



THE RESPONDER

Newsletter of the National Response Directorate

Volume 3

August 2017

When the Unimaginable Happens....The Damage Claims Process

Submitted by: James M. McCarty, DVC-RS

No one foresees, or plans on damaging their facility while under orders. Oh sure, we anticipate mishaps from a safety perspective, we rely on TCT and operations workshops and basic crew training but what if the unforeseen happens? What then? You run aground and damage your prop. You scrape your hull while performing an along-side tow evolution...you name it and it can happen. After we check the crew for injuries, determine how sea worthy we are, and notify our communications provider, we return to base and start filling out our mishap report. Now, what about your vessel? You are under orders, and you are entitled to file a claim to have needed repairs done by the Coast Guard.

REPORTING A CLAIM

By policy, damage claims must be reported to the Order Issuing Authority (OIA) within 24 hours and to the DIRAUX within 48 hours. The Auxiliary Claims Handbook, MLCLANTINST 5890.3 (series), contains the proper form to use, as well a description of the processing procedure so that you will understand what to expect during the claims process. If claimants fail to follow these procedures, delays will probably occur and your claim may be at risk of being lost in the process.

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When the Unimaginable Happens (continued)

PROCESS

The OIA should send an investigator to conduct a “visible inspection” of the damage within 24 hours of notification by the Auxiliarist. The OIA will also send the Auxiliarist a claims “package” based on the initial notification. According to the Auxiliary Damage Claim Handbook, “The Auxiliarist should NOT start repairs to the equipment or facility or submit patrol orders for reimbursement until authorized by the operational commander or the Director of Auxiliary (DIRAUX)”. When the Auxiliarist completes the claims package and sends it to the OIA, the OIA generates an “Acknowledgement of Auxiliary Damage Claim” letter to the Auxiliarist. This tells you that the claim is in the proper COLM. The OIA will ensure that an initial visual inspection of the facility damage is completed by the assigned investigator.

When the OIA has completed processing of the claim, including an investigation into the mishap, the Auxiliarist should be notified of that fact. There are levels of OIA inquiry and response based on the amount of the claim, starting at \$200, then \$750, and over \$750. The Auxiliary Claims Handbook, provides detailed guidance beyond the Operations Policy Manual; you should become familiar with this handbook to ensure that your claim has been properly completed and submitted, and to ensure that the OIA provides feedback to you where required. The steps in the process of initial reporting, through visual inspection and

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investigation by the OIA, and the duties of all persons responsible for the claim, are spelled out to remove any confusion or unnecessary delays.

So, how long should it take to process a claim? Clearly this depends on the amount of the claim and the complexity of the investigation, as well as ensuring that you have completed your reporting responsibilities in a timely manner. We would strongly recommend that if you have not received notification that the claim has been assigned for visual inspection, or that the OIA received the initial claim package within a short time of initial report, that you contact the OIA or DIRAUX directly with your concerns since this is a Coast Guard matter from start to finish. As always, it is never a bad idea to keep your COLM informed of your status, but be aware that the Auxiliary Chain of Leadership and Management is not part of the claims process; your OIA will be the source for all status inquiries for your claim. Of course the best way to avoid this bureaucratic process is to make every effort to avoid mishaps in the first place.

Please be safe out there.



Standing the Watch

Submitted by: Telecom National Staff



John Nicholson from District 1 (SR) is actively involved in the Auxiliary as a Vessel Examiner, FSO-FN, and is in training for Communications Watchstander. John moved to Mattituck, Long Island in 2012, from Rochester, NY, where he was the Director of Mathematics with the Rochester School District, and a Paramedic. He was also an active American Red Cross Volunteer. John is partially retired but still working as a nationally recognized mathematics consultant in New York City, New Jersey and Long Island. Following his move to Long Island John wanted to continue volunteering and was introduced to the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary by Stephen Bush and joined in 2014.

He has completed four training sessions at the Shinnecock Coast Guard Station under the supervision of Chief Warrant Officer Richard Berg, along with Michael Fusco and several watchstanders. He has found it very reassuring

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Standing the Watch (continued)

to watch the U.S. Coast Guard in action as they respond to requests for assistance and plan and carry out their orders for boarding fishing vessels. It has also opened his eyes as to how important the Coast Guard Auxiliary can be in supporting their efforts at several different levels.



Photo by John Nicholson

John found that “The active duty watchstanders are VERY young, competent and confident, and eager to train”. One watchstander, even thanked John for providing him an opportunity to “refresh” his skills in plotting positions using latitude and longitude and distance and bearings. During his four sessions he has so far completed nine tasks. He expects to complete plotting and start his first of five Radio

Communications Watches shortly. His goal is to be fully qualified as a Coast Guard Communications Watchstander by the end of the summer. John says that “Watchstanding has been the most rewarding experience so far because I can see, during every watch, how Auxiliary volunteers can make a difference in supporting the U.S. Coast Guard.”



Watchstander Interview Guide

Submitted by: John W. Holmes, BC-RTQ

Those Watchstanders who are interested in telling their stories may use the below listed questions as a thought provoker:

- How long have you been a member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary?
- What Flotilla do you belong to?
- What motivated you to become a Watchstander?
- Where do you do your Watchstanding?
- How long have you been a CG Watchstander?

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Watchstander Interview Guide (continued)

- What other Auxiliary qualifications do you hold?
- If you had to do it over, would you?
- What is the biggest attraction that keeps you serving as a Watchstander?
- What were the two or three most exciting days as a Watchstander?

- What would you tell other Auxiliarists to convince them to become Watchstanders?
- How many hours do you devote to Watchstanding in the typical month?



Coast Guard Auxiliary Photo

- Have you convinced other Auxiliarists to become Watchstanders?



Event Reminders

Special Event Radio day coming up 11 November 2017 see posting on the [Response Directorate What's new page at this link](#)

NACON 2017 – The Response directorate will be presenting

- Surface Best Practices – Night Operations 1300 hours Friday and Saturday



Things to Remember

Surface Safety Tip:

The Coast Guard strongly recommends that local navigation standards and operating procedures become a key part of the knowledge coxswains and crews must internalize as part of their preparation for getting safely underway on our nations waterways. If you do not have a copy of

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these local rules, hazards and procedures, please contact your CG Operations Training Officer (OTO).

Uniform Protocol:

ODU are sleeves up for the summer. Clean and neat, no stains, no excess wear, and no rips. **Let's look sharp out there.**

Telecom Protocol:

Operations are in full swing all across the country. It's a good time to brush up on your radio procedures. Review your protocols and your Pro words. No "10 codes" and let's not

hear any "Over and Out" responses. [Mentor guide for TCO \(Telecommunications Officer\) PQS can be found at this link.](#)

Aviation - Mishap Reporting SOP

A new Aviation Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been announced that is specifically aimed at the requirement for timely and accurate reporting of all Auxiliary Aviation mishaps. The SOP adds redundancy to our process and targets reduced cycle time for moving a report from the unit or individual, to senior Auxiliary leadership. The [SOP may be referenced at this link.](#)

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