



THE RESPONDER

Newsletter of the National Response Directorate

November 2020

Helicopter (Helo) Ops in 9CR Sector Detroit

By Christopher Stevens ASO Sector Detroit and Joseph Sheehan BC-RSP
Unless otherwise noted photos are by Chris Stevens



Background

CG Air Station Detroit contacted District 9 Central Region (D9CR) requesting Auxiliary Surface Facilities to support Helo training. D9CR, working with the Air Station and their Coast Guard Operations Training Officer (OTO) developed a Helo training support program. In order to ensure safety, Team Coordination



Training (TCT) was incorporated in the creation of the program.

D9CR Helo Ops Program Consists of:

- Auxiliary capability to provide agile and trained Surface Vessel support crews to safely and reliably coordinate hoisting operations with USCG rotary-wing aircraft

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in a dynamically changing maritime environment.

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Helicopter (Helo) Ops in 9CR Sector Detroit *(continued)*

- A vessel of 27 feet or more - this was determined to be what was needed with all required safety and PPE gear aboard.
- Auxiliary Vessel (facility) Positioning and Communications capable of supporting USCG active duty boats and swimmer standby operations.



Photo by Chris Stevens

To Duplicate This Program in Your District Or Create an Appropriate Air Station Support Program

Please note every Air Station may have different needs and requirements from the ones D9CR's programs support. A group from your district's operations staff should be working with the Auxiliary Air Station Coordinator through the District Staff Officer – Aviation (DSO-AV). Contact the Air Station and setup a discussion on the needs of the Air Station with regards to auxiliary surface

capabilities. You will need to identify the basic program requirements with your District Operations Training Officer (OTO) and develop an AUX class to instruct Auxiliary Boat crew and Coxswains to support Helo Ops procedures



Petty Officer 2nd Class Miguel Arellano operates the hoist on a MH-65C Dolphin helicopter during training operations with the Auxiliary Vessel Ladyfish III. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Cory J. Mendenhall.

used by Coast Guard aircraft. Instruction should include USCG Concept of Operations (CONOPS) in conducting rescue swimmer work, communications required throughout Helo Ops evolutions, positioning of operational vessels in relationship to aircraft while training, and proper abort procedures should a problem occur.

How to Secure Active Duty Buy-In

Once classroom instruction is completed with your Auxiliary team, work with your District's Coast Guard Air Station to begin building a safe operational program to move into the next phase involving Air & Surface crews to do hoisting. Given that the demands of hoisting operations are among the most dangerous operational evolutions conducted by Auxiliary

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Helicopter (Helo) Ops in 9CR Sector Detroit *(continued)*

Facility vessels, it requires AUX initiative to establish a Helo Ops Personal Qualification Standard (PQS) to train/ test /document Auxiliarists' knowledge and abilities to safely execute tasks of hoisting operations between surface and air facilities. The PQS process will demonstrate to Active Duty aircrews that AUX surface crews have been sufficiently trained to safely operate and serve as a force multiplier to their hoisting operations.

- Helo Ops PQS Program demands include:
 - AUX crewmembers physically capable of safely conducting actual hoisting from USCG helicopters in a downdraft environment
 - Boat Crew Personnel capable of conducting efficient communications and surface boat handling.
 - Levels of PQS qualifications to include Crew Hoisting certified and Coxswain Hoisting qualified.

US Coast Guard active duty continue to serve as the model for getting our AUX Helo Ops program through its initial phases and facilitate opportunities to get Auxiliary personnel trained in accordance with AUX PQS requirements. Auxiliary programs should seek Coast Guard active duty participation in training sessions to advance AUX familiarization with communications, terminology, aircraft knowledge, boat positioning, crew positioning, PPE, boat preparations, bail out procedures, and various methods of hoisting. Additional

helo hoisting skillsets that active duty could offer to the Auxiliary members include pre-mission briefings, handling the basket or trail line, grounding stick to discharge static and hand signal communication with the aircraft.



The US Coast Guard Auxiliary should keep the program active by providing a required yearly review and TCT/RM workshop for each member in the program. Ideally, the program should be updated throughout the year with briefs between operational vessels, aircraft, Stations and the member training team. AUX members involved in such a dynamic program should find it to be most exciting and rewarding, not to mention the indescribable feeling of an MH-65 helicopter's downwash from 20 feet **above!** For those in the program who have successfully completed the PQS requirements, a certificate signed by the Air Station Commander, Air Station Ops, Auxiliary OTO and Training Team could be presented to the Auxiliary member.





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Summer Reflections

By Davida Kellogg, BC-REI

As we turn the calendar page to September and start hauling our boats for the coming winter, the Summer-that-just-was is passing into history as the Summer-that-wasn't for many of us. We've missed going out on surface and AUXAIR patrols, standing radio watch at the station, taking courses, or attending conferences and flotilla meetings, and getting together with our friends and Shipmates. So, what are the 'let's get out there and do this thing' kind of Auxiliarists who are drawn to Response to do? Well, certainly not sit on our hands while we wait for this long slow season to turn.

Just as in the Days of Sail, sailors would use slack time unavoidably spent in the Doldrums to make repairs to sails and rigging, chart new courses, and see to their ship in other ways they would not have time for once the winds began to blow again, we can use this down time to get new qualifications and requalify for old ones, take courses on-line, check out new openings for jobs and staff positions in the Auxiliary we might be interested in applying for, call our FC or Member training officer and ask what help they need or think they might need later, read, learn, communicate with each other, and otherwise prepare. That way, when the virus that has kept us pinned down has been brought under control, we will be ready to pick up our old work, and start working in new fields that are opening up before us.

In British Navy wardrooms, there used to be (and may very well still be), a toast traditionally given by the most junior officer — 'A bloody war, or a sickly season!' The reason for this odd-sounding wish for himself and his Shipmates was that, in response to the challenges of such trials as the pandemic we are now going through, opportunities can be expected to emerge. This summer, our Shipmates in the Education end of Response with input and comments from many members across the country have been putting their IT, teaching, and communication skills together to design and deliver the new Risk Management (RM) course on-line. This not only will prevent a backlog of member demand for this mandatory course, but will allow us to deliver this and other courses to far-flung flotillas and divisions that often feel left out of educational opportunities due to travel and scheduling difficulties involved in sending instructors out to meet their needs. FEMA has been offering advanced multi-day courses on-line and free. This is a windfall for those of us interested in picking up qualifications in various aspects of Incident Management, which we have to be ready to do, Pandemic or no. Because of a COVID-19 related drop in Coast Guard accessions, we have received an ALAUX entitled 'Everybody is a Recruiter,' outlining opportunities for all of us, including Auxiliarists, in recruiting. All of these, and others, are tasks we can roll up our sleeves and dig into now. And the longer this 'sickly season' continues, the more there will be for us to do when it finally dies down.





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Hurricane Laura Response by Auxiliary Telecommunications

By P. Denis Rossiter, BC-RTS

With: COMO David Elliot, DVC-RT; Richard Taylor,
BA-RTL; David Rockwell, BC-RTC

Rarely do two hurricanes follow nearly the same track within hours of one another. However, this is what transpired last month. Marco (tropical storm /hurricane/tropical storm) was followed by Hurricane Laura into the Gulf of Mexico creating a very real threat to shipping and the U. S. coast.

As the storms proceeded, Marcos weakened but Laura continued to grow in strength reaching an extremely dangerous category 4 designation. The USCG Auxiliary members provide over 300 High Frequency (HF) radio stations nationwide in support of Coast Guard activities. On August 22nd COMO David Elliot (DVC-RT) informed me that the Coast Guard had requested the Auxiliary Communications Team maintain a ready status, pending an expected call out to support the monitoring of the emergency marine frequencies. Working with Rick Taylor (BA-RTL) and David Rockwell (BC-RTC) the High Frequency (long range) radio stations were put on alert.



On August 26th, a notification was received that we were activated and were to guard the assigned frequencies between the hours of

2200Z and 2400Z the following day. The stations were notified and within fifteen minutes there were six confirmed stations operational. Within an hour we had fourteen stations working to monitor communications from the storm area.



By the evening of the 27th Laura had moved inland and was quickly losing strength with only one distress message copied and relayed. Most stations maintained their watch through 2400 to make sure there were no vessels in distress.

During the twenty-six-hour watch period the fourteen stations logged 131.5 hours of watch-standing in support of the Coast Guard and for the safety of the ships at sea. The members who perform this important mission are part of two Auxiliary Radio Mission programs: the Auxiliary Monitoring Program (AUXMON) and the Augmentation Communications Program (AUGCOM).

The communications team is always Semper Paratus. We maintain our stations and continue to train to insure that "No Call Goes Unanswered".





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Auxiliary Air Operations and COVID-19

By Dan Turner, Branch Chief – Flight Safety

*Semper Paratus, Always Ready,
in an ever-changing world.*

This simple expression requires an innovative, creative, ever alert, and active mind. It requires many dedicated people who love to learn, for what we learned yesterday may or may not prepare us for tomorrow. What will prepare us will be how we hang on to the flexibility to learn and innovate.

Nothing has proven our salt like Covid-19. This has been an invisible and continuing misunderstood enemy. This virus has been a driver for our resolve. The COVID-19 pandemic has tested our resolve, our patience, and our systems. We have found challenges in our preparation of how to respond to this flanking maneuver to our everyday mission response. Auxiliary Aviation (AUXAIR) has stepped up to the challenge, responded with innovation, developed risk mitigation procedures and has continued to serve the Air Stations providing necessary air operations during the pandemic.



Aircraft Commander (and DSO-AV) John “Mango” Manganaro providing Hawaii LT Governor Josh Green the pre-mission briefing – Honolulu, Oahu, HI
Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Matthew West

I am reminded of an old story about an old farmer whose apple tree quit producing apples. A neighbor was surprised when the old farmer walked over to the tree and drove a huge old rusty nail into the center of the tree. The onlooker asked, “are you trying to kill it”? The farmer replied, no, I am reminding it that it’s alive. In the story the tree began to produce apples.

Auxiliary flight crews in D14 are regularly flying missions to deliver and distribute medical supplies (masks, gloves, thermometers, face

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Auxiliary Air Operations and COVID-19 *(continued)*

shields, etc.) throughout the Hawaiian Islands. In Hawaii, the inter-island travel is almost exclusively by air.



LT Governor Green loading the first box of 2000 masks aboard an AUXAIR facility – Honolulu, Oahu, HI
 Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Matthew West



U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Cherokee Six loaded and ready for departure with COVID-19 relief equipment – Honolulu, Oahu, HI
 Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Matthew West



Transfer of masks to Maui EMA for use by Maui Police and Fire Fighters – Kahului, Maui, HI
 Photo By John Manganaro DSO-AV D14

Auxiliary flight crews in D9CR have been transporting active duty flight crews between Air Station Detroit and Air Facility Waukegan (north of Chicago) so that Dolphin crews can provide Search and Rescue (SAR) capability on western and southern Lake Michigan during the peak recreational boating season. Additionally, they have been transporting critical replacement parts, many times with short lead time, since late June.

We are changing the way we prepare. We have found the meaning and purpose for the process of Emergency Management and Disaster Response. In our response during these times, we will document what we have learned and

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Auxiliary Air Operations and COVID-19 *(continued)*

continue to learn in an emergency preparation manual, to augment our normal mission response and be better prepared for the unexpected challenges of the future.



AUXAIR Comanche preparing to transport Active Duty Dolphin flight crew to Air Facility Waukegan – Air Station Detroit, MI

Photo by Ron Keil (Aircraft Commander)

In Air Operations, our everyday mission planning requires the team to review every aspect of a mission before departure release. Air Station Operations has the final authority for mission approval and the Auxiliary Pilot in Command (PIC) has the final authority for flight departure.

Procedures include; planning and filing a VFR or IFR flight plan, weather briefing, weight and balance calculations, fuel and refuel planning, communications planning, mission planning,

crew briefing, Persons on Board (POB) list, operational risk management assessment and risk mitigation.

The prerelease phone call with the Air Station reviews much of this preparation. Phone calls with the Sector Command review the mission profile and any additional tasking. Any changes in the risk assessment can change the response in either asset choice, delay of mission or even scrub the mission altogether. Is the mission value worth the risk?

After resuming air operations in multiple districts, we know that our mission order process and standards, supplemented with additional safety measures to deal with the COVID-19 threat, have stood up to the current threat. It is a sound practice. This was not by accident. We have been working on the order procedures continually with our AUXLO (Auxiliary Liaison Officer an active duty pilot) and Operations at USCG Air Stations and Sector Commands.

This is an ongoing continuous improvement effort - which will continue. A risk awareness strategy and response to reduce or eliminate the potential exposure to infection was added to our standard planning, preparation, and mission performance.

But what did change? What additional practices did we put in place to mitigate the risk from COVID-19?

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Auxiliary Air Operations and COVID-19 *(continued)*

The awareness and planning stages now include adding research for Covid-19 infection status, for any location that may be linked to the mission. Additionally, what changes need to be made to avoid the potential of a crew member being exposed to the infection, or carrying an infection back to their family?

We must consider the members' and their families' pre-existing health status. Is anyone in their ecosystem a high-risk potential for the infection? Specific rules to mitigate the risk have been communicated by the districts; any commercial flight within the past 14 days requires quarantine from the flight crews. Pilots and crews have been teamed up and kept together to reduce risk and they continuously update each other with personal risk assessments. Aircraft sanitization techniques have been developed and implemented.

How do we reduce infection risk while operating in a small cockpit or landing at locations for crew pickup or refueling or supplies?

Solutions to these questions were added to our normal procedures for mission planning and execution.

Per Federal Aviation Regulations, every pilot on every flight is responsible to become familiar with all information and knowledge that may affect that flight. This now includes the COVID-19 status. CFR 14 part 91.103 for preflight action reads, "Each pilot in command (PIC)

shall, before beginning a flight, become familiar with all available information concerning that flight". **PICs now need to include the requirement to know and understand the Covid-19 status and recommendations or laws concerning traveling in and out of that state or locale.**



We are avoiding hot zones for any destination or stop along the way. The Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) list now includes mask, gloves, disinfectant wipes and cleaner. Our standard procedures for post flight now include disinfecting any surface areas inside the cockpit or normally handled surfaces on the aircraft, including headphones and communication equipment.

While the order standards provided great oversight, we experienced a great deal of interruption. We found an intelligent approach to dealing with this sidelining, unexpected disruption to our everyday mission response. The risk assessment process did its job and in doing so mitigated risk and provided for a thorough process to respond to missions when the value outweighed the risk.

We will innovate on these experiences. We will incorporate these lessons into our standards. We will be better prepared for a faster response during the next disruption.

SEMPER PARATUS





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Practice makes perfect....

By Garrison Bromwell, BC-RRP

We have all heard the admonition that “practice makes perfect” which can be attributed to several authors. In some form, we probably all subscribe to it in theory.

But do we practice it?

In conducting several of the recent online TCT/RM classes I was struck by something when my co-facilitator and I introduced the Boston Whaler scenario. In this activity the subject facility is heading a little offshore on an otherwise perfect day to conduct two boat tow training with another facility that was waiting for them. Most of the teams presented with this problem immediately wanted to know about the target facility, “what kind boat, how many aboard, what’s their skill level, etc.”, while conducting the pre-mission risk assessment for the facility that was going out.

I would not give them any information – why not? This is a towing practice, right? In a real situation we usually do not have all the information in advance. In a come upon, do we know anything about the boat we are going to tow when we are doing our initial risk assessment at the dock before going out? Of course not. Let us practice for that. We do not have any information about the boat we are going to tow (or even if we will do any towing).

Our best practice, when we come upon a boat that needs towing is to evaluate the vessels’ occupants – are they physically and mentally ok? Are all occupants wearing life jackets? The vessel itself – position of cleats, seaworthiness,

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**Please submit articles for Publication, via the chain of leadership and management, to the editor:
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etc. Where is the nearest safe haven and can we safely undertake the tow? We quickly revise our Risk Assessment (GAR score) and decide if we should do the tow. Why not take this opportunity to practice this scenario? As a Coxswain, what is your course of action when you come upon a vessel in distress or just dead in the water? Practice what you will do at every opportunity – even those days when you are just going to meet your friend who you have traded tows with every opportunity you had over the last several years. And take it a step further – sit around a table with your shipmates and create a check list for a come upon tow. Then go out and practice using the check list – step by step.

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Practice makes perfect (continued)

We can take this same approach to other training situations as well. Man overboard drills should be done at every opportunity but do them precisely – punch the Man Overboard (MOB) button on the GPS, make sure a datum marker is tossed, simulate five or more short blasts on the horn, simulate notifying your controlling authority of the incident, and do an evaluation of the recovered target (yes I know it's hard to check the pulse and breathing of a fender or seat cushion – but the point is to simulate what you would do if it was an actual person).

Another area where we may be all a little rusty is in search patterns. When was the last time you ran a search pattern, on your last check ride? The Qualifying Examiner (QE) most likely had you run a Victor Sierra (Vector – Single Unit) or an expanding square so if you have practiced search pattern at all, you did one of those – right? How about running a parallel pattern or creeping line for practice? On a cold winter night, you could review the various patterns and when they are used. Where in your Area of Responsibility (AOR) would a barrier search be used, how about a track line single unit non-return?

At the end of a mission, do you always conduct an honest complete mission debrief? What did we do right? What did we do wrong? What can we do better next time? Practice debriefs at every opportunity. I debrief at the end of every TCT/RM class, simply to model the behavior.

After a while debriefing a mission, a class, or a meeting becomes automatic.

Strive for perfection every time you go out – train for perfection.



Operational Tips

Operational Tips is a new feature that will be in future Responders as well as on the Response website. While operational Coast Guard Auxiliary members receive excellent training and must pass their respective PQSs we can always strive to learn more and become more proficient. Our goal for these tips is to provide our members with additional ideas, techniques, and tips that can help all of us become safer and better qualified.

If you have a tip for Surface Operations, Telecommunication, or AUXAIR that you would like to share with your shipmates we invite to submit your article to Bruce Pugh at bruce.pugh@cgauxnet.us.



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“But It Was Working Just Fine” Antenna Coax Connections

By David Elliot, DVC-RT

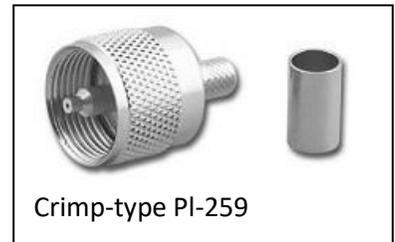
Antenna connections for our marine radios typically require at least installing one connector on a cable. The practice for doing this is not well understood by many boaters. The coaxial cables to connect to marine antennas are typically either large diameter (RG-8 equivalents at about 1/2”) or small diameter (typically RG-58 or RG-8X) of approximately 1/4”. The larger cables like RG-8-type have lower loss at VHF frequencies



Typical RG-58 or RG-8X cable

than the smaller ones, but for short runs (less than 25’) the difference is negligible.

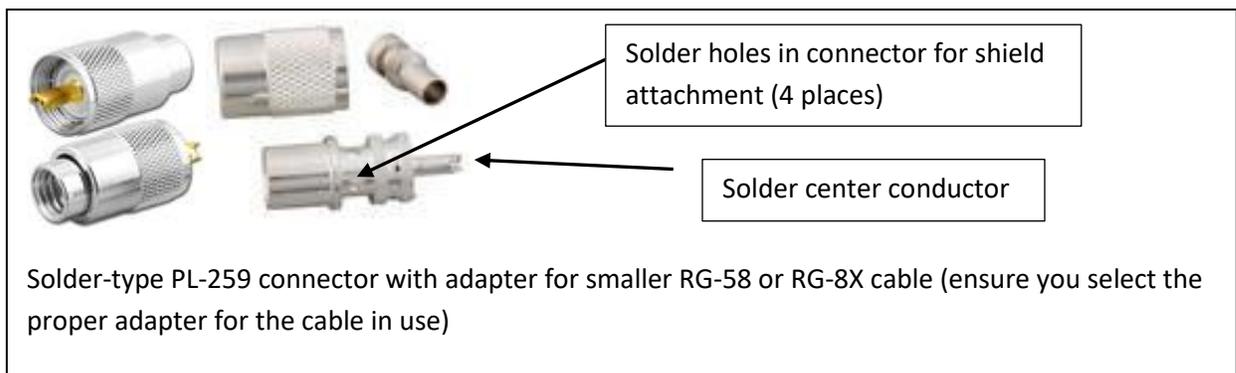
While the cables are generally waterproof with an outer plastic insulated layer, coaxial cable connectors like the standard PL259 (so-called UHF connectors) are not waterproof! If they get wet the coaxial shield will act as a wick and draw in water along the shield (braid) and into the main part of the cable.



Crimp-type PL-259

I was asked to check on an Auxiliary vessel that was having communications “issues”. In checking the system, I quickly saw, once I had screwed back the outer shell, that the PL-259 was not completely sealed. This opening in the coax cable had permitted moisture to be drawn into the point that at about 10 ft beyond the PL259 connector water dripped out of the cable once I cut it back to check. This kind of problem will destroy the cable and cause a loss of communications capability on both transmit and receive.

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Solder-type PL-259 connector with adapter for smaller RG-58 or RG-8X cable (ensure you select the proper adapter for the cable in use)



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But It Was Working Just Fine Continued

This situation may occur if when attaching the connector, all the openings are not sealed and the cable/connector joint also taped or provided with a covering of sealant. This moisture can seep in over time, especially from a humid, salty atmosphere, even if the connector itself does not get immersed or wet.

If you are using a solder-type connector, make sure ***all*** the holes in the inner body are filled with solder and make good connections to the shield braid. If you are using a crimp-style connector, ensure it is the proper connector for the size of the cable and use the proper crimp tool and die for the connector/cable combination.

Waterproof all your connections by using a dielectric waterproofing sealant, then tape the connection at the back of the connector with vinyl or with a self-sealing tape.

This tip applies to all station connections, especially where they are exposed to the elements or moist and salty air.

Once the connections are made, check the quality of the installation by using a wattmeter/SWR meter, or similar tool.



How Far Away is that Waypoint?

By Paul Verveniotis, Qualification Examiner, Flotilla 4-6 D11NR

How Far Away is that Waypoint?

Imagine you are on patrol and your OPCON contacts you to respond to a boater who needs assistance at a given location. Where is that waypoint and how do you get there? Of course, you are familiar with your chartplotter and can enter that waypoint and get underway. But with just a few seconds of mental math you can derive a rough solution and respond.

You are at the following location (which happens to be the coordinates of Blossom Rock Buoy in San Francisco Bay):

37⁰49.1'N

122⁰24.2'W

Also recall that one minute of latitude is equal to one nautical mile.

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How Far Away is that Waypoint? (continued)

You are given the following coordinates of the boater requiring assistance (at Harding Rock Buoy):

37° 50.3'N

122° 26.7'W

By quick inspection of the numbers you can see that both the latitude and longitude are greater than your current position, so you know it is roughly northwest of your current position. The latitude is 1.2 minutes greater, so they are 1.2 miles of "northing" from you.

Also note that the longitude is 2.5 minutes greater and therefore they are west of you. But those would only be miles at the equator and we are at latitude 38. At this latitude, the longitude scale is shorter than the latitude scale by an amount equal to the cosine of our latitude or about 80%.

80% of 2.5 is 2.0, therefore they are 2 miles of "westing" from you.

The triangle is therefore 2 miles west and 1.2 miles north. If you guessed the actual distance of around 2.5 miles, you would be close – it is actually 2.35 NM. If you were to roughly sketch the triangle, you would be very close if you guessed that the course is about 30 degrees north of due west, or 300 degrees True. At least you could proceed in the right direction while you fine-tuned your navigation plan.

Now, knowing your cruise speed is 15 knots and that 2.5 miles is one-sixth of what you can travel in an hour, your estimated time enroute is around 10 minutes (one-sixth of 60 minutes).

If you practice this, you will be amazed in how quickly you can come up with a reasonable estimate.

Remember that this does not replace proper navigation and hazard avoidance.



What's New

A very big thank you, and Bravo Zulu to the 12 Telecommunication Auxiliarists who manned their radio facilities during Hurricane Sally operations in September. These 12 radio operators from the Telecommunications team logged over 188 hours monitoring Coast Guard and GMDSS frequencies. The radio operators listened for any communications problems or emergency broadcasts during the storm, in support of COMMCOM, the Coast Guard Communications Command.



There have some staffing changes in the Response Prevention Group, Rick Saunders is now ANACO-RPd reporting to Kevin Cady ANACO-RP. In the Response Directorate Roy Savoca has moved up to the Director slot.

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What's New (continued)

Our new deputy director is Michelle Thornton DIR-Rd. Larry Fletcher has moved into the Division Chief Aviation position. Congratulations and BZ to all for their new roles on the Response and Prevention team.

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