find the lines not recoiled and stowed? How often do we have wet decks to walk on? Is the sea always calm? Does the helmsman communicate their actions so everyone is sure of their footing before a change of speed, course, or taking a wake? Do we communicate our movement to the helmsman so they are aware of the shifts that may occur in the boat's response? I am very sure you each can add to the various scenarios which could lead to the slip, trip or fall of a crew member when we have unexpected movements of the facility while underway or at rest.

We need to look beyond the patrol to the activities in other areas of our Auxiliary missions.

There are many instances of instructors and/or students injured in S.T.A.F. situations in the class room because of stray wires, loose rugs, misplaced brief cases and other hazards. If we do not inventory the risks and do a thorough job of "policing" the site we endanger ourselves, our shipmates and possibly the general public.

Can we prevent S.T.A.F.? Yes it can be accomplished if we take the time to evaluate the situation, correct any deficits and constantly review the area around us, and the next place we are going to place our foot. We cannot walk looking down all the time, but we can keep our guard up and mitigate as much as practical any and all situations that will "catch" us or one of our shipmates.

S.T.A.F. injuries run the gamut of just plain embarrassment to death. There is no telling what the outcome of any S.T.A.F. will be. Just remember

if you are 5' 10" tall your head is going to fall that distance before it hits the surface. The speed over that distance of just your height increases dramatically and can and does cause serious injury. If we are not on our guard it can happen so fast we never will understand until we hit the surface. Use care, be safe, and be aware of your footing.

Lastly, it is your responsibility to report, according to your District policy, all mishaps whether they do or do not cause injury. The parents of many junior team sportspersons have been in the habit of saying, "just shake it off", but are learning what a mistake that has been. It is the same with our activities, what does not hurt today can be serious tomorrow. Report all mishaps no matter how small you think they may be.







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## Use of Helm Commands – Communication for Safety, Performance and Professionalism

Submitted by: James McCarty DVC RS

Most everyone would agree that the Coast Guard Auxiliary is becoming more and more professional. Over the decades we have seen better equipment, more accountability, improved training, security clearances, and closer operational coordination with the Coast Guard. The recently developed Coast Guard and Auxiliary Interaction Plan is clear evidence that a closer relationship with the gold side is key to fulfilling the mission of the U.S. Coast Guard, and the Auxiliary by enhancing safety, professionalism and performance through better communication.

The Auxiliary Surface Operations program to the “gold side” and the public is a high profile demonstration of our commitment to the Coast Guard mission; we have an

obligation to present ourselves in a positive and professional light to all who interact with us on the nation’s waterways. So how do we present both the image and reality of professionalism and competence while maintaining our safety standards? One method is improved helm and dockside communication that enhances Auxiliary seamanship and boat handling performance. This is what the public, the Coast Guard, and all of our crew members expect of us every day.

### Safety

Any experienced mariner will tell us that communication and coordination among crew members while underway or moored is the most important element of vessel safety. Analysis of Auxiliary surface mishaps conducted by the Surface Operations Division has found, not surprisingly, that human error is by far the most common cause of accidents and mishaps. Human error can often be caused by

complacency, poor seamanship habits, and ineffective communication that lead to invalid assumptions about who is responsible and accountable for specific tasks during surface operations. Complacency, or a



lack of attention to detail regarding proper communication of commands while at the launch area, dock or while underway creates an environment of uncertainty that can often lead to slips, falls, groundings, entanglements and tow line mishaps that cause injuries and property damage. For more details about Auxiliary mishap causation, please use this link, or visit the National Response Directorate web page and navigate to the Surface Operations page. Surface Mishap Analysis:

[http://wow.uscgaux.info/Uploads\\_wowII/R-DEPT/SurfaceMishapAnalysis.pdf](http://wow.uscgaux.info/Uploads_wowII/R-DEPT/SurfaceMishapAnalysis.pdf)

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**Use of Helm Commands  
(cont.)**

***Performance***

Many crew members are very familiar with each other; they may have been fishing together for years, or they may have developed long term friendships as a result of crewing on the same OPFAC for several months or years. This sort of familiarity might seem to be good for communication among crew members, but that may not always be the case. Sometimes this familiarity can lead to the complacency I mentioned earlier. “Assumptions” are



made about what the coxswain “meant” to say or do, or we “assume “ that “someone” will haul in on the mooring line or tow line, or monitor the radar for the

helmsman, etc. during so called “routine” operations or when emergent circumstances present themselves. Use of standardized, clear and unambiguous helm commands will ensure that operational tasks are clearly identified by the coxswain, that they are specifically assigned to the proper crew member, and that tasks are successfully completed. If coxswains faithfully post formal watches prior to getting underway we eliminate the need for excessive, redundant or confusing verbal requests to various people who may or may not be the right crew member. A crew member who knows his or her specific watch responsibilities will be alert and ready to respond to the anticipated command from the coxswain, and will respond more quickly and confidently to that command. Crew members who are not assigned to specific watches, nor prepared for specific duties associated with those

watches, may not be actively listening for commands if they “assume” that someone else will probably perform the task.



***Professionalism***

The purpose of using designated helm commands is to eliminate misunderstandings and errors that lead to casualties and poor performance. If we all invented and used our own language, with our own vocabulary, nothing would get done; the Bible story of the Tower of Babel illustrates this concept. Crew members need common terms and common understanding of those terms to communicate our thoughts accurately. As we all know, one way streets can be a pain to navigate and do not make driving in cities very enjoyable.

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## Use of Helm Commands (cont.)

The same applies to our communication. We need to have a 2-way capability to ensure that our wishes and thoughts are understood by both sender and receiver. This is why the feedback leg of the communications loop in helm commands is essential. Professional Coast Guard officers and coxswains demand that each command that is issued be repeated by the receiver of that command, and that the receiver then communicate either the successful completion of that command, or that some other circumstance has occurred. No one assumes anything. The verbal system of commands, acknowledgements, execution feedback, and conning officer acknowledgement of the execution of the command is evidence of a professional and

competent crew to all who witness the process. Crew members also take pride in this professional atmosphere and enjoy crewing on vessels that use these practices. This is how professionalism is ingrained into our daily Auxiliary operational routines. For example:

### *Standard Commands*

The conning officer issues a command of "Come right (or left) to 180 degrees magnetic" and the response would be "Come right (or left) to 180 degrees Aye." Now the loop has been closed for that command. When the helmsman achieves the designated new course, he or she announces "Steady on course 180 Magnetic." The conning officer announces "Very well". Now the conning officer and other crew members are fully informed of the change. The second loop has been closed. This exchange leaves little to doubt, discretion or confusion.

Although some may see all this verbalizing of "the obvious" as a waste of time, good practices and attention to detail reduces complacency, sharpens performance and reduces mishaps.

COMDTINST M3520.2A, Helm Commands, provides us with the most common terms that should be used by crews while underway, both making way and line handling commands while mooring. This document can be found on the Surface Operations page of the Response Directorate under "best practices." The standard language must be learned by everyone, and the best way to learn any language is to use it, and use it all the time. Download this instruction and keep it as a ready reference. Coxswains, FSO-OPs and FSO-MTs can use this short guide to help crew members practice both on the water and in a classroom.

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## Use of Helm Commands (cont.)

Member Training officers can review these commands at Flotilla meetings so that all Auxiliarists, no matter their specialty, can have a fundamental understanding of the process as part of their individual development as Auxiliarists.

Coxswains should drill each member during the patrol to avoid boredom and complacency. OPS officers can ensure that every crew member receives, reviews and practices this new language until it becomes second nature

to them.

We in the Auxiliary must always strive to do a better job of using this communication model that separates the Coast Guard and the Auxiliary from civilian pleasure boaters. Although we are not military, we do represent the military when we wear the uniform and conduct our surface patrols. Let's be sure that the public, our fellow Auxiliarists and the Coast Guard see us as true partners, and true professionals, by using the proper helm and mooring commands during every patrol.

## PPE are you ready for the patrol season?

The new Rescue and Survival manual is out and there are new requirements in place for PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) among them is that your PFD must now be inspected and logged with your flotilla safety (or operations) officer. Are you ready to get underway?



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