



Gene M. Seibert, National Commodore

SUBJECT:

THE AUXILIARY BOAT CREW PROGRAM

Correcting for Set and Drift:

Many of you have become aware of the impending changes to the Auxiliary Boat Crew Training Program and I'd like to take this opportunity to update you on these changes.

These changes do not imply any change in the importance or priority of the Auxiliary Surface Operational Support to the US Coast Guard. *Auxiliary operational support to the Coast Guard has been and will continue to be a critical component of our mission mix.* These programs are absolutely vital to the Coast Guard.

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Instrument of Change—The STAN:

The effectiveness and safety of Auxiliary operational programs have always been one of my chief concerns. The last major revision to our boat crew program was in the mid-to-late 1990's, so a review of our program and practices was warranted. That is why I commissioned the **Auxiliary Surface Standardization Team** (Surface STAN Team) in December 2004.

The mission of the Surface STAN Team is to “promote safety, standardization and best practices in all aspects of Auxiliary surface operations”. The team focuses on policy, procedures and training issues.

The Auxiliary Surface STAN Team employs a broad base of expertise. The team members include G-PCX, Coast Guard Boat Forces, an OTO, and four members of the Auxiliary, including a “member at large”. The team gathered input from the field (from both USCG and Auxiliary) to insure that all points of view were considered. Out of this discussion, a recurring theme emerged ... the Auxiliary Boat Crew Program did need some revision.

Philosophic Change:

The first challenge that the STAN team faced in revision of the Boat Crew Program was a philosophic one....what were we trying to achieve? The team ultimately agreed on this basic precept.

To assure our customers, the Coast Guard units and the public, that all Auxiliary boat crews are at a state of perpetual readiness and that they could, at any time, meet the standards for which they were originally qualified

The STAN Team wanted to insure that all of the elements of our training, qualification, certification and re-certification programs and processes mirrored our goal of maintaining crew readiness.

Our comprehensive review of the boat crew program has now been completed. The STAN Team worked diligently to review and/or revise each element and each task of our program. The team also considered the economic climate of the Coast Guard, the changing demographics of both our members and facility ownership and the basics of both learning and “forgetting”. As a result of their analysis, we have made some major changes in the boat crew program. These changes were reviewed and approved by the NEXCOM in August at NACON 06.

Like their AUXAIR aviation counterparts, I hope that Surface STAN Teams will one day be able to visit the districts and work directly with our operational members to evaluate our readiness and improve our skills. But there is still much preliminary work to be done before we enable such visits.

Summary of Changes:

I don't have the room in this *On Course* to provide all of the details and specifics of the changes. Below, I've provided a brief summary of the changes to the Auxiliary Boat Crew Training Program.

The STAN Team published a SITREP on their progress and some details of the new program are listed there. You can find more details about these changes in the Surface Operations section of the Chief Director's website at <http://cgauxsurfaceops.us/ABCTM.htm>.

The team will continue to provide updates as needed while the new manuals, including the Auxiliary Boat Crew Training Program and the Crew, Coxswain and PWC Operator Qualification Guides (M16794.51-4) make their way through the CG approval process. These changes will be implemented in January 2007.

Details of Some of the Changes:

- Incorporation of a Qualification Examiner (QE) Guide to the Auxiliary Boat Crew Training Manual.
- Changed some initial qualification tasks from optional to required, removed some optional tasks, and changed some optional tasks to waivable by DIRAUX.

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- Changed the required number of underway time from 8 hours to 12 hours per year, which can be earned as either coxswain or crew. (That is, coxswains can serve as crew members to achieve the new 12 hour requirement!)
- Annual currency maintenance tasks have been removed!
- Five year QE Check ride will be reduced to every three years. (Implementation plan pending approval.) But if you are due in 2007 or 2008, be looking for the new task list. You will probably be completing the revised check ride with a QE sometime in 2007.
- Check ride tasks are being revised and will be published when approved. There will be a few additional tasks in the new check ride taken from the qualification check ride tasks. Nothing you haven't done before, but you might not have done some for a while.
- One hour annual TCT review, designed by the Department of Operations, which can be conducted without a TCT facilitator at the local level.

Summary:

As a coxswain and QE myself, I know the value of our surface crews and their capability. I respect what you have done for our nation, the Coast Guard and the boating public and I continue to be your strong advocate. I view these changes as simply a course correction for the Boat Crew Program. This is also an opportunity for us to determine our actual position and make the changes needed to provide a ready operational surface fleet, so your noble work can be continue to be accomplished.

We are not changing where we want to go, we are simply correcting for set and drift.

Semper Paratus,



Gene M. Seibert
National Commodore