

U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security

**United States  
Coast Guard  
Auxiliary**



*A Guide to*  
**New Member  
Integration**  
The First Six Months



*Developed by:*  
**Training Directorate**

*In Co-operation with:*  
**Human Resource Directorate**

**June 2018**



## Introduction

We have all seen our new members “fade away”! Consider this scenario...

The new member typically starts strong – eager, interested and open. They are polite, a bit reserved and sometimes shy. The flotilla rallies around; introducing themselves and making small talk. As the current members start to resume their customary friendships and activities, thoughts about the new member recede. And the new member loses interest, stops attending functions and “fades away”.

**Too bad – so sad!** We sometimes will say:

- “They didn’t really fit in!”
- “They weren’t very friendly!”
- “Maybe their job or family is taking too much time!”

We usually don’t ask:

- “What could we have done better?”
- “Did I do enough to make them feel welcome?”
- “What other resources could have helped the new member?”

Do you see the difference? The first approach blames the new member for not fitting in, and the second approach asks the critical questions needed to help improve the experience for the next new member.

This Guide will focus on what we, as existing flotilla members can do differently. Do you know the definition of Insanity?

***INSANITY***

**Doing the same thing over and over  
again expecting a different result.**

That means that WE need to change what we are doing! And, although change is hard, it will help us all strengthen our flotilla and our personal relationships. Let’s get started!



## Learning Objectives

After reading this Guide, the participant will be able to:

1. **Identify** why new members feel uncomfortable and awkward for an extended period of time.
2. **Explain** the difference between integration and orientation.
3. **Describe** the concerns of a new member.
4. **Review** the group dynamic model.
5. **List** the three elements of a good integration process.
6. **Explain** the role of advisors.
7. **Define** the role of the Flotilla Commander in integrating a new member.
8. **Generate** a list of integration activities.
9. **Develop** a six month integration plan for a new member.
10. **Incorporate** the New Member Passport.

## Where Are We Today?

It is important to review the standard process of bringing on a new member in the US Coast Guard Auxiliary today. But wait! There is no standard process. That is part of the problem! Here is what we know about integrating new members today.

- **New members are brought on board differently in every flotilla.** While many flotillas integrate new members well, no one does it the same. There is no “sharing of best practices” or resource to help the flotilla manage this process.
- **Most flotillas do not use a “high touch” approach.** Many people feel that training is the answer to a successful integration. Simply throwing training opportunities at a new member will not satisfy their need to belong. Training is one of a variety of activities that the flotilla should provide to integrate the new member. The sense of belonging a good integration provides is dependant on building relationships.
- **After joining the flotilla, the new member quickly finds out about the cliques.** “We don’t have cliques!” you say. That’s because you are probably a part of it! Cliques are described as a small exclusive group of friends or associates. Cliques are not good or bad, but they have the potential to exist everywhere that people exist! We all have friends in our flotilla, but we forget that, from the new member perspective, it might look like a clique!
- **Most members underestimate the time it takes to be integrated.** Real, lasting integration occurs over time. Many flotillas provide an orientation class and think that the job is done – not true! The key to success is to structure the integration process so that it can take hold.



**Your Turn!** In the space below, jot down a few thoughts about your integration into college, the military or a new job (not the Auxiliary)

What elements made your integration successful?

What elements made your integration difficult?

It is important for you to think about this prior experience so you can remember what it is like to be “new”. The feeling of “new” is often uncertain, unclear and uncomfortable! But there are things we can do to reduce the stress of being “new”.

What is integration?

- Integration** is the evolving outgrowth of the careful and methodical implementation of a long-term orientation.
- It means feeling like **you are a part** of a team.

Integration provides the fundamental information and relationship building needed to be successful in an organization. Orientation processes typically focus only on providing information.



**Your Turn!** In the space below, jot down why both information and relationship building are important to the integration process.



The Walt Disney Company© is a great example of a company that understands the concept of integration. Van France, creator of the first Walt Disney Company orientation in 1955, understood why integration was important.

*He found that people in general want to be involved in something greater than just being paid for a job... that people have a fundamental need for meaning and significance in what they do.*



**Your Turn!** In the space below, identify how Van France’s remarks relate to integrating a new member into the flotilla.

We know that people join the US Coast Guard Auxiliary for the same reasons that Van France noted. Our new members need to have:

- Involvement in something greater than their day-to-day experience.*
- A fundamental need for meaning and significance in what they do.*

The variety of recreational boating safety, support and operational missions that the Auxiliary undertakes fill many of these critical needs.

### Group/Team Dynamics

In 1965, Dr. Bruce Tuckman developed the “Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing”<sup>1</sup> model. This model provides a helpful explanation of team or group development, and contains valuable insights into new member integration. In 1977, Dr. Tuckman added a fifth step “Adjourning” to describe behavior of short-term teams, like project teams.

For our purposes, we will examine the first four stages. The group (flotilla) goes through these stages *each time a new member joins!*

#### The Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing Model<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from © Chimaera Consulting Limited 1999.



Stage	Behavior
<b>Forming</b>	Member behavior is driven by a desire to be accepted by the others, and avoid controversy or conflict. This applies to new and existing members. People are polite; serious issues and feelings are avoided. All individuals are gathering information and impressions about each other
<b>Storming</b>	This stage can be characterized by minor confrontations that will arise but be quickly dealt with or glossed over. Oftentimes individuals in the flotilla will need to address roles and responsibilities within the group. Conflict may occur. To deal with the conflict, individuals may feel they are winning or losing battles, and will look for structural clarity and rules to prevent the conflict persisting.
<b>Norming</b>	In this stage, the "rules of engagement" for the group become established, and each member's role and responsibilities become clear. Having had their arguments, the members now understand each other better, and can appreciate each other's skills and experience. Individuals listen to each other and are prepared to change pre-conceived views. Members feel they are part of a cohesive, effective group.
<b>Performing</b>	Not all groups reach this stage which is characterized by a state of interdependence and flexibility. Everyone knows each other well enough to be able to work together, and trusts each other enough to allow independent activity. Roles and responsibilities change according to need. Morale is high!



**Your Turn!** Use the space below to answer the following questions.

1. In which of the four stages of group/team development does your flotilla currently operate?

Forming      Storming      Norming      Performing

2. Based on the stage you chose above, what group behaviors have you observed that characterize that stage?



3. When was the last time a new member joined your flotilla? \_\_\_\_\_

4. When the new member joined your flotilla, what changes (they may have been subtle) did you notice in the existing membership?

### Questions New Members Ask Themselves

Now, it's time to put yourself in the "shoes" of a new member. Every new member goes through a period of doubt about making the decision to join your flotilla. It is a type of "organizational buyer's remorse". They may not be asking you these questions, but they are certainly asking themselves!

1. Will I be accepted or rejected here?
2. How will this group be different from my other affiliations?
3. What exactly will this organization be like?
4. What risks will I take here?
5. How am I like other people here? Different?
6. Will I feel pressured and pushed to perform in some way?
7. How important will I be?
8. Who will be the real leaders here? What can be achieved here?

All of these questions focus on determining the "rules of engagement" as a new member figures out how to operate in this new environment.



**Your Turn!** Use the space below to answer the following questions.

1. Which one of the questions listed above have you asked yourself when joining a new organization?

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8

2. How did you find the answer? How long did it take?



## Concerns & Fears

It's easy to see how a new member can have concerns and fears about joining the flotilla. We all have experienced a moment or two of self-doubt. New members may be asking themselves or wondering:

1. I'm afraid I'll look stupid.
2. Will I tell too much about myself?
3. Will others like me?
4. What if everyone rejects me?
5. What if the group attacks me?
6. I'm afraid I'll be withdrawn and passive.
7. Will I embarrass myself?
8. What if I'm asked to do something I don't want to do?
9. What if others can tell I'm afraid and nervous?

We have all asked these questions or experienced moments of self-doubt. It is an unnerving feeling! Consider being especially supportive of the new member to try and reduce the apprehension.

## Behavioral Characteristics

There are behavioral clues that a person can display when they are new to a group or uncomfortable. These clues may not seem extraordinary to you, nor are they unusual. But, by knowing some of these clues, you can recognize the feeling of being “new”.

1. Silence and awkwardness.
2. High anxiety.
3. Impatience to "get the ball rolling".
4. Confusion about what everybody is supposed to be doing.
5. Storytelling, a tendency to talk about others and focus on people and situations outside of the group.
6. Requests for greater leader involvement.
7. Cocktail conversations, safe levels of conversation.
8. Vying for informal leadership.

Of course, the central issue is **trust vs. mistrust**. Your relationship with the new member has not had enough time to develop. Trust is built over time and is based on consistent behavior between both individuals.

So, it all adds up to a new member that, unless properly supported and integrated, will “fade away”. And this all adds up to:

## The Top 10 Reasons Sure to Kill Enthusiasm



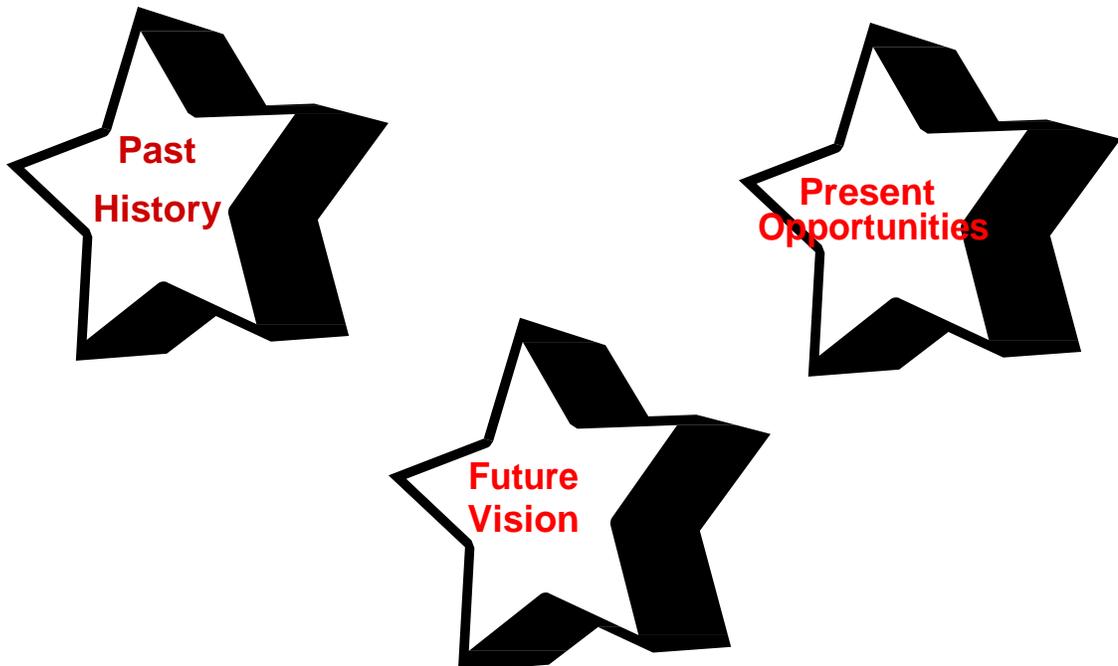
### The Top 10 Reasons Sure to Kill Enthusiasm

10. Long periods of time without contact.
9. No one talks to the new member.
8. No explanations for terms or organizational structures.
7. No introductions to key people in Flotilla, Division and District.
6. No short term objectives.
5. No training.
4. No advisors – the “go to” people.
3. Not being included (i.e. coffee after the meeting).
2. Not knowing how to find resources.

And the **#1** Reason Sure to kill enthusiasm is

## NO FUN!

### Three Components of a Good Integration





Let's look at each of the components of a great integration experience. Think in terms of spending one third of your time with the new member in each of these categories.

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<b>Past History</b>	<p>Sprinkle your integration process with a sense of organizational history. Here are some examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Reinforce facts about Auxiliary history learned in the BQ process</li><li>○ Share stories about US Coast Guard heroes</li><li>○ Talk about local Coast Guard lore and legend</li><li>○ Describe how your flotilla was started</li><li>○ Explain time-honored naval traditions</li></ul>
<b>Present Opportunities</b>	<p>New members are usually anxious to get started! Have a discussion with the new member. Ask them what they'd like to do and learn. Advise them of social activities. Here are some suggestions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Ask the new member if they have special skills they can contribute (cooking, photography, etc.)</li><li>○ Determine the first qualification the member wants to obtain. Many folks feel that Vessel Examiner is the place to start because it can be obtained relatively quickly, but it may not be what the new member wants to do. Instructor and Boat Crew qualifications can also be good places to start, but be sure the new member understands the time commitment.</li><li>○ Encourage the new member to complete the APC qualification.</li><li>○ Bring the new member to Division meetings, events and District conference.</li><li>○ Ensure that the member is encouraged to come to social events.</li></ul>
<b>Future Vision</b>	<p>As Van France noted, people want <i>involvement in something greater than their day-to-day experience</i>. The US Coast Guard Auxiliary helps to fill that need. Here are some ways to communicate the future vision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Talk about the variety of Coast Guard missions the Auxiliary is involved in.</li><li>○ Frame the mission in terms of service to our country and assisting to keep our country safe.</li><li>○ Reinforce the Coast Guard's core values of honor, respect and devotion to duty.</li><li>○ Encourage (not insist on) additional qualifications to help the member stay interested.</li><li>○ Grow leadership qualities in the new member through <u>training, project management and increased responsibilities.</u></li></ul>

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**Your Turn!** What are the past histories, present opportunities and future visions of your flotilla? Use the space below to jot down your thoughts.

Past History	Present Opportunities	Future Vision

The question then becomes “How do we accomplish this goal in a planned and structured way? The rest of this Guide will outline a simple process for integrating new members.

### **The Key to Success – The Advisor Team**

As you may have surmised, relationship building is a critical element in integrating a new member. Relationship building takes time, and is a process of getting to know one another and growing trust.

There is a saying “It takes a village to raise a child”. Traditionally, many flotillas have relied on one person, sometimes called the “mentor” to integrate the new member. Flotillas have had mixed results with this method. The Advisor Team concept relates more to the village approach mentioned above.

The Advisor Team consists of flotilla members chosen by the Flotilla Commander to help integrate the new member. A team consists of 3-5 members. Selection of team members is critical and they should meet the following criteria.



### Advisor Selection Criteria

**Desire** – *An advisor must want to do the job!*

They must like people, be a good listener, and be generally empathetic to the needs, fears and concerns of the new member. They must care!

**Reliability** – *An advisor must follow through on their commitments.* It is not OK to decide you don't want to show up! If you agree to attend an event or meet the new member, an advisor needs to be there!

**Time** – *An advisor must have the time and availability to do the job!* If you are working 16 hours a day, you might want to be an advisor when you have more free time. The time to devote to personal contact with a new member is important to building relationships.

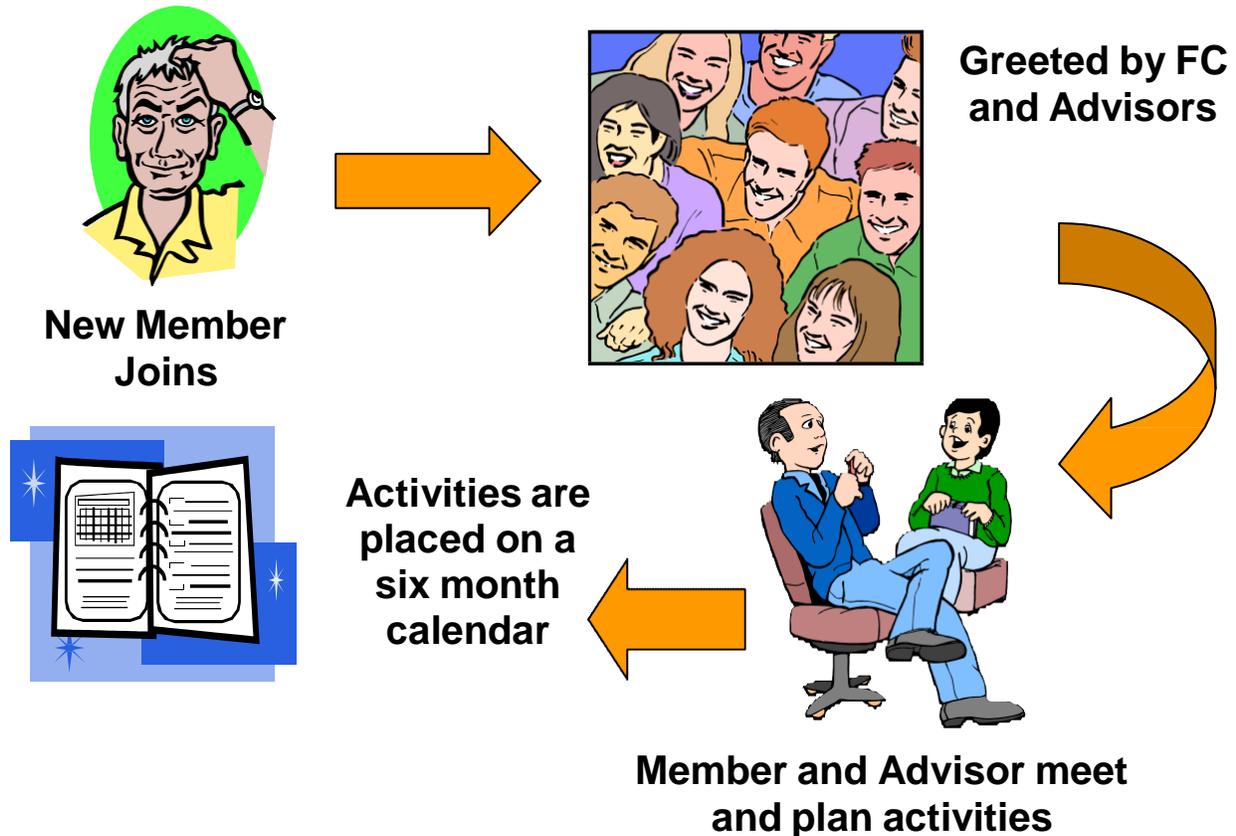
The role of the advisor is to ensure that the new member builds relationships with everyone in the flotilla, not necessarily to be the new member's "best friend"! This is achieved through exposing the new member to events and opportunities through a series of structured activities,

You could be asked to take on the role "Primary Advisor" or "Deputy Advisors". The Primary Advisor takes the lead in scheduling the new member into activities, and works with the Deputy Advisors to be sure that the new member has at least one advisor present at each activity.



## The Integration Model

The chart below illustrates the simple process of integrating the new member.



This model has some unique differences from the traditional “mentor” model. Those differences include:

- A team approach
- Strong involvement of the new member in determining their initial goals
- A six month schedule

The Integration Model works, but only when it has the full support of the Flotilla Commander. Let’s look at the role of the Flotilla Commander.



## The Role of the Flotilla Commander

Any process is sure to fail without the drive, support, backing and leadership of the flotilla bridge, especially the Flotilla Commander. In many ways, the saying made famous by President Truman fits the role of the Flotilla Commander. A bit of history for you...



The sign "The Buck Stops Here" that was on President Truman's desk in his White House office was made in the Federal Reformatory at El Reno, Oklahoma. Fred M. Canfil, then United States Marshal for the Western

District of Missouri and a friend of Mr. Truman, saw a similar sign while visiting the Reformatory and asked the Warden if a sign like it could be made for President Truman. The sign was made and mailed to the President on October 2, 1945.<sup>2</sup>

Without the full and active support of the Flotilla Commander, this program will struggle. So check with your Flotilla Commander to ensure that they will throw their complete support behind the program.

Specifically, the Flotilla Commander needs to:

- Greet and welcome the new member
- Be present at flotilla events and training (whenever possible)
- Be accessible to the new member and advisors
- Be a good listener
- Mediate conflict (if necessary)
- Be a role model
- Demonstrate great teamwork and team behaviors

## Building the Integration Plan

At this point, you have the support of your Flotilla Commander, have chosen the Advisor Team and the new member has attended their first flotilla meeting. What's next?

Now it is time to build the integration plan. The integration plan is a six month schedule of events, training and activities that are designed to expose the new member to the people, places, information and processes of the Coast Guard and the Auxiliary. These experiences are called "Activities". The new member must be actively involved in determining the activities they want to participate in.

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<sup>2</sup> Harry S. Truman Library & Museum. 500 W. US Hwy. 24. Independence MO 64050



There are a myriad of activities that a new member can enjoy! The most critical element of an activity is **new member involvement**. An activity is not something you send a new member to attend on their own. It is an event that the new member takes an active role in, participates fully in and, hopefully, benefits from! Here is a great example of an activity.

*A flotilla decided to hold a “PFD Fashion Show” as a way to do some flotilla training. They invited the new member to participate as a “model”. The new member accepted, and during the course of the fashion show demonstrated how to inflate an inflatable PFD. This produced lots of laughs for everyone and gave the new member a fun way to interact with the members of the flotilla.*

This example demonstrates how an activity can draw in a new member and give them a purpose for being there. It should be able to provide a sense of achievement and satisfaction for the new member. The advisor serves as the “safety net” for the new member during the activity, ensuring that they are

- Given the opportunity to participate
- Not left alone for extended periods of time
- Encouraged to give feedback on their perception of the value of the experience

Here are some more examples of integration activities;

- Attending Flotilla Meeting
- Walking docks with RBS Examiner
- Starting a training class
- Serving as an Instructor Aide
- Visiting a CG Station
- Attending a Flotilla BBQ
- Attending Division Meeting
- Visiting an MSO/MSU/MSD
- Beginning Boat Crew training
- Manning a Boat Show booth
- Taking photos at an event
- Starting a qualification training program

All of these activities are characterized by the active participation of the new member. An advisor should be present to ensure that the new member remains comfortable in the new situation.



Activities are planned with the member for learning about past history, capitalizing on present opportunities and preparing for future missions and interests.



**Your Turn!** What kinds of activities would your flotilla be able to provide? Use the space below to brainstorm some ideas.

Great job! Now what?

After reviewing the list of possible orientation/integration activities with the member, start to calendar them for a six month period. With the Advisor Team, list each activity and the advisor for each activity onto a calendar. There should be a minimum of 3 activities per month

On the next page you will find a sample calendar for one month. It contains the information needed to ensure the new member and the advisors know what they have committed to attend.



MONTH						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6 Division BBQ (George)
7	8	9	10 Flotilla Meeting (Audrey)	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 VE Walk the Docks (Dominic)
21	22	23 Instructor Training (Phil)	24	25	26	27
28	29	30 Instructor Training (Phil)	31			

You will notice that both the activity and the advisor are recorded. This way the new member knows in advance who the “go to” person is for the activity. Depending on the amount of space on your calendar, you can also include the time and date of the event – always helpful information to have on hand!



**Your Turn!** Create your own integration plan using the information provided below. You will also have to draw on your prior Auxiliary experiences and imagination to “fill in the gaps”.

**New member Information:**

Brian Eaton is a new member you have just recruited from your recently graduated PE class. Brian is approximately 45 years old and has owned a 24 foot cruiser for three years. He is interested in boating activities and is open to qualifications in the Boat Crew program and Vessel Examination.

New Member Integration – The First Six Months  
 US Coast Guard Auxiliary



Which of your Auxiliary members will comprise the Advisor Team for Brian? Use as many spaces as needed.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Brainstorm a list of potential activities that Brian can participate in (use your experience and imagination to think of social activities, events and site visits that would be typical in your area).

Now plan your six month activity calendar for Brian’s integration.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

New Member Integration – The First Six Months  
 US Coast Guard Auxiliary



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3						
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

New Member Integration – The First Six Months  
 US Coast Guard Auxiliary



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3						
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

New Member Integration – The First Six Months  
 US Coast Guard Auxiliary

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	
3						
11	12	13	14	15	16	
18	19	20	21	22	23	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Fantastic! Now it is up to you and the rest of the flotilla to make the new member feel welcome, energized and happy they joined the US Coast Guard Auxiliary! Good luck!