

# **AQEC MEMORANDUM 2014-003**

## **TOWING – HORSESHOE MANEUVER**

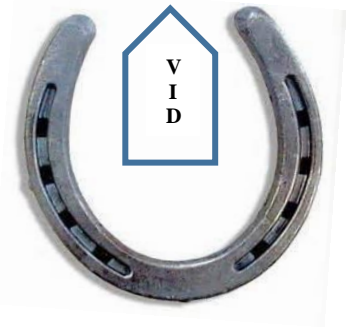
### **QUESTION:**

*“Is the USCG Auxiliary required to circle a disabled vessel when we are checking cleat placement, lines in the water or debris in the water when preparing to tow the disabled vessel? I heard the USCG uses a different method?”*

### **AQEC/SNC RESPONSE:**

*The Boat Crew Seamanship Manual (17-28) states:*

*“This period of pre-tow, on-scene analysis is when crew experience and judgment on both vessels must mesh. Discuss concerns before directing action. The distressed vessel’s crew may have information that the towing vessel’s crew does not. The easiest way to get the big picture may be by circling the distressed vessel, if possible. A method to check drift rate of the distressed vessel is to maneuver the towing vessel onto the same heading as the distressed vessel and stop astern of it. If the distance between the vessels increases, one vessel has a higher drift rate. Note the different angles or aspects the towing vessel and the towed vessel hold towards the winds and seas. The only time the drift rate and aspect will be exactly the same is if the vessels are exactly the same.”*



*The Initial Boat Crew Qualification Guide - Coxswain (COX-08-04-AUX) states;  
“Performed an on-scene assessment of the disabled vessel’s material condition.”*

*The goal is develop information regarding the distressed vessel’s material condition, including cleat placement, lines in the water, debris in the water, vessel traffic, etc.*

*The USCG uses a horseshoe maneuver (Coxswain’s call) to develop information needed for towing a Vessel in Distress (VID) and communicating with the captain of the VID. The maneuver starts with the towing vessel on either the port or starboard side and checks the VID as the towing vessel backs around the VID using a horseshoe maneuver. At the stern of the VID, the towing vessel station keeps for several seconds to determine the rate of drift of the two vessels. The towing vessel continues on to the opposite side of the VID using forward way to continue gathering information opposite from whence they started the maneuver. The maneuver gives the appearance of a horseshoe and you develop the same information as if you circled the VID.*

*Either option is acceptable.*

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