

NEW DIRECTION FOR THE AUXILIARY BOAT CREW PROGRAM IN SNC

There is some new direction regarding the Auxiliary boat crew program from the Operations Training Officer at D5SR.

In particular, some boat crew tasks have created safety hazards. These hazards need to be recognized and eliminated to prevent mishaps.

In most cases, rather than creating a hazard during an evolution, these tasks can be handled by a Coxswain decision to use a different method to accomplish the task. All Coast Guard Auxiliary vessels (OPFAC) are non-standard and some vessels have a unique method to accomplish a task which may differ slightly from the guidelines. In these cases, a task may have to conform to the OPFAC to accomplish the task.

In particular, the following two tasks come to mind;

Transition from Stern Tow to an Alongside Tow:

When transitioning from a stern tow to an alongside tow, rather than walk the towline forward to use as the number one line, it is a Coxswain decision to remove the towline completely and store it out of the way to avoid a tripping hazard. Then use a free approach to take the disabled vessel in an alongside tow by providing a new number one line and making line adjustments as needed.

Use of Heaving Line:

The distance between the tow and the target vessels for tossing a heaving line has been 20 feet. A Coxswain decision to shorten the distance between the two boats resulting from member difficulties, along with excessive wind and current or other factors allows the Coxswain to decide what adjustments to make. In some cases, this distance can create safety issues when the member does not use the proper method of coiling the heaving line, getting the ball hung up on the gunwale, missing the toss, and leaving excess line on the deck to create a tripping hazard. The objective is for the towing vessel to station keep (stop the boat in position for a successful throw) so the crew member can send the heaving line and ball with towline attached to the disabled vessel.

By adjusting these tasks, it should reduce the time to ready the task and eliminate a tripping hazard. In most cases the task has been learned and proficiency is all that is required to accomplish the task.

All other tasks that should be evaluated for safety should be directed to the Area QE Coordinator for review. Your safety and that of the boat crew is our primary goal.

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