

## BOAT SHOWS

### CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS:

The Coast Guard Auxiliary Manual states that standing rules must contain a provision that only the FC, DCP or DCO is authorized to sign licenses, contracts or other agreements. It further states that **all such documents must first be reviewed and approved by the district legal office** (DSO-LP or ADSO-LP) or in the case where the DSO-LP is not a licensed attorney, by an attorney designated by the DC-L. (*COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION M16790.1E*)

The DC-L points out that contracts can provide benefits, but that they also impose responsibility. “The importance of strictly complying with the Auxiliary Manual cannot be stressed too much, for it is to prevent that responsibility from resting on an individual Auxiliarist. For example, if an Auxiliarist, without authority, signs a contract and a problem develops, the Auxiliarist may become responsible for those problems such as property damages, injuries that may occur in the leased area, or monetary expenses for any payments due under the contract. Without exception, provide any licenses, contracts or other legal agreements to your DSO-LP for your protection.”

### AUTHORITY FOR ASSIGNMENT TO DUTY FOR COAST GUARD COVERAGE:

Regarding PA events, the DC-L calls to our attention that no DSO-PA, ADSO-PA or SO-PA has the authority to schedule other Auxiliary members to duty for set-up or watchstanding. Such authority is reserved to the other member’s FC, VFC or FSO-PA.

“If not previously assigned to [boat show] duty, only once the person arrives, would protections arise should a problem occur. Some flotillas prepare assignment sheets for

boat show attendees so that they will know what time they should be present. Assuming this is done under the concurrence of the FC or VFC or the FSO-PA, then they would also be ‘assigned to duty’ and have all the protections” There should be a scheduled time to serve and all watchstanders should sign in (and out).

### FEES:

In some districts wearing the Auxiliary uniform allows entrance to the boat show, but in most districts, the watchstander pays an entrance fee *and* a parking fee. **Before** the show begins ask about the promotor’s policy for admission of booth watchstanders and parking fees. Inform the members assigned to booth watch of any fees. Some shows may require a list of the watchstanders’ names and will issue badges to those scheduled to work. Check first with the boat show promoters.

Generally, the boat show promoter will provide the booth space at no fee to the Auxiliary. On the application for space, enter “Request Gratis”, in the space where the fees are indicated.

### EQUIPMENT FOR PA BOOTH (at major boat shows or community events):

**Backdrop:** Many districts have portable backdrops on which large boating safety posters and color photos of Auxiliarists teaching classes, doing CMEs, serving on patrol, etc., may be displayed. Such photos should picture Auxiliarists in correct uniform for the mission and correct patrol signs and ensigns. Posters featuring sailing, boating safety courses, the Academy Introduction Mission (AIM) etc., may be ordered from the Auxiliary National Supply Center (ANSC). An Auxiliary flag, hung on the boat show back curtains is an eye-appealing backdrop, too.

**Table Cover:** Usually a table skirt is provided by the boat show management for the booth. A plain

blue tablecloth may serve as a satisfactory table cover.

#### LIGHTS AND TV HOOKUP:

Find out before the show starts if there will be a charge for connecting to the electric outlets. The DC-V states that at most boat shows there is a substantial fee for electric hookups, based on the wattage of the lights and equipment. The fee is generally not waived.

TV/VCR: A VCR and TV on the table will attract attention. Tapes should be short and run continuously. Tapes of recreational boating in the local area and public service announcements are good short subjects.

Special Displays: A light-changer from a lighted buoy or flashing red and green lights (borrowed from the Coast Guard) are great attention-getters. However, some boat shows don't allow flashing lights. A half-boat, (provided by the district or the Coast Guard) will draw a crowd, but you need an area large enough for display.

Attract the kids! Your district or division may have its own boating safety mascot, but PFD Panda should be available from your Director of Auxiliary. At PA booths at the docks and launch ramps have a good supply of PFD Panda cards to hand out to children wearing their life jackets. Order from ANSC, (Stock number 6048). Coloring books and activity books appeal to the youngsters. *Inky the Whale*, *The Adventures of Captain Cleanwater*, *Officer Snook*, are some of the items you may order from ANSC. Also include a child's PFD in your display. A boating safety robot, a "Bobby the Boat", may be available through your state's department of natural resources.

Other Displays: On your table and in the racks you provide, keep an ample supply of boating safety pamphlets, ordered from ANSC, the

Coast Guard, from your state or from other boating organizations. (Some flotillas maintain their own supply of materials for the booth.) Talking to the boating public is a good opportunity for the PA Officer to promote not only boating safety courses, but water safety programs for kids, National Safe Boating Week information, the AIM/RAP programs and Courtesy Marine Examinations. Be sure to display materials on these programs. (A list of vessel examiners and the areas in which they do their CMEs is helpful.)

Class Lists: Lists of district and local public education classes are a must! Visitors to your booth will ask you about the safe boating classes that are available. Have sign-up sheets and pens and pencils on the table. Follow up on the requests for classes, CMEs and CGAUX membership. Boat shows are a valuable source of prospective members.

#### WATCHSTANDING:

The purpose of the PA booth is to attract the public. Never ignore a boat show visitor by discussing personal or Auxiliary matters with other booth watchstanders. The show booth is not a place for a flotilla meeting. Be responsive to the public.

Uniforms: Everyone working the booth should be in the prescribed uniform. Refer to the Auxiliary Manual, chapter 10, "Uniforms." Take pride in your appearance. A good looking uniform (or blazer) makes a good impression on the general public.

Chairs for Watchstanders: Use a minimum of chairs in the booth for a brief rest. Place them so that the booth is not crowded and there is room to enter. Keep the booth clean. There should be a maximum of four watchstanders at any one time to prevent congestion in the booth. It is preferable to stand while on watch to meet the public "eye to eye". A good technique is to stand in front of the booth and greet visitors as they approach.

**Eating:** It is not recommended that you eat or drink in the booth. It is difficult to answer questions while eating and it detracts from a sharp appearance. Eat away from the booth if you take a break. Never imbibe alcoholic beverages before or while working in the booth.

**Best Days for Staffing:** Some Auxiliary booth coordinators find it easier to fill weekday watches because of Auxiliary demands on weekends. In other districts, it may be easier to staff the booths on weekends and evenings.

#### **ICEBREAKERS:**

There are many ways to catch the attention of the boaters. As they approach your booth, smile and ask “Do you own a boat?” If they say yes, follow up with, “Have you taken one of our boating safety classes?” If they say, no, but they’re looking for a boat, tell them that this is the ideal time to take a boating safety class. Another ploy is to ask: “Do you like to fish?” (Many fishermen don’t consider themselves boaters.) Follow up with, “Have you ever taken our boating safety courses?” “Sell” the boater on what we have to offer: the how-to’s of safe boating.

#### **ADVANCE PUBLICITY:**

Major boat show promoters will advertise in the media and on billboards and will distribute programs at the show listing the organizations participating and their booth locations. However, flyers and newspaper releases to the local media will help publicize your booth.

#### **AUXMIS CREDIT:**

The DC-I reminds us that Auxiliarists who participate in boat show activities, such as serving at a boating safety booth, shall report their time on the ANSC 7030 form (CGAUX-26) Activity Report- Mission, form with mission category 10, Public Affairs Mission checked..

Category 10, “Public Affairs Mission”, includes “hours spent promoting the Coast Guard, Coast Guard Auxiliary or Coast Guard Reserve, CME stations, boating safety booths, time spent writing news stories, magazine articles, advertisements, radio and television announcements and programs, placing posters, arranging for promotional messages on outdoor signs, milk cartons, ice bags, shopping bags and place mats.” (DC-A)

The DC-I points out that boat show participation is generally scheduled by a group leader who is responsible for a specific time period, a session, during the boat show. “In order to minimize duplicate reporting, the group leader for the session should fill out the ANSC 7030 form listing all members participating during the session. The group leader’s name is entered on line 1, LEAD; the other members’ names on the following lines, 2, ASSIST.”

“Boat show activities shall also be included at the end of the month as part of the “Unit Monthly Public Affairs Activity” report, form ANSC 7031 (CGAUX-37), as Activity 28, (No. Safety/CME Booths), indicating in Activity 29, an estimate of the number of visitors at the booth. Submitting this report will ensure that the unit receives proper credit for the activity performed.”

At the boat shows we Auxiliarists represent Team Coast Guard. A boat show booth may be the first contact a recreational boater has with the Auxiliary. We need to present ourselves as professionals—in proper uniform, well informed and enthusiastic. Watchstanding at a boat show not only performs a valuable service for the recreational boater, but it’s also fun!

*Prepared by the Dept. of Public Affairs.  
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