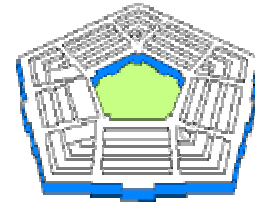


Organizing Your Disaster Response



An Orientation for U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Leaders



CG Auxiliary units and CG Auxiliary members only perform disaster response activities under the direction of U. S. Coast Guard active duty personnel in charge.



Introduction

In the wake of the recent national tragedies, many members of the US Coast Guard Auxiliary want to contribute to the efforts of the Coast Guard in the execution of disaster response, port security and backfilling at Groups and Stations to relieve our Active Duty and reserve counterparts. As a unit leader, you must provide the guidance and mechanisms to effectively integrate members into the response activity. In an ideal world, a plan for a seamless transition is in place and members can immediately begin lending assistance. However, unit leaders change frequently and a formal plan may not exist. This document will provide you with an orientation to the planning process and help to focus your efforts in these confusing weeks ahead.



Getting Organized

Let's start with a clean slate.....nothing has been done. If you have completed one or more of these phases, you are well ahead of the game. Let's examine each of these phases. They are: Customers and Expectations, Assets and Skills and Plans and Response.



Customers and Expectations

We must be able to determine who needs our help and what it is that they need. Our customer is the Coast Guard and ultimately, the public. But you need to be specific. What Stations or Groups does your unit support? Do you need to

identify needs to be met at the District Office or in an Auxiliary SARDET? Identify all of the possible places where your action plan could be implemented. Then consider what the needs are for each unit. This will require dialog with the OINC, Commanding Officer, DIRAUX, SARDET Supervisor and other key people. Some may need personnel for administrative functions, or to help out in the galley. Perhaps the need is for operational assets, like boats, aircraft or even vehicles! Is relief needed in the Operations Center or Communications Center? Your goal is to meet the needs of the customer.

Your ability to have this dialog is hampered by the urgency of the situation. As the tempo of this disaster slows, consider drafting a *"Memorandum of Understanding"* (MOU) between your Auxiliary unit and the specific Coast Guard unit or units that you serve. This document will provide all of the administrative groundwork to describe your relationship and what each party will provide (contact persons, orders, etc.). A sample MOU is provided on the Coast Guard Auxiliary website, www.cgaux.org.



Assets and Skills

You work with a talented group of people in your unit...and you need to know all of the talents that they bring to the table. You can track items like qualifications and boats, but what about all of the skills and wisdom? You need to find a way to access that data, as well.

Brainstorm for a bit, what skills might be useful in disaster response? Skills like mechanics, firefighting training, EMT, electronics, communications, computer skills, environmental training, heavy equipment operators and the like will all prove very valuable in an emergency. But don't stop there. Good phone skills, culinary skills, secretarial skills, public speaking or public affairs skills, human resource professionals or just the willingness to pitch in should be identified and cataloged so that you can identify these resources at the time needed. Members with any of these skills will provide a valued service.



Plans and Response

The basic plan describes the situation, mission, execution, logistics and command and control. The **U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Guidelines for Emergency Response Planning** provides complete guidance for preparation of these plans. The plans can provide an outline or be quite comprehensive. The **U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Guidelines for Emergency Response Planning** can be found on the CG Auxiliary website. An example of a plan for a Security Emergency from the Guidelines follows.

C-5: SECURITY EMERGENCIES	
Situation	<p>When US forces deploy overseas, Coast Guard forces protect the outload ports. When there is a direct threat to the United States itself, Coast Guard commands work with other agencies to protect targets in port cities.</p> <p>Auxiliarists are not authorized to participate in Coast Guard military operations. However, all of these situations divert Coast Guard personnel from their normal missions. Auxiliarists will be required to backfill vacated positions, especially in the search and rescue area.</p> <p>Not all areas of the US are equally vulnerable to maritime attack, piracy, or terrorism. There is a centralized process for validating security threats and targets. Auxiliary leaders should consult with their local Coast Guard command as to credible security threats in their areas and the desired role to be played by the Auxiliary in supporting Coast Guard needs.</p>
Mission	<p>Coast Guard OPLANS include a listing of the shortfalls that a security crisis might create. This should be the starting point for Auxiliary mission analysis.</p>
Execution	<p>Security crises usually emerge over a period of days or weeks. In this time, Auxiliary leaders and Coast Guard commanders should agree on a final list of shortfalls and a duty schedule. It may be necessary to suspend some normal Auxiliary operations to fill critical personnel needs.</p>
Administration/Logistics	<p>Should be provided by the supported Coast Guard command. Due to the extended nature of these emergencies (weeks to months), food, lodging and supplies should be provided directly by Coast Guard units. This will be more practical than trying to live at a marina or waiting for reimbursement deposits or checks.</p>
Command & Control	<p>Provided by the supported Coast Guard command. With the consent of their Flotilla Commander, Auxiliarists may be appointed to supervisory roles such as Junior Officer of the Day, as necessary to maintain proper span of control. Auxiliary office designations and qualifications are confusing to most Coast Guard personnel, so Auxiliary leaders should provide accurate information on their member's skill and experience levels.</p>

Once your plan has been developed, personnel can be briefed on their mission and begin to pitch in.....**NOT YET!** It is no longer "business as usual" at the Coast Guard facility. The Coast Guard uses a different management system for event management called the **Incident Command System (ICS)**. The ICS is

used by the Coast Guard for "Big" events like OPSAIL or "Bad" events like the recent acts of terrorism in NY and Washington. Each responder will be positioned in the framework of the ICS. As the CG Auxiliary unit leader, you need to be familiar with the structure and function of the ICS.

The Incident Command System (ICS) organization is built around five major functions that are applied on any incident whether it is large or small. ICS establishes lines of supervisory authority and formal reporting relationships. There is complete unity of command as each position and person within the system has a designated supervisor. Federal, state, and local agencies have used ICS for years. Because of its wide acceptance, ICS is ideal for managing a large scale or multi-agency response to a natural or man made disaster.

The major components of the ICS are:

Function	Major Activities
Command	Sets objectives and priorities, has overall responsibility at the incident or event
Operations	Conducts tactical operations to carry out the plan, develops the tactical objectives/organization and directs all resources
Planning	Develops the action plan to accomplish the objectives, collects and evaluates the information and maintains resource status
Logistics	Provides support to meet incident needs, provides resources and all other services needed to support the incident
Finance/ Administration	Monitors costs related to the incident, provides accounting, procurement, time recording and cost analysis

Auxiliary members and/or units working in disaster relief or security operations will be assigned to duty by the designated CG authority. Assignments are generally made to a specific work group with specific tasking. More information about the Incident Command System can be found on the Coast Guard Auxiliary website.



Summary

Effective use of Auxiliary resources depends on an understanding of the needs of the response, efficient mobilization of personnel with the right skills, and an organized response of those persons. Emergency response planning and knowledge of the ICS structure allow for seamless integration of the Auxiliary response. Preparing to meet the needs of the Coast Guard and the nation in this time of national tragedy is the challenge of Auxiliary Leaders.