

OPERATIONS POLICY QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

PURPOSE: These questions were put together to ensure that a member has a thorough understanding of the Coast Guard's and Coast Guard Auxiliary's Operations Policies and Procedures as well as the Maritime SAR Assistance Policy and General Salvage Policy and Firefighting Activities Policy as outlined in Chapter 3 of Coast Guard Addendum to the National SAR Manual.

QUESTIONS:

1. What Auxiliary officers have been delegated authority for the administration of the Auxiliary by the Commandant per provisions of 14 U.S.C. 821 (a)?
Ans: Down to Division Captains and their Vice as well as Flotilla Commanders and their Vice. (COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 1, par A-2)
2. Whose decision is it to employ an Auxiliary resource?
Ans: Unit Commanders (COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 1, par A-3-d.)
3. What police powers may be assigned to Auxiliarists?
Ans: None (COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 1, par A-3-f and chap 4, par F)
4. Who is allowed to issue Operational Orders to an Auxiliarist?
Ans: Unit Commanders or their authorized designee.
(COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 1, par B-8)
5. Who has the authority to suspend, reaffirm, certify, decertify, or downgrade an Auxiliarist's qualifications in the operations program?
Ans: Director of Auxiliary (in d9 this has been delegated to the Group Auxiliary OTO's) (COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 1, par I-7-l)
6. Who has the authority to grant any waiver of any requirement in the Operations Program?
Ans: Director of Auxiliary (in d9 this has been delegated to the Group Auxiliary OTO's) (COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 1, par I-7-n)
7. What are the responsibilities of Facility Coxswains under orders?
Ans:
 1. Ensure at least the minimum number of crew are on board
 2. Ensure that only authorized personnel are on board in the proper uniform wearing PFD's or protective clothing as required.
 3. Ensure that the facility is properly equipped and that patrol orders have been issued
 4. Ensure that all crew members are capable of performing the mission
 5. Comply with crew fatigue standards
 6. Comply with operational mission requirements
 7. Assume the responsibility for supervising and safely carrying out the ordered mission per current Coast Guard policy.
(COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 1, par L)

8. What are the physical requirements for Auxiliarists serving on an Auxiliary Boat Crew and what are the duties of the crew if a member is not physically or mentally capable?
Ans: To be able to perform all tasks required of in the Auxiliary Boat Crew Standards Manual as well as those required by the mission.
(COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 1, par N)
9. What are the crew requirements in d9 for an Auxiliary facility?
Ans: Boats under 26' in length is a Coxswain and at least one qualified crew. Boats 26' and over is a Coxswain and at least two qualified crew.
(COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 1, par P) and d9 policy
10. Do Patrol orders guarantee liability coverage while on patrol under orders?
Ans: No (COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 2, par A)
11. Who may unit commanders issue patrol orders too?
Ans: Coxswains who will be in charge for an ordered patrol.
(COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 2, par A-1-g)
12. When may verbal orders be issued?
Ans: In emergencies and when necessary in non-emergencies.
(COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 2, par A-2)
13. What is the coxswain's responsibility in the event of a mishap while on patrol under orders?
Ans: The individual or unit with first knowledge of an accident or incident, must report all available information per district requirements. This report is normally to the unit commander that issued the orders, who then must pass the information to the appropriate Coast Guard commands and Auxiliary leadership. The Coast Guard will direct appropriate investigations as necessary.
14. What is the purpose of local "Operations Orders?"
Ans: To give overall guidelines for operation of Auxiliarists while under orders on patrol. (District Operations Plan)
15. What is the policy for non-owner use of an Auxiliary Facility?
Ans: The owner of the facility must file a Non-Owner Use Authorization with the Director of Auxiliary (Group Auxiliary OTO in d9) to authorize the operational use of the facility by a non-owner.
(COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 2, par I)
16. When may the Auxiliary Patrol Ensign be displayed and what must be displayed?
Ans: a.) While on an authorized patrol with the appropriate crew on board.
b.) The national ensign and patrol signs boards
(COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 3)

17. When may Auxiliary Patrol signs be displayed when the facility is not under orders?
Ans: Never (COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 3, par B-1)
18. What decals may be displayed on Auxiliary Operational Facilities?
Ans: Only the CG Operational decal and wreath.
(COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 3, par C-1)
19. What Auxiliary facilities may display distinctive hull markings?
Ans: Auxiliary Unit Owned Facilities and CG owned and maintained facilities available for Auxiliary use.
20. What liability protection does an Auxiliarist have while not on patrol or under orders?
Ans: Any Auxiliarist acting in response to a potential SAR incident, before receipt of verbal or written orders from competent Coast Guard authority, is taking action as a "Good Samaritan" private boater.
(COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 4, par B-1)
21. Explain the Coast Guard's Maritime SAR Assistance Policy for non-emergency cases.
Ans: The CG serves as SAR coordinator for all maritime emergencies. If a boater has a non-emergency situation but needs some help, the CG will normally coordinate the effort to locate an alternate source of assistance. An Auxiliarist on orders **must** follow the CG's policy concerning Maritime SAR assistance. An Auxiliary coxswain in a "Come Upon" case which has **not** made radio contact with the CG should relay the assistance request to the unit commander and may independently determine whether or not to provide aid and then provide aid if capable. No Auxiliary boat may tow another boat unless the safety of both boats, and their passengers on board each, is reasonably assured. (COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 4, par B-2-a)
22. What is the purpose of "Pocket Orders?"
Ans: Pocket Orders allow a unit commander to place an Auxiliarist on orders during certain circumstances when the Auxiliarist is not in contact with the unit commander. (COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 4, par B-2-c)
23. When may an Auxiliary boat crew on deck, go without wearing the appropriate PFD with required survival equipment attached while on board an Auxiliary facility on patrol?
Ans: Never. (COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 4, par C-4-c)
24. Are Auxiliary coxswains allowed to enter a surf zone with an Auxiliary Facility while on patrol under orders?
Ans: No (COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 4, par C-4-h)

25. What could the penalty be for an Auxiliarist using drugs or alcohol on a patrol?
Ans: Disenrollment (COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 4, par C-4-i)
26. May Vessel Exams be done from an Auxiliary Facility while actually underway?
Ans: No (COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 4, par C-4-k)
27. What markings, lights, or sounds may be used on an Auxiliary Facility on patrol under orders?
Ans: US & Auxiliary Patrol Ensigns, Patrol signs and a Safety light and tow lights (in certain situations). (COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 3 and chap 4, par C-4-1 and par F- 9 and 10)
28. What activities are Auxiliarists prohibited from conducting?
Ans: 1. Actually boarding of a boat for law enforcement purposes.
2. The carrying of firearms on their person.
3. Investigating complaints of negligent operations or serving subpoenas.
(COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 4, par F-1-(a-c))
29. May CG Auxiliarists aid states in the promotion of boating safety on sole state waters?
Ans: Yes, but the appropriate state boating law administrator must first request this aid from the Director of Auxiliary. (COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 4, par F-5-b)
30. What are the standards for crew fatigue on Auxiliary Surface Facilities?
Ans: 1. Normal conditions; 10 hours underway in a 24 hour period.
2. In adverse operating conditions; 8 hours underway in a 24 hour period.
(COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 4, par F-6-a)
31. When and under what conditions may the "Crew Fatigue" standards be exceeded?
Ans: Only after consulting with unit commanders and receiving permission, or per district policy. The only exception is for emergencies.
(COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 4, par F-6-b)
32. When may Auxiliary Facilities display the "Public Safety" light?
Ans: 1. When patrolling regattas and marine events
2. When helping CG forces in maintaining security zones during events such as shuttle launches, hazardous cargo transfers, etc.
3. When needed for brief periods of identification of the Auxiliary vessel facility. These periods include helping a boat in distress locate the Auxiliary Facility during a SAR case, warning boats away from a hazardous situation, or when SAR activity takes place within the boundaries of regattas, marine events, or security zones.
(COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 4, par F-10-c)

33. What survival equipment must be equipped on all Auxiliary PFD's when worn on a patrol under orders?
Ans: 1. A whistle
2. Reflective tape
3. A Personal Marker Light (PML) – a cyalume light stick, a flashlight, or a strobe light
4. A mirror
5. Flares/smoke (CG Approved) if operating beyond 3 miles from shore (COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 4, par F-12)
34. Are guest passengers allowed on Auxiliary Facilities while on patrol under orders?
Ans: No, unless the unit commander authorizes their presence or in an emergency situation.
(COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 4, par F-15)
35. Are Auxiliary members allowed to enter the water while under orders?
Ans: No; except as absolutely necessary. Remember to make all required notifications (i.e., tell the controlling CG unit). Also, Auxiliary members may not enter submerged or capsized boats, vehicles, or aircraft.
(COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 4, par F-16)
36. What are the guideline for use of hypothermia protection?
Ans: 1. If the water temperature is below 60 degrees a mustang suit is required
2. If the water temperature is below 50 degrees a dry suit must be worn
(COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 4, par F-20) and new CG Policy
37. May Auxiliary On-the-Water Training be conducted without orders?
Ans: No (COMDTINST M16794.51)
38. What is the CG responsibility during a regatta or a marine event?
Ans: Spectator safety (COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 5, par B)
39. May Vessel examinations be done during an Auxiliary patrol under orders?
Ans: Only while the Auxiliary Facility is tied up. Remember to keep one crew on board for radio watch. (COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 5, par D)
40. What facilities are exempt from maintaining radio and formal message logs?
Ans: 1. Surface facilities under 65 feet
2. Aircraft
3. Vehicles with land mobile radio facilities aboard
(COMDTINST M16798.3D, chap 9, par G)

41. What are the three emergency phases and what is the definition of each?
- Ans: 1. UNCERTAINTY – exists when there is knowledge of a situation that may need to be monitored, or to have more information gathered, but that does not require moving of resources.
2. ALERT – phase exists when a craft or person is experiencing some difficulty and may need assistance, but is not in immediate danger or in need of immediate response. Apprehension is usually associated with the “Alert” phase.
3. DISTRESS – phase exists when a craft or person is threatened by grave or imminent danger requiring immediate response to the distress scene.
(COMDTINST M16130.2B, Sec. 3.B.2.b)
42. What is the primary CG concern in a SAR situation?
- Ans: Timely and effective assistance
(COMDTINST M16130.2B, Sec. 3.B.4.b)
43. Who is usually in the best position to assess the circumstances of a particular case and to take whatever steps are necessary to promote the safety of life and property?
- Ans: The Operational Commander/SAR Mission Coordinator (SMC)
(COMDTINST M16130.2B, Sec. 3.B.4.c)
44. What is the CG’s policy in non-distress cases if no commercial firm, marina, or friend is available?
- Ans: If a commercial provider is available (usually one hour or less) or an offer to assist is made by a responder, no further action by the CG, beyond monitoring the incident, will be taken. Otherwise a CG Auxiliary facility, if available, or a CG resource may be used.
(COMDTINST M16130.2B, Sec. 3.B.5.c)
45. What are the three principals which guide assistance to vessels not in distress?
- Ans: 1. Assistance normally will be provided by the responder which first arrives on scene with the vessel requesting assistance.
2. If a CG resource or Auxiliary facility takes a disabled vessel in tow, the tow will normally terminate at the nearest safe haven.
3. Once undertaken, there is no requirement to break the tow except as described below:
- a. The SMC and coxswain of the assisting vessel determine that a hand-off can be carried out safely; and either
 - b. Alternative assistance is desired and arranged by the operator of the vessel being assisted; or
 - c. The operational commander has a higher need for the CG resource or Auxiliary facility.
- (COMDTINST M16130.2B, Sec. 3.B.5.c) &
(COMDTINST M16130.2B, Sec. 3.B.6.f)

46. What is the CG policy regarding non-distress use of the CG?

Ans: The CG both supports efforts of private enterprise and encourages volunteerism in assisting mariners. CGG resources will not unnecessarily interfere with private enterprise. CG resources normally do not provide immediate assistance in non-distress cases where there is alternative assistance available. A CG resource may assist in non-distress situations when no higher priority mission exist and no other capable resource is available.

(COMDTINST M16130.2B, Sec. 3.B.5.d)

47. What is the CG's policy for providing assistance to Auxiliary facilities?

Ans: CG resources or Auxiliary facilities may be used to help Auxiliary facilities in need of assistance at any time.

(COMDTINST M16130.2B, Sec. 3.B.5.h)

48. What considerations does the SMC take into consideration when determining the appropriate emergency phase to classify a case?

Ans:

1. Nature of the situation
2. Position or lack of known location
3. Type, size, reported condition of the vessel, food, water, emergency signaling devices, and survival/life saving equipment on board
4. Visibility, including daylight or darkness conditions
5. Present and forecasted weather including wind and sea conditions, air and sea temperature
6. Ability of the vessel to anchor
7. Special considerations such as number of POB's, age, health, and special medical problems
8. Ability of the vessel to maintain reliable communications
9. Degree of concern of the mariner for the safety of the occupants of the vessel
10. The potential for the situation to worsen

(COMDTINST M16130.2B, Sec. 3.B.6.a)

49. What is the CG's policy regarding cases discovered by an Auxiliary facility?

Ans: When an Auxiliary facility on a routine Safety Patrol or otherwise on orders discovers a vessel requesting assistance, but not in radio contact with the CG, it should relay the request for assistance to the CG operational commander and may undertake to provide assistance if capable. No Auxiliary facility may undertake the tow of another vessel unless the Auxiliarist is reasonably assured of the safety of both vessels and the persons on board. If the Auxiliary vessel cannot safely tow a disabled vessel which is standing into danger, it may endeavor to remove the persons from the threatened vessel and stand by until a more capable resource arrives on scene.

(COMDTINST M16130.2B, Sec. 3.B.6.d)

50. What is the Coast Guard's policy regarding firefighting on other than CG units?

Ans: Generally, Coast Guard personnel shall not actively engage in firefighting on other than CG units except in support of a regular firefighting agency under the supervision of a qualified fire officer. CG personnel shall not engage in independent firefighting operations, except to save a life or in the early stages of a fire to avert a significant threat without undue risk.. (COMDTINST M16130.2B, Sec. 3.D.2)