AQEC MEMORANDUM 2014-010
WATCHSTANDING - USING CLOCK TERMINOLOGY

QUESTION:

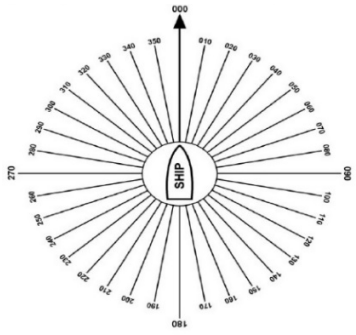
"Can I use clock terminology when giving a bearing to an object while on patrol?"

AQEC/SNC RESPONSE:

There is no reference in the Boat Crew Seamanship Manual (BCSM) for using a clock to reference a bearing to an object. The BCSM states; "Use relative bearings only (BCSM 1-10)."

> *The goal for watchstanding during surface operations is to report everything you see, hear, and smell and think you see, hear, and smell. A correct report should include the identity of the object (color may also be beneficial), relative bearing, and distance to the object.*

Warren D. Edman
AQEC/SNC
09/13/2014



Relative Bearings

From Quotations with Character by W. David Edman

WATCHSTANDING RESPONSIBILITES (BCSM):

Lookout Watch (Page 1-7 through 1-8 and Page 10)

C.1. Description:
The Navigation Rules, International - Inland, COMDTINST M16672.2 (series) states that "Every vessel shall at all times maintain a proper lookout by sight and hearing as well as by all available means appropriate in the prevailing circumstances and conditions, so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and of the risk of collision."

Although not specifically assigned the duty of lookout, the entire crew must perform lookout duties unless directed otherwise.

C.2. Assign and Station:
Coxswains must assign and station lookouts properly in order to comply with the requirement noted above. Lookouts must report to the coxswain everything seen, smelled, or heard as well as everything they think they see, smell, or hear. If in doubt, report it! A sharp lookout is often the first means of protection for the boat to avoid trouble, not to mention locating situations to investigate (e.g., vessels/ people in distress, law enforcement, or pollution). Some examples are:
- *Ships.*
- *Land.*
- *Obstructions.*
- *Lights.*
- *Buoys.*
- *Beacons.*
- *Discolored water.*
- *Reefs.*
- *Fog signals.*
- *Whales.*
- *Sea Turtles.*

C.3. Guidelines:
The following guidelines must be used to stand a proper lookout watch:
- *Remain alert and give full attention to the assigned duty.*
- *Remain at Station until relieved.*
- *Do not distract others with excessive conversation. (However, some conversation among Crewmembers may be beneficial in reducing fatigue and maintaining alertness.)*
- *Speak loudly and distinctly when making a report.*
- *If the object sighted, smelled or heard cannot be positively identified, report what is believed at that moment.*
- *Repeat report until it is acknowledged by the coxswain.*
- *When conditions impair ability to see, smell, or hear; report the condition so the coxswain can take corrective action.*
- *Report everything seen including floating material, even if it has to be reported several times.*
- *Make certain duties are understood. If duties are not understand, ask for more information.*

C.6. Object Identification:
Lookouts must report what they see, smell, or hear with as much detail as possible. Object type is immediately important (vessel, buoy, breaking waves), but additional details may help the coxswain in decision-making. The following are some obvious characteristics of objects:
• Color.
• Shape.
• Size.

At night, lookouts must identify the color of all lights. This is the specific reason why all boat crew members must have normal color vision.

C.7. Relative Bearing:
Lookouts make reports using relative bearings only. *The relative bearing of another object depends on its location in relation to the vessel's hull. They start off with 000°, which is straight off the bow or dead ahead. The bearings increase moving clockwise around the vessel all the way to 359°. Straight out from the starboard beam of the vessel would be 090°, dead astern would be 180°, and straight out from the port beam of the vessel would be 270°.*

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