

USCG AUXILIARY
PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST
(AUXPA1) – SENIOR LEVEL



PERSONNEL QUALIFICATION STANDARDS (PQS)
STUDY GUIDE AND WORKBOOK





16790
05 Sep 23

MEMORANDUM

Reply to CG-BSX-11
Attn of: Mr. D. Goff
(202) 372-1264

From: /T. P. Glendye, CAPT/
Chief, Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety

To: Distribution

Subj: AUXILIARY PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST 1 PERSONNEL QUALIFICATION
STANDARDS (PQS) – STUDY GUIDE AND WORKBOOK

Ref: (a) Auxiliary Public Affairs Specialist 1 PQS Study Guide of Feb 2016
(b) Auxiliary Public Affairs Specialist 1 PQS Workbook of Feb 2016
(c) ALAUX 015/23 of 19 Apr 2023
(d) Auxiliary Manual, COMDTINST M16790.1 (series)

1. PURPOSE. The purpose of this Personnel Qualification Standards (PQS) Study Guide and Workbook is to provide training and qualification guidance for Auxiliarists to achieve the Auxiliary Public Affairs Specialist 1 (AUXPA1) competency.
2. ACTION. Elected and appointed Auxiliary leaders and program managers at all levels of the Auxiliary organization shall ensure Auxiliarists adhere to this PQS.
3. AUTHORIZED RELEASE. Internet release is authorized.
4. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. References (a) and (b) are cancelled.
5. BACKGROUND. The Auxiliary public affairs program has historically provided outstanding support of Coast Guard public affairs and outreach efforts particularly in times of significant events like major hurricane, Midwest flood, and the Deepwater Horizon response operations. Such high-quality support has been achieved through close collaboration between Coast Guard and Auxiliary public affairs program managers and resultant training and qualification tools like this PQS.
6. DISCLAIMER. This PQS is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is it a rule. It is intended to define requirements for Auxiliary personnel and is not intended to, nor does it impose legally binding requirements on any party outside the Coast Guard.

7. MAJOR CHANGES. In accordance with reference (c), Coast Guard Public Affairs Specialists 1 (PA1) may be granted the AUXPA1 competency without having to complete this PQS if they enroll in the Auxiliary within three years of their separation from active or reserve duty.
8. SCOPE AND AUTHORITIES. It is recommended AUXPA1 trainees become familiar with and adhere to the guidelines and content throughout this PQS.
9. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS. This PQS will not result in any substantial change to existing environmental conditions or violation of any applicable federal, state, or local laws relating to the protection of the environment.
10. DISTRIBUTION. No paper distribution will be made of this PQS. An electronic version will be posted on the Auxiliary Public Affairs (A) Directorate's training division website: <https://www.uscgaux.info/contnet.php?unit=A-DEPT&category=training-division> . All web sites in this guide are the most current available. If the cited web link does not work, then access should be attempted by copying and pasting or typing the web site address into the user's internet browser.
11. RECORDS MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS. Records created as a result of this PQS, regardless of format or media, must be managed in accordance with records retention guidance in reference (d).
12. FORMS. Forms referenced in this guide are available on the Coast Guard Auxiliary web site: <https://www.cgaux.org>.
13. REQUEST FOR CHANGES. Auxiliary units and individuals may formally recommend changes in writing through the chain of leadership and management including the appropriate Auxiliary national program manager(s) (email acceptable). Comments and suggestions from users of this PQS are welcomed. All such correspondence may be emailed to Commandant (CG-BSX) at: CGAUX@uscg.mil.

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Encl: (1) AUXPA1 Study Guide
(2) AUXPA1 Workbook

Dist: DIRAUX (dpa), NEXCOM, ANACO-FC, DIR-A, BC-ATP



Auxiliary Public Affairs Specialist 1 (AUXPA1) Study Guide

1. Command Area of Responsibility (AOR).
 - a. Describe your command's AOR.
 - b. Comment on the working relationship with other agencies in your AOR.
 - c. Detail the recall procedures for equipment in your command. The boating public will contact Auxiliary Public Affairs Specialists regarding recalls (example life jackets etc.), and they should be able to produce the latest recall notices and processes.
2. Public Information and the ICS (Incident Command System).
 - a. Discuss the benefits and methods of using social media in recruiting new members to the Auxiliary and how social media can be used to retain current members. Candidates should demonstrate a knowledge of how the use of social media helps to recruit and retain members.
 - b. In an emergency incident context, what is the purpose of public information? To communicate timely, accurate and accessible information on the incident's cause, size, and current situation. Public information must be coordinated across jurisdictions, and among Federal, State, tribal and local government agencies.
 - c. What advantages does an integrated public information structure offer? (1) Ensures that lifesaving measures, evacuation routes, threat and alert systems, and other public safety information is communicated in a timely, consistent manner.
 - d. What is the Incident Command System (ICS)?
 - (1) Standardized management tool for meeting the demands of large or small emergency (or non-emergency) situations.
 - (2) A key component of the National Incident Management System (NIMS).
 - (3) May be used for planned event, natural disasters, and acts of terrorism.
 - (4) Represents "best practices" and has become the standard for emergency

management nationwide.

e. Outline the five functions ICS is designed to accomplish.

- (1) Meet the needs of incidents of any size.
- (2) Allow personnel from various agencies to meld into a common management structure.
- (3) Provide logistical and administrative support to operational staff.
- (4) Be cost effective by avoiding duplication of effort.
- (5) Can be applied from the time an incident occurs until the requirement for management and operations no longer exist.

3. Joint Information Center (JIC).

a. Describe a JIC and its purpose.

- (1) A centralized location where public information personnel from various agencies work together to provide critical emergency information as quickly as possible to the news media and the public.
- (2) The JIC is a communications hub that expedites the flow of information and allows multiple agencies to “speak with one voice” during an emergency.
- (3) Using a JIC also permits more accurate tracking of records and information, which improves post-incident assessments. These assessments are used to improve crisis communication during future incidents.

b. How is a JIC generally organized?

- (1) Centralized structure with a lead for each functional area.
- (2) The lead Public Information Officer (PIO) and JIC Manager are part of the Command Staff and oversee media relations, research and writing, and special projects.

c. Explain the Public Information Officer’s (PIO) role in the ICS Command Staff hierarchy.

- (1) Responsible for interfacing with the media, public or other agencies who seek information directly from the incident or event.
- (2) Coordinates all JIC public information activities.

(3) There is only one PIO per incident, and he or she may have assistants. As a member of the Command Staff, the PIO reports directly to the Incident Commander.

d. How can you prepare for JIC participation?

(1) Build relationships with other response agencies now.

(2) Talk about how a JIC will work in your area and how overall JIC functions and flow will help communication efforts, and who can be called to work in a JIC.

4. Media Policy.

a. What is the Coast Guard's established media policy? Maximum disclosure with minimum delay.

b. Why is it important not to withhold information or say, "No comment"?

(1) Credibility is at stake. Unless the information is prohibited from release by FOIA or because it would violate a member's privacy (see next question), do not hold back.

(2) A "No comment" response gives the appearance that you are hiding something. Reporters may suspect a cover-up and go on the attack.

c. What are some general Do's and Do Not's in connecting with the media?

DO

(1) Get the facts, get them right, and get them out.

(2) Know each medium and its audience. Be aware of time or space limitations, deadlines, or special requirements.

(3) Know the people who work in your local media.

(4) Treat reporters as you would like to be treated.

(5) Tell the truth.

(6) Be available for press queries.

(7) Have fact sheets and background information on your unit, the Coast Guard, and the Auxiliary.

(8) During a query or interview, tell reporters up front if you cannot comment on a

particular subject.

- (9) If you must refer a reporter to another office or source, provide the phone number and e-mail address.

DO NOT

- (1) Ask a reporter to kill a story.
 - (2) Beg for coverage.
 - (3) Grant exclusives or be partial to a media representative.
 - (4) Be a publicity hound.
 - (5) Speculate.
 - (6) Lie to the media or the public.
 - (7) Release information to a reporter that was given to you by another reporter.
 - (8) Ask news people to slant their copy, withhold information or do favors.
- d. Under the Privacy Act, what information concerning an individual should not be released?
- (1) The idea is to protect individuals from invasions of privacy through release of information considered “privileged.” Basically, privileged information includes all actions not related to performance of official duties (except for acts that break the law).
 - (2) Do not release the following:
 - (a) Social Security Number.
 - (b) Home address or phone numbers.
 - (c) Medical history.
 - (d) Other personal information.
- e. Explain how the acronym SAPP is a helpful guide for releasing information.
- (1) SAPP stands for Security, Accuracy, Policy and Propriety.
 - (a) Information designation with a Security classification of CONFIDENTIAL,

SECRET or TOP SECRET cannot be released.

- (b) For Official Use Only (FOUO) is not a security classification level, but a designation that means the information requires special handling and is typically not included in a news release or media interview.
 - (c) Check information for [Accuracy](#) prior to release. Stick to the facts and avoid speculation.
 - (d) Information for release cannot violate Coast Guard [Policy](#).
 - (e) All information for release should meet acceptable standards of [Propriety](#).
- f. Discuss the terms “libel” and “slander.”
- (1) [Libel](#) is untrue or defamatory information that is written, printed or broadcast.
 - (2) [Slander](#) is spoken defamation.
 - (3) Since both are based on state (not Federal) law, definitions can vary by state. In general, both can injure the reputation of an individual, company, or organization.
- g. Describe four types of “difficult” media questions you may encounter during a crisis.
- (1) [Hypothetical question](#) (Do not speculate; label question as hypothetical and reiterate what your unit did).
 - (2) [Bait question](#) (Don’t get snared by any provocation—if the Coast Guard is called “insensitive,” for example, refute the word without repeating it).
 - (3) [Question for another agency](#) (Refer to appropriate authority. Speak only about what your unit has done or is doing).
 - (4) [Circumstance you haven’t seen or heard](#) (Do not respond to something you know nothing about).
- h. How do you handle the same unanswerable question asked over and over?
- (1) Politely, but firmly signal that you’re not going to give in.
 - (2) Repeat your Command Message and state policy.
- i. For “bad news” stories, you should develop at least three positive and neutral key messages based on what themes? *Empathy - Current response - Future action*

5. Force Multiplier for Team Coast Guard.

a. Name Coast Guard enlisted personnel grade structure from lowest to highest.

Seaman Recruit (SR)
E-1



Seaman Apprentice (SA)
E-2



Seaman (SN)
E-3



Petty Officer Third Class (PO3)
E-4



Petty Officer Second Class (PO2)
E-5



Petty Officer First Class (PO1)
E-6



Chief Petty Officer (CPO)
E-7



Senior Chief Petty Officer (SCPO)
E-8



Master Chief Petty Officer (MCPO)
E-9



Command Master Chief Petty Officer (CMC)
E-9
*Gold Stars and Gold Shield denotes
Area CMC/MCPOCG in Coast
Guard Reserve



Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard
E-10



b. Repeat for warrant officers and commissioned officers.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 (CWO-2)
W-2



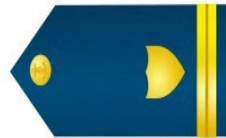
**Chief Warrant Officer 3 (CWO-3)
W-3**



**Chief Warrant Officer 4
(CWO-4) W-4**



**Ensign (ENS)
O-1**



**Lieutenant Junior Grade (LTJG)
O-2**



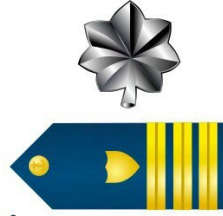
**Lieutenant (LT)
O-3**



**Lieutenant Commander (LCDR)
O-4**



Commander (CDR)
O-5



Captain (CAPT)
O-6



Rear Admiral (lower half) (RDML)
O-7



Rear Admiral (upper half) (RADM)
O-8



Vice Admiral (VADM)
O-9



Admiral (ADM)
O-10



- c. Recite the Phonetic Alphabet. Spell your name using Phonetic Alphabet. How do you pronounce Phonetic Numerals?

<i>Alpha</i>	<i>November</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Spoken As</i>
<i>Bravo</i>	<i>Oscar</i>	0	<i>ZEE-RO</i>
<i>Charlie</i>	<i>Papa</i>	1	<i>WUN</i>
<i>Delta</i>	<i>Quebec</i>	2	<i>TOO</i>
<i>Echo</i>	<i>Romeo</i>	3	<i>TREE</i>
<i>Foxtrot</i>	<i>Sierra</i>	4	<i>FOW-ER</i>
<i>Golf</i>	<i>Tango</i>	5	<i>FIFE</i>
<i>Hotel</i>	<i>Uniform</i>	6	<i>SIX</i>
<i>India</i>	<i>Victory</i>	7	<i>SEV-EN</i>
<i>Juliet</i>	<i>Whiskey</i>	8	<i>AIT</i>
<i>Kilo</i>	<i>X-ray</i>	9	<i>NINE-ER</i>
<i>Lima</i>	<i>Yankee</i>		
<i>Mike</i>	<i>Zulu</i>		

- d. U.S. Coast Guard Core Values should underscore everything we do in support of the Coast Guard. What are they?

(1) **Honor**

Integrity is our standard. We demonstrate uncompromising ethical conduct and moral behavior in all our personal actions.

(3) **Respect**

We value our diverse work force. We treat each other with fairness, dignity, and compassion. We work as a team.

(4) **Devotion to Duty**

We are professionals, military and civilian, who seek responsibility, accept accountability, and are committed to the successful achievement of our organizational goals. We serve with pride.

- e. Contact and introduce yourself to active-duty public affairs staff within your district.



Auxiliary Public Affairs Specialist 1 (AUXPA1) Workbook

1. Introduction.

- a. This Personnel Qualification Standard (PQS) workbook and accompanying study guide are designed to help you become a Coast Guard Auxiliary Public Affairs Specialist 1 (AUXPA1).
- b. All AUXPA Specialist levels require skills in journalism and writing, print, broadcast and social media, public appearances, photography, video basics, static displays, ethics, media relations, and television interview techniques. Specialist candidates must demonstrate expertise in media policy, release of information, Coast Guard ranks and rates, the phonetic alphabet, Incident Command System (ICS), command Area of Responsibility (AOR), and Joint Information Center (JIC) operations.

2. PQS Verification.

- a. A Verifying Officer (VO)/mentor and you will use this workbook to show completion of each task. Your (VO)/mentor must be an active status certified AUXPA Specialist who has earned the qualification level you are seeking, an Auxiliary Public Affairs C-school (AUX-12) graduate, or an active-duty Coast Guard Public Affairs Specialist. Please contact the Auxiliary Public Affairs Directorate's Branch Chief for Professional Standards (BC-ATP) if you need an active status certified AUXPA Specialist to be your VO/mentor. A list of approved VO/mentors is also provided under the Auxiliary Public Affairs (A) Directorate's Public Affairs Academy website: [Public Affairs Specialist Training Program \(uscgaux.info\)](http://www.uscgaux.info) .
- b. More than one VO/mentor may make entries in your workbook. The VO/mentor will review your qualifications and/or observe you perform specific jobs. The VO/mentor will sign off tasks as you demonstrate proficiency. For some tasks, you must present evidence, such as published articles, news press releases, and photos.

3. Documentation Packet.

- a. When you complete this PQS, you must submit a documentation packet via e-mail (all files in a single PDF format) to the BC-ATP. Scan all your course completion certificates, every PQS sign-off page, and articles, news press releases, and photos into one file. Save the file as a PDF and submit it with a request for an oral board and the

dates and times you will be available for approximately 60 minutes. You will be scheduled for an oral board following review and validation of your documentation.

- b. The PQS sign-off tasks, articles, news press releases, and photos must be no more than two years older than the date you request your oral board.

4. Oral Board.

- a. The board consists of three AUXPA Specialists, generally members of the national staff, and is conducted as a free teleconference phone call or via virtual platform session for approximately 60 minutes.
- b. An oral board is required for each level of AUXPA Specialist. There is a 3-month waiting period between each AUXPA level before trainees are eligible to test for the next level. This waiting period affords an opportunity for trainees to obtain experience prior to testing for the next level.

5. Qualification.

- a. Once you successfully complete the oral board, your task sign-off sheet will be forwarded to the Auxiliary Director of Public Affairs (DIR-A) for endorsement and then forwarded to your District Director of Auxiliary (DIRAUX). You will receive an AUXPA1 Specialist certificate from the DIR-A.
- b. Upon DIRAUX approval, you will receive a qualification letter along with two bronze stars for wearing centered upon your AUXPA ribbon (this may be relayed and presented to you by your Flotilla Commander). Your DIRAUX will also make the appropriate AUXDATA II qualification entry. If you have not received the qualification letter within four weeks of completion of your oral board, then notify the BC-ATP.

AUXILIARY PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST (AUXPA) PROGRAM

AUXILIARY PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST 1 (AUXPA1)

TASK SIGN-OFF RECORD

AUXPA1 Specialist Trainee Name: _____

Member ID Number: _____ **Auxiliary Region / Division / Flotilla:** _____

These tasks must be performed by the AUXPA1 trainee and signed off by a qualified AUXPA1 or a Coast Guard PA2 or above as the Verifying Officer (VO)/mentor. These tasks are similar to those required of a PA1 candidate. The AUXPA1 trainee may be asked questions or be required to demonstrate certain tasks as necessary to judge competency.

Task signoffs must be completed within one year after the date of the first task signoff. If not completed in this time, then the AUXPA1 trainee shall start a new AUXPA1 task signoff sheet with another one-year period for completion. The completed form must be submitted to the Auxiliary national Branch Chief for Professional Standards (BC-ATP). The BC-ATP will review and submit it with their recommendation to the Auxiliary Public Affairs Director (DIR-A) for endorsement and forwarding to the District Director of Auxiliary (DIRAUX) for AUXDATA II entry and AUXPA1 qualification issuance.

Coast Guard Public Affairs Specialists 1 (PA1) may be granted the AUXPA1 competency without having to complete these tasks if they enroll in the Auxiliary within three years of their separation from active or reserve duty.

VO/Mentor Printed Name(s): _____

VO/Mentor Initials: _____

VO/Mentor Qualification/Office: _____

Member ID Number: _____ **Auxiliary Region / Division / Flotilla:** _____

AUX-PA1 – PQS Tasks

TASK NUMBER	PRELIMINARY TASK DESCRIPTION	SIGNOFF (INITIALS)	DATE
P-1	Possess Favorable Operational Support Personal Security Investigation (OS PSI).		
P-2	In Basically Qualified (BQ) or Operational Auxiliarist (AX) membership status.		
P-3	Current in Auxiliary Core Training (AUXCT).		
P-4	Successful completion of the AUXPA3 competency.		
P-5	Successful completion of the AUXPA2 competency.		
P-6	Successful completion of IS-29: Public Information Officer Awareness.		
P-7	Successful completion of ICS-800: Introduction to National Response Plan.		
P-8	Submit copy of AUXDATA II report showing minimum 16 hours in Public Affairs (PA) activities (Code-10 recorded).		
P-9	Submit full-length jpeg/.png trainee photos in ODU/CG-U and/or Tropical Blue uniform.		

Candidate: _____ Member Number: _____

District: _____ Unit Number: _____ City, State: _____

Training Officer(s) Signature(s): _____

Training Officer's Printed Name: _____

Training Officer's Position: _____

Training Officer's Initials: _____

TASK NUMBER	TRAINING TASK DESCRIPTION	SIGNOFF (INITIALS)	DATE
T-1	Describe your command's Area of Responsibility (AOR).		
T-2	Comment on the working relationships with other agencies in the AOR.		
T-3	Detail the recall procedures for equipment in your command.		
T-4	Discuss the benefits and methods of using social media in recruiting new members to the Auxiliary and discuss how social media can be used to retain current members.		
T-5	In an emergency incident context, what is public information?		
T-6	What advantages does an integrated public information structure offer?		
T-7	What is the Incident Command System (ICS)?		
T-8	Outline the five functions ICS is designed to accomplish.		
T-9	Describe a Joint Information Command (JIC) and its purpose.		
T-10	How is a JIC generally organized?		
T-11	Explain the Public Information Officer's (PIO) role in the ICS Command Staff hierarchy.		
T-12	How can you prepare for JIC participation?		
T-13	What is the Coast Guard's established media policy?		
T-14	Why is it important not to withhold information or say, "No comment"?		
T-15	What are some general Do's and Do Not's in connecting with media?		
T-16	Under the Privacy Act, what information concerning an individual should not be released?		
T-17	Explain how the acronym SAPP is a helpful guide for releasing information.		
T-18	Discuss the terms "libel" and "slander."		

T-19	Describe four types of “difficult” media questions you may encounter during a crisis situation.		
T-20	How do you handle the same unanswerable question asked over and over?		
T-21	For “bad news” stories, you should develop at least three positive and neutral key messages based on what themes?		
T-22	Name Coast Guard enlisted personnel grade structure from lowest to highest.		
T-23	Repeat for warrant officers and commissioned officers.		
T-24	Recite the Phonetic Alphabet. Spell your name using the Phonetic Alphabet. How do you pronounce Phonetic Numerals?		
T-25	Coast Guard Core Values should underscore everything we do in support of the Coast Guard. What are they?		
T-26	Contact and introduce yourself to active duty public affairs staff within your district.		
T-27	Submit your documentation packet (email acceptable) to BC-ATP with request for an oral board. Include all relevant course certificates, Task Sign-off record, photos, media lists, articles, speeches, and news press releases (latter three items must be no more than two years older than the date of the request for the oral board).		
T-28	Final Task: Successful completion of AUXPA1 oral board. Must be signed off by BC-ATP (email notification acceptable).		

Record of AUXPA1 PQS Completion

Record of BC-ATP Notification and Forwarding

Name (BC-ATP): _____

Recommendation for Qualification: Approve / Disapprove

Comments: _____

Date Forwarded to DIR-A: _____

Record of DIR-A Notification and Forwarding

Name (DIR-A): _____

Recommendation for Qualification: Approve / Disapprove

Comments: _____

Date Forwarded to DIRAUX: _____

Record of DIRAUX Receipt and Competency Assignment

Name (DIRAUX staff member): _____

Date AUXPA1 Competency entered in AUXDATA II: _____

Date AUXPA1 Qualification Letter (with two bronze stars) issued: _____