



NEW MEMBER HANDBOOK

*Charting your course for service in the
United States Coast Guard Auxiliary*



**U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary
Human Resources Directorate**

Revised 1 December 2015

NEW MEMBER HANDBOOK

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PLEASE NOTE: Publications maintained by the Human Resources Directorate are continually under review based on the most current and accurate information available. If you have questions regarding the contents of this publication or approved Auxiliary changes not reflected in this document, please contact your Human Resources (HR) staff officer, per the Chain of Leadership and Management.

Record of Changes

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Chapter 1 YOUR PART IN THE AUXILIARY

The Prologue to the Membership Pledge states that you have been brought into: “. . . *an organization dedicated to the promotion of boating safety and providing assistance to the Coast Guard in the fulfillment of its civil functions. You accept this membership as a volunteer, but as a member you are charged with certain responsibilities and obligations. These include your willingness to support the Coast Guard Auxiliary and its purposes and to participate in its authorized programs to the best of your ability and to the extent that time and circumstances permit.*”

A. MEETINGS

1. Your attendance at flotilla meetings is very important. At our meetings we will share information regarding:
 - Division activities
 - Commander's report
 - Old Business
 - New Business
 - In-flotilla training
 - Fellowship
 - Communications / Staff Officer Reports
2. Attending these meetings will keep you up to date on all of the flotilla's activities. It will also enable you to meet and interact with other members in the flotilla. It is your right and responsibility to VOTE at these meetings.
3. Staff Meetings may also be scheduled for elected and appointed officers, as well as committee chairpersons. All members are welcome to attend these meetings.

B. UNIFORMS

1. The Auxiliary uniform is similar to the Coast Guard uniform and needs to be worn when on any mission where you represent the Auxiliary or the Coast Guard. It is the responsibility of members to purchase and maintain a uniform appropriate to the activities in which they participate. All uniform purchases are tax deductible.
2. As a new member you should consider purchasing the **Tropical Blue Uniform**. This basic uniform can be worn for most Auxiliary activities. This uniform, as well as the **Service Dress Blue, Operational Dress Uniform**, and all other options of uniform selection and their appropriate use, is outlined in detail in Chapter 10 of your Auxiliary Manual. The **Flotilla Human Resources Officer (FSO-HR)** will be able to help you order the clothing for your uniform and the **Flotilla Materials Officer (FSO-MA)** can order the insignia and devices needed to make it complete.

C. MANUALS

If you have not already downloaded the Auxiliary Manual, the most current version is online: <http://www.uscg.mil/auxiliary/publications/comdtinst/default.asp>. This is the first of many manuals and other publications that you will obtain as a member of the Auxiliary. Your membership in this organization will be enhanced by the information contained in them. *It is important for all members to read their manuals and keep them updated.*

D. ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

1. What in the world is an AUXOP, DCDR, or FSO-? One of the first puzzles for a new member is the shorthand (acronyms/abbreviations) with which we sprinkle our conversations and writing. It's the "insider" Auxiliary language, just like other insider languages. Acronyms are a part of the game. Don't become frustrated; no one knows them all. Ask a fellow Auxiliarist or look them up in your Auxiliary Manual or on the Auxiliary website at: www.cgaux.org.
2. Some helpful examples:
 - **PE**—Public Education
 - **VSC**—Vessel Safety Check
 - **OP**—Operations
 - **MT**—Member Training
 - **BS&S**—Boating Skills & Seamanship

E. MEMBER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

You have been given an Member Identification Number. From this point on, your status, activities and accomplishments will be recorded in the Auxiliary Data System (AUXDATA) using that number. The Coast Guard has provided you with an Identification Card. Your Member ID is provided on your card. It is important that you know and understand your Member ID.

F. DUES

Each year you will receive a notice when dues are payable. Your total dues are divided into four parts: flotilla, division, district, and national. You pay your total to the flotilla. The Flotilla Finance Officer (FSO-FN), in turn, sends the appropriate portions of your dues to the other levels of the organization. Our dues help to support Auxiliary activities at all levels of the organization and are tax deductible.

G. REPORTING

The status, qualifications, and activities of all members and units in the Auxiliary are tracked in the Auxiliary Data System (AUXDATA) using the member number. Since the Auxiliary plays a significant part in Coast Guard accomplishments, it has a direct bearing on Coast Guard funding. Reporting is very important to you, your flotilla and division and the Coast Guard.

| DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY U. S. COAST GUARD AUXILIARY (01/2010) FORM 2-01 | | U. S. Coast Guard Auxiliary MEMBER ACTIVITY WORKSHEET (FOR OPTIONAL USE) | | | | | |
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Chapter 2 WHO WE ARE ...

A. TEAM COAST GUARD

The Auxiliary is the uniformed, volunteer arm of TEAM COAST GUARD, working alongside the Active Duty Coast Guard and Reserve within the sphere of the Coast Guard's civil functions. The word "volunteer" makes a big difference. Auxiliary authority isn't like the military or business authority. Although we have rules and regulations to follow, we depend completely on support and cooperation. Your leaders are volunteers too, and cooperation is a two-way street.



HOW USCGAUX IS LIKE USCG:

We represent the federal government
We qualify through training
We wear uniforms, observe military "good" manners
We do not take sides in political activities to raise funds
Our activities are limited to approved programs

HOW USCGAUX DIFFERS:

We aren't paid with money
We don't enforce the laws
We elect our leaders
We furnish and maintain our own equipment
We can choose to participate
We work where we live instead of living where we work

B. POLICY MAKING

Only the Coast Guard Commandant and the National Board make policies; the rest carry out these policies. Within the parameters of these policies, districts may create their own policy manuals. The members decide, by vote, within which areas and at what level the flotilla will participate.

C. FLOTILLA LEADERS

1. A complete description of the duties of the elected and appointed officers can be found in the **Flotilla Procedures Manual**. The Flotilla Commander has a copy of this publication. Names and addresses of your flotilla officers can be found in the Flotilla Roster.
2. Flotilla elections are held in the fall of the year, after the division elections. At that time we elect our **Flotilla Commander (FC)** and **Flotilla Vice Commander (VFC)** to serve for one year. The FC then appoints the Staff Officers (FSOs) who also serve for one year, beginning 1 January. Staff Officers are responsible for reporting on a monthly basis to the VFC and to their corresponding Division Staff Officer (SO) on activities in their area of concentration. A member may hold more than one office, but no one may hold more than one elected office at a time.
3. The FC also appoints Flotilla Committees for Fellowship, Nominations, Historian, Audit, etc. The FC also serves on the Division Board and helps to elect the Division Commander (DCDR) and Division Vice Commander (VCDR).

4. Should you desire to seek elected office at some time in your career as an Auxiliarist, you should talk to the **Member Training Officer (FSO-MT)** about completing the required **Administrative Procedures Course (APC)** or the **Flotilla Leadership Course (FLC)**. All qualifications for elected office can be found in your Auxiliary Manual. Should you be interested in serving as a Flotilla Staff Officer, be sure to discuss the requirements with your Flotilla Commander.

D. ELECTED LEADERS are elected by the members of the flotilla.

1. **Flotilla Commander (FC):** Represents the flotilla. Presides at flotilla meetings. Appoints FSOs and committee chairpersons.
2. **Flotilla Vice Commander (VFC):** Alternate for FC. Chief of Staff. Presides at staff meetings.

E. FLOTILLA STAFF OFFICERS are appointed by the Flotilla Commander.

Flotilla Staff Officers organize activities in the following program areas:

1. **Communications Officer (FSO-CM):** Conducts radio facility inspections and provides radio support of Coast Guard Auxiliary patrols.
2. **Communication Services Officer (FSO-CS):** Designs and maintains flotilla's web site and reports information posted on the Auxiliary website.
3. **Diversity Officer (FSO-DV):** Conducts and coordinates all Flotilla-level training in the areas of Diversity.
4. **Finance Officer (FSO-FN):** Maintains records on budget, expenditures, dues. Pays bills.
5. **Human Resources Officer (FSO-HR):** Oversees member resources, recruiting, retention, and fellowship activities.
6. **Information Systems Officer (FSO-IS):** Enters forms into AUXDATA and maintains official activity records.
7. **Marine Safety and Environmental Protection Officer (FSO-MS):** Supervises flotilla programs associated with marine environmental awareness.
8. **Materials Officer (FSO-MA):** Responsible for the acquisition and inventory of administrative, marketing, and mission support supplies.
9. **Member Training Officer (FSO-MT):** Organizes training sessions for all Auxiliary program qualifications and specialty courses.
10. **Navigation Systems Officer (FSO-NS):** Updates charts. Plan chart patrols.
11. **Operations Officer (FSO-OP):** Schedules and organizes on-water patrols and Coast Guard support missions.
12. **Public Affairs Officer (FSO-PA):** Organizes publicity, posters, public speaking, safety booths.
13. **Publications Officer (FSO-PB):** Prepares flotilla newsletter and materials for other Auxiliary publications.
14. **Public Education Officer (FSO-PE):** Organizes courses and schedule instructors for adult and children's public boating classes.

15. **Program Visitor Officer (FSO-PV)**: Distributes safety and PE material to marine dealers.
16. **Secretary/Records Officer (FSO-SR)**: Records and publishes minutes; maintains records.
17. **Vessel Examiner Officer (FSO-VE)**: Organizes Vessel Safety Check (VSC) program and facility inspections.

Chater 3 WHAT WE DO and HOW YOU CAN DO IT, TOO!

A. AUXILIARY MISSIONS

Recreational Boating Safety and Coast Guard Support

- Aids to Navigation
- Auxiliary State Liaison
- Boat Show Participation
- Chart Updating
- Commercial Fishing Vessel Exams
- Marine Environmental Education, Administrative and Operational Support of the U. S. Coast Guard
- Operations
- Program Visitation
- Public Affairs
- Public Education
- Recruiting Assistance Program
- Support National Safe Boating Week
- Vessel Safety Check Program

B. MEMBER TRAINING

For full enjoyment and participation in these Auxiliary programs, you will need to become involved in the Member Training program. Members do not have to follow a required sequence of training. You will choose your training according to your interests. All programs are available to any member without cost. The training is available from instructors within your flotilla, division, and district.

Talk to your **Member Training Officer (FSO-MT)** and refer to the appropriate Coast Guard Auxiliary publications for more specific information on the program of interest to you. Some programs requiring preliminary study include:

1. VESSEL SAFETY CHECK PROGRAM (VSC) - Vessel Examiner (VE)

Objective: one-on-one safety education for boat owners. Qualifications: boating course credit, study Vessel Safety Check Manual, complete course, pass open-book exam, conduct vessel exams under supervision. Reference: Vessel Safety Check Manual (COMDTINST M16796.8), Auxiliary Facilities Guide, VE forms ANSC 7003, 7008, 7012, 7038, and 7045.

2. **INSTRUCTOR PROGRAM - Instructor (IT)**

Objective: teach courses on boating safety to adults and children in the general public and training courses for Auxiliary members. Qualifications: boating course credit, complete Instructor Qualifications course, pass open-book exam, prepare lesson plans, and student teach. Reference: Instructor Qualification Course COMDTPUB P16794.44 (series), Auxiliary Instructor Development Course (ANSC 5502 Rev 07).

3. **COMMUNICATIONS - Watchstander**

- a. Objective: communications missions for the Coast Guard. Qualifications: boating course credit, complete Sector or Station Communications Watchstander Qualifications Guide and training, local familiarization, knowledge of plotting.
- b. For an Auxiliary facility: AUXCOM qualified local familiarization according to local Regional Director of Auxiliary (DIRAUX) policies. Reference: Auxiliary Communications Course (AUXCOM) M16794.32 (series); Auxiliary Telecommunications Qualification Standard (COMDTINST M10470.10F); per local Sector or Station requirements.

4. **NAVIGATION SYSTEMS - ATON Verifier**

Objective: verify aids to navigation (ATONs), private aids to navigation (PATONs), chart updating. Qualifications: boating course credit, complete Aids to Navigation Course, Chart Updating Manual, Operations Policy Manual COMDTINST M16798.3 (series.)

5. **OPERATIONS - Coxswain and Crew (CX and CR)**

Objective: to provide operation/patrol support to the Coast Guard to enhance recreational boating safety. Qualification: boating course credit, complete Boat Crew Qualifications Program for level desired including ashore and on-water tasks. For Coxswain - pass closed book Navigation Rules exam. Reference: Auxiliary Operations Policy Manual COMDTINST M16798.3 (series), Auxiliary Crew and Coxswain M16798.28 (series), Boat Crew Seamanship Manual M16114.5 (series), Auxiliary Boat Crew Qualification Guide, Volume I: Crew Member M16794.52A, Auxiliary Boat Crew Qualification Guide, Volume II: Coxswain M16794.53A, Auxiliary Boat Crew Qualification Guide, Volume III: PWC Operator M1679.454A.

6. **SPECIALTY COURSES**

Auxiliarists who are interested in further increasing their knowledge are offered a series of **Auxiliary Operational Specialty Courses**. This is known as the AUXOP program. The **Flotilla Member Training Officer (FSO-MT)** will be able to tell you when these courses will be given:

- COMMUNICATIONS
- NAVIGATION
- PATROLS
- SEAMANSHIP
- SEARCH & RESCUE
- WEATHER

More detailed information on any of these specific training programs can be obtained from the FSO-MT, the Auxiliary Manual and the Auxiliary Operations Policy Manual.

C. SELECT YOUR MISSIONS

There are many other opportunities for service within the Auxiliary. Ask the **Flotilla Human Resources Officer (FSO-HR)** to explain some of the clerical, administrative, technical, and social tasks that need to be done for the Auxiliary and to assist the Coast Guard. Select the activity that interests you the most. Our Flotilla has many interesting ways in which you can participate. **We need your help** and are looking forward to your participation.

Chapter 4 WHAT DO YOU GET OUT OF IT?

The benefits of membership in the Coast Guard Auxiliary are many—some tangible and some intangible. As a member of the Auxiliary, you'll proudly wear the uniform and insignia of office and fly the Auxiliary ensign while participating in many of the activities involved in the Auxiliary's missions of Recreational Boating Safety and support of the Coast Guard. In addition to the pride and satisfaction that comes to every volunteer, Auxiliarists enjoy many valuable benefits and privileges not available to the general public. For additional information, contact your Flotilla Commander.

- A. COAST GUARD AUXILIARY ASSOCIATION** The Coast Guard Auxiliary Association is a national nonprofit organization established to support Coast Guard Auxiliary activities. The Coast Guard Auxiliary Association conducts fiscal and business management responsibilities for the Auxiliary including fundraising, partnerships and donations enabling the Auxiliary to accomplish their primary mission responsibility of recreational boating safety.
- B. COAST GUARD MUTUAL ASSISTANCE** Coast Guard Mutual Assistance (CGMA) provides an emergency fund that can provide fast financial relief when a member faces an unexpected or "impossible" financial burden that would cause personal hardship if no assistance were provided. Auxiliarists may apply for CGMA loans and are considered as "Sponsor Members" under the program. If approved, CGMA loans are interest free. For information, you can call toll free: 1-800-881-2462.
- C. COAST GUARD WORK-LIFE PROGRAMS** Auxiliarists can take advantage of certain Coast Guard Work-Life Programs such as:
- Family
 - Wellness
 - Dependent Resources
 - Employee Assistance

A variety of insurance programs cover Auxiliarists when operating under Coast Guard orders. This includes medical, hospitalization, disability, and death benefits should an accident occur in the performance of your duty.

If your boat, aircraft, or other authorized Auxiliary facility is damaged or destroyed while legitimately engaged in Auxiliary operations, coverage for repairs or replacement will be provided. Liability insurance protects the Auxiliarist from third-party claims made as a result of actions that occur when the Auxiliarist is performing authorized missions and has been properly assigned to duty.

In order to maintain this coverage, all incidents and accidents must be reported to your order-issuing authority for the mission. As a caution, there must be strict adherence to all Coast Guard governing policies, or the claim may be denied.

- D. EXCHANGE PRIVILEGES** Auxiliarists in uniform, with proper identification, can purchase anything sold in the Coast Guard Exchange System (CGES) Stores except liquor and cigarettes. Family members may accompany Auxiliarists to the Exchange, but may not make individual purchases. Members of the Auxiliary are also welcome at other Department of Defense Exchanges, but only uniform items or accessories may be purchased.
- E. PUBLICATIONS** Members receive the quarterly Auxiliary National publication, *The Navigator*, their own district/division/flotilla publications, and other bulletins to keep abreast of Coast Guard, Auxiliary, and general boating information.
- F. UNIFORMS AND AWARDS** The pride of wearing the Auxiliary uniform is amplified by awards and advancement. There are ample opportunities to receive recognition by completing Auxiliary training courses and participating in authorized programs.
- G. TAX DEDUCTIONS** Uniforms, their cleaning and maintenance, and reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the performance of your duties are considered contributions for tax purposes. The foregoing is not intended to be advice on deductibility. You should consult your professional tax advisor.

Doing something useful with friends may be the benefit that will bring satisfaction to your membership. That could mean tossing a towline to a distressed boater, or tossing a salad at a flotilla picnic. It could mean being a student or an instructor, checking a boat or performing an exam, using computer skills or accounting skills ... it could mean a lot of things.

IT IS UP TO YOU ... a little or a lot, once a month or once a day—something that interests you and "as your time and circumstances permit." The personal benefits and satisfaction that you receive from your membership will depend upon your choice and level of participation.



WELCOME ABOARD!