

U.S. Coast Guard Sector North Carolina



Public Affairs Strategy

Sector North Carolina Public Affairs Strategy

2018

The Sector North Carolina Public Affairs Strategy will guide our outreach and engagement efforts in educating and informing the public, our partners, and our stakeholders. Our strategy emphasizes the Coast Guard's missions, authorities, and partnerships that help us achieve our safety, security, and stewardship objectives in the maritime environment in the State of North Carolina. This strategy does not address specific communications objectives or processes adopted by an incident-specific Joint Information Center (JIC) under a Unified Command structure.

Public Affairs Objectives:

- Balance mutually beneficial public outreach with operational security.
- Educate the public and stakeholders on Sector North Carolina missions and associated value proposition through regular public and media engagements.
- Increase boating and water-based activity safety through timely and targeted public safety messages.
- Highlight partnerships and joint operations emphasizing coordination and collaboration among state, federal and local agencies.
- Provide timely updates to the public and impacted stakeholders regarding Coast Guard heavy weather preparedness and response operations.
- Ensure public and stakeholder awareness of planned marine events, closures, or other operations affecting traffic or authorized use of ports and waterways within the Sector area of responsibility.
- Highlight non-operational support to the community by Coast Guard members including participation in organized or individual volunteer events.

Target Audiences:

- Boating public and other waterway users
- Partner agencies
- State and federal officials
- Stakeholder entities and organizations (pilots, ferry operators, non-governmental organizations)

Communication Methods:

Social Media - The U.S. Coast Guard Sector North Carolina and Station Facebook pages are the primary social media outlets to update the public on open-source operations, maritime safety messages/education, and volunteer or special interest stories involving Sector North Carolina and sub-unit personnel. Members are encouraged to send photos and captions for upload to the "U.S. Coast Guard Sector North Carolina" Facebook page to MSTC Jeremy Thomas or LCDR Elizabeth Buendia. Use of other social media platforms (e.g., Twitter, Instagram, etc.) is prohibited.

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Print Media – Print media includes local or national newspapers, magazines, online news outlets (excluding Twitter, Facebook, etc.), and maritime industry-focused “blogs.”

Television Media – Television media includes local news stations, cable news stations, public access channels (e.g., C-SPAN), and internet-based streaming services¹.

Public Events – Public events includes organized festivals, parades, sporting events, and organization-sponsored gatherings, symposiums, and conferences.

Embarks/Embeds – When possible, provide media access to our day-to-day operations, training evolutions, and responses.

Key Messaging Objectives:

Press releases and other public affairs engagements educate the public and make them aware of the Sector’s missions and value we provide in our coastal communities. Our public affairs strategy is to be proactive and aggressive in pushing out both targeted and general boating safety, emergency preparedness, operational highlights, event notifications, waterway status changes, and community service stories that improve public safety in the maritime environment, reinforce the public trust, and recognize Sector personnel’s contributions in our communities. Key messaging objectives for 2018 are:

- 1) Coast Guard Value Proposition – we will leverage print, social media, television and public events to educate the public, state and local officials, port partners, and emergency management partners on the services and value the Coast Guard provides their communities and constituents.
 - a. We are a multi-mission, humanitarian, military service
 - b. Highlight our 11 statutory missions and those particularly germane to the State of North Carolina (SAR, Marine Safety, PWCS, LMR, Law Enforcement, ATON)
 - c. Emphasize our unique portfolio of integrated and complementary authorities (e.g., COTP, OCMI, FOCS, AMSC, SMC) facilitating our ability to execute our safety, security, and stewardship missions
 - d. Emphasize the economic impact of facilitating maritime commerce in the State of North Carolina
 - e. Emphasize our broad state, local, and federal partnerships and our ability to quickly integrate into the ICS structure during major events
 - f. Highlight our role and partnerships with OGA’s and industry in coordinating and leading the Area Maritime Security Committee, Area Committee, Port Readiness Committee, and the Harbor Safety Committee with emphasis on community resilience, information sharing, and incident response coordination

- 2) Boating Safety – we will leverage print, social media, television and public events to

¹ Report all interviews with national news outlets or foreign outlets to CG-0922 through D5 public affairs staff.

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educate the public on boating safety including:

- a. Developing and sharing sail plans
 - b. Carrying and wearing life jackets
 - c. The benefits of installing VHF radios in boats
 - d. The benefits of carrying and properly registering EPIRBs
 - e. The importance of attending boating safety courses offered by the Auxiliary, the Power Squadron, and other entities
 - f. Paying careful attention to weather forecasts prior to departing offshore.
 - g. The importance of unimpaired boating and the impacts/costs of boating while intoxicated.
- 3) Hurricane/Severe Weather Preparedness – we will leverage print, social media, television and public events to educate Sector personnel, the public, and our port partners on:
- a. Developing an emergency evacuation and communications plan with family members as well as maintaining a 72 hour supply of non-perishable food and water
 - b. Educating emergency response partners on Coast Guard HURCON status and impacts to response capabilities
 - c. Ensure port and state and local emergency management partners are familiar with the Sector Heavy Weather Plan and associated impacts of Port Condition changes upon the approach of a hurricane or other heavy weather event.

General Guidance:

The following are basic, general guidelines for engaging with the public, partners, and stakeholders. The following applies to all social media, print, television, organized events, and incidental engagements:

- a. Never discuss classified, pre-decisional, or operationally-sensitive information
- b. Never disclose Personally Identifiable Information (PII) or protected health information
- c. Speak only to information you know and for which you are responsible; do not guess, extrapolate or provide conjecture
- d. Do not speak on behalf of any other Coast Guard entity unless explicitly authorized
- e. Adhere to all approved PAGs or additional guidance from the D5 or Sector Public Affairs Officer, Deputy Sector Commander, or Sector Commander
- f. Answer only the question asked and go no further; do not provide extraneous information
- g. If you do not know the answer to a question, state so and be prepared to provide the Public Affairs Officer point of contact information for follow up
- h. Brief your chain of command immediately following any press or public engagement whether planned or incidental

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Social Media Guidance

a. Personal Use.

- i. Obey the law: Do not violate intellectual property rights including copyright protections. Do not use U.S. Coast Guard protected words or symbol without prior authorization.
- ii. Be responsible: Anything you post on the web including text and pictures can easily be shared, taken out of context or used maliciously.
- iii. Practice restraint: Be respectful, accurate and professional. Always use your best judgment and consider how the content reflects upon yourself and the service.
- iv. Online doesn't mean anonymous: There is no such thing as anonymity online. Even if you decide not to fully identify yourself, you should not disguise, impersonate or otherwise misrepresent who you are and your association with the service.
- v. Talking about the USCG: Comment carefully. Stay in your lane and only talk about what you know, your personal experiences and professional expertise. You may use your name, rank and position to disclose your affiliation with the service. When expressing personal opinions, Coast Guard members should make clear that they are speaking for themselves, not on behalf of the Coast Guard, and use a disclaimer such as, "the postings on this site are my own and don't represent Coast Guard positions or opinions."
- vi. OPSEC: Consider the information or imagery you wish to share, and verify it does not pose an operational or personnel risk to the service.

- b. **Official Use.** Social Media presents the opportunity to take our storytelling one step further and engage in two-way communication with our audience. Being a trusted source of timely, engaging and responsive online information helps continue to build public trust and confidence. Good judgment, common sense and adherence to Coast Guard core values and established policies are paramount. All official social media activity must be carried out in accordance with references (a), (b), (c), and (g). Additional guidance and information can be found on the CG-09221 "Digital Media Division" Portal Page.

District Public Affairs Office:

Sector PAO will coordinate all print and television media articles/press releases with the D5 Office of Public Affairs. D5 PAO Poc: PAC Kip Wadlow, 757-398-6272; LT Amanda Faulkner, 757-398-6275; D5 Command Center 757-398-6390.

D5 Public Affairs Guidance (PAG) provides information and talking points intended to provide the public with accurate, uniformed messaging and responses to questions (RTQ) regarding policies and operations affecting the Coast Guard, D5, and Sector North Carolina. All personnel are required to conform to messaging, talking points, and RTQs issued in any HQ, Area, or D5 PAG. Press releases and pertinent news clips are maintained in the PAO public folder at:

<\\D05MS-SSNC\Public\Command Folders\Public Affairs>