



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

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WebWatch

Division 8, 5NR

August 2010

A. Reserve Recall for Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

RDML S.L. Stosz, Acting Director of Reserve and Leadership

1. Today our Reserve Guardians are standing the watch on shores both foreign and domestic. To those shipmates who stand ready, I commend you for your dedication and devotion to duty. To the Commands who train and support our Reservists, Congratulations. The results of your collective efforts are evidenced by the thousands of reservists meeting mission around the world, and particularly in the Gulf of Mexico in support of Deepwater Horizon oil spill response operations.

To those who have mobilized for Deepwater Horizon, thanks to you, your families and Commands for answering the call to duty, on short notice, to deploy into a challenging operating environment while logistics were still being put in place.

2. For the past decade, the Coast Guard Reserve has supported defense operations overseas following 9-11 while responding to natural disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina, Gustav, and Ike, flooding on the western rivers, and the earthquake in Haiti. The Deepwater Horizon oil spill is being heralded as the largest environmental disaster our country has faced, and I anticipate the majority of you will be recalled to participate in the response. Thus far, Reservists make up the majority of Coast Guard responders - you should be proud of your contributions to the nation in this time of urgent need.
3. Coast Guard Reservists who have not yet been recalled, regardless of rate or rank, should take immediate measures to ensure their readiness and that of their families:
 - a. Make preparations for your family. Taking proactive steps toward readiness will minimize the anxiety you and your family may have about mobilization. Remember that as you depart for mobilization, it could be an emotional experience for your family. Discuss your upcoming deployment with them. If you need assistance your local work life office can provide support <http://www.uscg.mil/hr/cg111/>.

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- b. Review the reserve mobilization and demobilization online training course, which is available on the Coast Guard Learning Portal at <https://learning.uscg.mil/portal.asp>.
 - c. Keep your employer informed of your reserve status. Engage early and if your employer has questions on employer rights refer them to your Command or Employers Support of The Guard and Reserve (ESGR) at www.esgr.mil.
 - d. Ensure you have a complete set of uniforms.
 - e. Verify currency of your personal identification such as Military ID and Driver's license.
 - f. Have proof of vehicle insurance as well as vehicle registration.
 - g. Check the currency of your security clearance.
 - h. Verify your periodic health assessment is up to date, your immunization status is current, you are in compliance with Coast Guard weight requirements and your medical and dental readiness are current. If you have any pending medical requirements, they must be completed prior to mobilizing.
 - i. Ensure your mandated training requirements and annual screening questionnaire are complete.
 - j. For those of you who need ICS 300 or 400 training, there are classes convening as early as July 15, 2010.
 - k. If recalled, provide your spouse with a copy of your orders from Direct Access.
4. Once mobilized check to make sure:
- a. DEERS information is up to date.
 - b. Government credit card is activated with proper limits.
 - c. You have sufficient personal funds and civilian clothing for at least the first thirty days of your mobilization period.
 - d. You have copies of prescriptions, medications and any Immunizations received from your personal physician as well as spare eye wear.

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5. The Service Members Civil Rights Act covers you while mobilized. The act allows military members to suspend or postpone some civil obligations so that you will be able to devote your full attention to your military duties. More information on the act is available on the Coast Guard legal assistance web site www.uscg.mil/legal/la/legal_assistance_home.asp.
6. Taking charge of your personal readiness means not waiting until the notice of mobilization comes. Notify your command immediately if you have a deployment limiting medical condition (DLMC) such as pregnancy or broken limb, etc.
7. If you are unwilling or unable (long term) to answer the call, do not wait until you have a set of orders to advise your command. You will need to reconsider your commitment to the Coast Guard Reserve and take action prior to recall by contacting your unit and informing your supervisor. Junior enlisted members are encouraged to seek guidance and mentoring from senior enlisted personnel.
8. For reservists who are interested and able, Reference B details procedures for continuing on active duty to further support the Deepwater Horizon oil spill operations after completing your initial Title 14 orders.
9. Continue to monitor the Coast Guard Reserve web site at www.uscg.mil/reserve. We have a robust list of frequently asked questions that we continue to update, and you may email questions to cgreserve@uscg.mil.
10. Once again, thank you to all reservists, families and commands, whether you have mobilized, or are preparing to mobilize. Your nation needs you now more than ever. *Semper Paratus*.

B. Strengthening Partnerships - U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Staff Talks

ADM Bob Papp, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard And LTG
Robert L. Van Antwerp, Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army

1. As discussed in my Guiding Principles, strong partnerships are critical to enhancing our capability, effectiveness, and credibility in the maritime domain. The United States Coast Guard (USCG) and United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) held our first staff talks on 15 Apr 2010 to capitalize on our unique histories, can-do attitudes, and commitment to service, allowing us to strengthen our collaboration and improve our service delivery to the nation.

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2. USCG and USACE field units have a long history of partnering to meet our overlapping missions, specifically, navigation safety and disaster response. The objective of our recent meeting was to institutionalize our commonality, find areas where improved cooperation is in the best interest of the American public, and develop strategies for the future.
3. As a result of this meeting, we have directed our staffs to engage in a continued dialogue to exploit the strengths of our organizations. For example, we are sharing climate change research, exploring the feasibility of a common inland multi-purpose vessel design, and utilizing the Committee on The Marine Transportation System to develop an interagency e-navigation strategy. We are also engaging our respective staffs to coordinate our exercises and to establish an interagency team to explore ways to better integrate the USCG with USACE waterway planning projects to improve implementation of necessary aids to navigation modifications. By working together we can find ways to work smarter, providing a whole-of-government approach that is more efficient than working separately. To make this effort a success, USCG District and Sector Commanders as well as USACE Division and District Commanders should engage their corresponding peers in a frank dialogue of opportunities for improvement in their respective areas of responsibility.
4. The next set of annualized talks between our two organizations are tentatively scheduled for Spring 2011. Best practices as well as national policy clarification needs will be solicited for consideration in next years agenda.
5. This is a coordinated message between United States Coast Guard and United States Army Corps of Engineers.

C. Force Readiness Command Structure and Way Ahead

RADM Tim Sullivan, Commander, Force Readiness Command.

1. In the first year following its establishment, the Force Readiness Command has accomplished significant goals and has fulfilled its contract with the Coast Guard workforce.
2. As FORCECOM prepares to get underway for its second year, I have made a couple of small course changes. FORCECOM now has a Director of Staff and the numbered staff have been broken out into five named divisions for clarity:
 - a. Reserve Force Readiness Division (FC-1) led by CAPT Mark Mackey

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- b. Doctrine Division (FC-55) led by CAPT Greg Sundgaard
 - c. Training Division (FC-51) led by CAPT Brian Marvin
 - d. Exercise Support Division (FC-57) led by MR. Jeff Hughes
 - e. Assessment Division (FC-7) led by MS. Jean Dominguez
3. FORCECOM is ensuring our shipmates continue to operate safely and effectively through the development and utilization of a performance cycle that involves input from the operational commander, the training system and a functioning doctrine system. The FORCECOM Performance Cycle leverages formalized and standardized doctrine to develop techniques, tactics, and procedures (TTP) which we train to and operate from. Assessment visits ensure standardization exists. Most importantly FORCECOM ensures this performance cycle rapidly receives and incorporates lessons learned and innovations from the field so we continually improve, adapt and remain agile.
 4. We will continue to mature the performance cycle through development of four key initiatives:
 - a. Mishap Analysis: Reporting, Analysis and Rapid Implementation of Required Changes.
 - b. Operational Doctrine System and TTP implementation.
 - c. Enhanced Consolidated Assessment Visits.
 - d. Implementation of an Enterprise Learning Management System.
 5. I am proud of what this FORCECOM staff has accomplished in such a short time and know that we can continue to provide value by standing the watch shoulder to shoulder with our operational shipmates, providing them an agile workforce with standardized procedures.

D. Loss Of Coast Guard Aircraft 6017

ADMIRAL Bob Papp, Commandant

1. It is with deep regret and sadness that I report the crash of CG6017 today along the coast near La Push, WA. CG6017, flown by a four person crew from AIRSTA Sitka, was in transit from Astoria, Oregon, to Sitka, Alaska. A multi-agency search and rescue effort located the four crewmembers - one was severely injured and three were deceased.



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2. Although many of you want to know the names and status of the crew, we are following the appropriate notification procedures. We will release additional information to all of you as soon as possible.
3. Our thoughts and prayers are with the officers and crew of AIRSTA Sitka and their families. Our immediate focus is on providing the necessary care and support to the families of the crew and their shipmates. We will dispatch every resource and provide support services required to meet their needs. The Seventeenth District Commander, RADM Colvin, is headed to AIRSTA Sitka to stand by our shipmates and their families.
4. We will conduct an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the mishap to determine the cause and help prevent future incidents. CG6017 salvage and recovery efforts are underway.
5. Additionally, I am directing operational commanders to conduct a safety stand down for every AIRSTA in the CG. The details of which will be conveyed in separate correspondence, a personal for message to AIRSTA commanding officers.
6. I ask all of you to please take a moment to pause and reflect on your duties and responsibilities as you stand the watch.

E. Update 1 - Loss Of Coast Guard Aircraft 6017

ADMIRAL Bob Papp, COMMANDANT

1. Shipmates, I want to update the Coast Guard family on the status of the crew of CG6017. I am deeply saddened to inform you that the three fatalities in yesterday's mishap are LT Sean Kruger, AMT1 Adam Hoke, and AMT2 Brett Banks. The fourth air crewmember, LT Lance Leone, survived the crash and is currently recovering from injuries. The combined efforts of all those who reached out and responded, have provided some small measure of comfort for the families of the deceased and injured crew members and their command. In times like these, our service has always been able to count on each other for support. Its part of the manners of our profession.
2. LT Kruger, AMT1 Hoke and AMT2 Banks collectively leave careers which serve as examples of our services core values and underscore what America expects from its Coast Guard. Their sacrifice reflects our country's best values and principles.

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3. Further, I am deeply concerned with the number of serious aviation mishaps that have occurred in the past 22 months. I am addressing this separately and will update you in the future. For now, we should and must focus our attention on caring for and supporting our shipmates and their families.
4. Our service conducts hazardous missions every day both on and above the water, and ashore. The loss of these three exceptional Coast Guardsmen reinforces that fact. I ask that you remember this crew's sacrifice and honor their lives.
5. Information regarding memorial services will be passed when the details are available.

F. Solicitation For 2010 Coast Guard Foundation Award

MR. Curtis B. Odom, Director of Personnel Management.

1. This message solicits individual, crew or unit nominations to receive the Coast Guard Foundation Award for Heroism at the 30th Annual Salute to the Coast Guard Dinner in New York City on 5 October 2010. The Coast Guard Foundation sponsors the event to generate support and to increase public understanding of the Coast Guard. A selection will be made from among the nominations received to honor the most deserving for recognition.
2. Criteria:
 - a. All Coast Guard units/staff elements and personnel (Regular, Reserve, Auxiliary, and Civilian) are eligible for nomination.
 - b. Nominations may be made on behalf of an individual, crew, or unit while in a duty status, and for individuals who have performed heroic or lifesaving acts while on or off duty (nominees may have already been recognized through normal medals and awards process).
 - c. The period of consideration is 1 May 2009 to 30 April 2010.
3. Submission Procedure:
 - a. The next senior person in each nominee's chain of command should submit nominations via the applicable District/Area/HQ office having administrative control over the recommended individual or unit.

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- b. The nomination should be submitted in a memo format. The details of the action should not exceed two pages, and if visual video coverage (i.e., media) is available, please provide a copy. Each District/Area/HQ office should consolidate and prioritize recommendations and forward to Commandant (CG-1221) by 31 August 2010. Nominations received after 31 August will not be considered.

- c. HQ offices should submit nominations directly to Commandant (CG-1221). Advance copies of nominations via email are welcome. Advance copies should be directed to deneen.a.day@uscg.mil. Please direct questions to MS. Day at (202) 475-5386 (202) 475-5386 or CWO Hughes at (202) 475-5384 (202) 475-5384

G. 2009 USCG AUXILIARIST OF THE YEAR

RADM B.M. Salerno, Deputy Commandant For Operations

1. I am very pleased to announce the selection of Mr. Ryan C. Bank of Flotilla 39-6 in the Ninth District (Western Region) as the 2009 Auxiliarist of the Year.

2. Mr. Bank enrolled in the Auxiliary in August 2007 and immediately became an active participant demonstrating extraordinary enthusiasm and devotion to duty. He completed the extremely challenging qualification as Communications Watchstander at Coast Guard Station Wilmette Harbor, Illinois, and he has begun qualification as boat crewmember on the Coast Guard 25ft defender-class boat. Moreover, in his short auxiliary tenure, Mr. Bank dedicated over 535 hours of service across several auxiliary mission areas.

3. Mr. Bank made tremendous contributions to the Coast Guard through application of his Internet and social media skills. He recognized that the lack of phone lines and cell towers during times of distress and natural disaster, coupled with overloaded networks, could cause huge barriers to finding people in need. Drawing upon his extensive social media experience and creativity, Mr. Bank developed a unique social media monitoring application. This system effectively searched and monitored content submitted via social media platforms such as text messages, Facebook, Twitter, and other outlets. Content or posts could then be combined with the GPS latitude and longitude of the original messages and sent to a central computer location. After successfully using this application in the last few months of 2009 in support of Coast Guard SAR cases, Mr. Bank exercised superb initiative by applying it on a massive scale in response to the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti. He was able to scan several hundred thousand social media



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- feeds, target tens of thousands of distress messages, and help direct rescue resources to save at least 80 lives.
4. Mr. Bank applied remarkable skill and exceptional self-motivation to make significant and valuable contributions to the Coast Guard, Coast Guard Auxiliary, and many people in distress. I applaud his exemplary performance and spirit of service. He will be recognized for such during ceremonies at the Auxiliary National Conference in Phoenix, AZ on 28 Aug 10.
 5. The following Auxiliarists were finalists for selection and are congratulated for their outstanding performance and achievement:
 - a. Ms. Deborah A. Sawin, Flotilla 46, D1-Northern Region.
 - b. Mr. Stephen C. Johnson, Flotilla 12-4, D11-Southern Region.

H. Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Solicitation for Collateral Duty Public Affairs Officer Support

RADM Karl L. Schultz, Director for Governmental and Public Affairs.

1. Public Affairs efforts in support of the response to the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico require a sustainable response effort by the Coast Guard. Deepwater Horizon (DH) response positions have been filled by full time Public Affairs Officers across the service. However, as all available personnel have been deployed and are moving toward multiple deployments, it is increasingly difficult to support surge staffing requirements.
2. At the same time, the magnitude of this response presents an opportunity to provide experience in Joint Information Center (JIC) and Field Public Affairs Operations to a greater number of Coast Guard Officers. In an effort to meet near term staffing requirements and build the expertise of individuals and the service, collateral duty Public Affairs Officers are encouraged to volunteer for critical fill positions in support of Deepwater Horizon response operations.
3. This solicitation will run for 30 days commencing on 31 July 2010 and expiring on 31 August 2010. Those officers who have completed the one-week Coast Guard Public Affairs Officer Course will be given top consideration. Commandant (CG-0922) is also exploring just in time training options for those who have not taken this course. All officers seeking volunteer assignments



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should contact Jordan St John, Deputy Chief, Headquarters Public Affairs Staff,
at (202) 732-4625 (202) 732-4625.

I. Ensuring Jersey Shore Preparedness In Case BP Oil Hits East Coast Senator Robert Menendez

Coastal communities up and down the Atlantic, including many on the Jersey Shore, have raised concerns over the BP spill getting caught in the Gulf of Mexico's Loop Current and eventually affecting our beaches and waterways. The health of our shore is too important to be left to chance – not only are they natural treasures, but they are also how many families in our state earn a living. If there is any real risk to these communities from a spill that right now remains thousands of miles away, we need to know as soon as possible, and we also need to be sure that federal and state response agencies are fully prepared.

At my request, representatives of the Coast Guard and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration met with me and other members of the New Jersey Congressional delegation. We were told that the probability of oil from the BP spill reaching the Jersey Shore remains small, and the Coast Guard said that it is fully prepared for such an occurrence. However, it was also clear that an event such as a hurricane could change the direction of the oil, and for that reason, we have to stay vigilant. Also at my request, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has begun to make long-term projections about the direction of the oil that has spilled, which is important to monitor.

J. Seventy-First Anniversary of The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary ADMIRAL Bob Papp, COMMANDANT

1. On June 23, 2010, the Coast Guard Auxiliary will celebrate seventy-one years of faithful and dedicated service. Our Auxiliary shipmates have once again given generously of themselves to support Coast Guard personnel and missions, and to make our nations waterways safer for the more than 83 million recreational boaters who sail them. Coast Guard Auxiliary volunteers have literally taught generations of boaters how to properly equip and operate their vessels. Through their dedication to boating safety and their lifesaving activities, thousands of mariners are saved or assisted every year. The Coast Guard Auxiliary has honored our profession and advanced the outstanding service we provide our nation.
2. Over the past year, the Auxiliary has set the standard for organizational resilience and continuous improvement. By modernizing its national organization, the

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Auxiliary positioned itself to parallel the Coast Guard in its conduct of operations, training, policy development, and mission support. At the same time, it broadened its capabilities through a major expansion of its Trident program to provide greater support for the Coast Guards Marine Safety mission, the innovative application of social media and language interpretation skills to support rescue operations following the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti, and the formalization of the Auxiliary's Chef program to better support Coast Guard Food Service personnel. More recently, Auxiliarists have served in a range of capacities in support of Deepwater Horizon spill response operations, including over 5,000 hours checking the readiness of vessels participating in clean-up operations, monitoring deployed booms, supporting the area command center, and assisting with Public Affairs.

3. Our shipmates, the Coast Guard Auxiliary, have performed superbly, always standing a taut watch and exemplifying our core values. Please join me in recognizing their superb dedication by celebrating their seventy-first anniversary with your local Auxiliarists.

K. Important Diagnostic Checks

By Jeff Hemmel, Photo by Tom King; Boating Magazine

No matter if the problem seems big or small, qualified mechanics will always start with these five basic diagnostic checks. Ask about them to make sure they've done a thorough and accurate diagnosis.

Visual. Did they notice anything obvious? Ask about water in the bilge, hull damage and condition of the prop.

Fuel. What's the fuel pressure and quality? Are the filters or tank pickups clogged? Are there any signs of water in the fuel, or other contamination?



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Compression. Ask for the compression reading. Is it good? All the cylinders should be within 10 percent of each other.

Spark. How's the spark? A good, strong spark should be present in every cylinder. Check by removing a spark-plug wire and laying it on the engine block (or other ground). While a partner cranks the engine, you should see a spark jump from the boot.

Lubricants. Ask about the condition of oils, gear lubes and transmission fluid. Did they find any signs of contamination, water, metal shavings or fuel dilution?

L. How to Estimate the Range and Bearing to a Flare Using safety and good Samaritanship.

By Kevin Falvey, Boating Magazine



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On the night of April 16, 2004 patrons at a waterfront restaurant on Cedar Key, Florida, sighted a flare out over the water. They told the waitress, who called the Coast Guard. Inside an hour, a family of four, including two little kids, showed up at the dock clinging to their rescuers. They were cold and shaky, but safe.

The skipper had run aground and stranded his family in a remote area. Fortunately, one of the bistro patrons was a U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliarist and knew how to pinpoint the position from which the flare was fired. The techniques for accurately estimating the range and bearing to a flare are simple and should be part of every boater's bag of tricks. Learn them, and you may one day help save a life.

The Fist Method

Knowing the angle from your position to the flare's height of trajectory allows the Coasties to triangulate the estimated distance to the boat in distress. Your fist can be used as a poor man's sextant. Here's how:

Make a fist and extend your arm. Place your pinky on the horizon and note how many fingers above the horizon the flare is at the height of its trajectory. Each finger represents approximately 2 degrees of arc. For you math nuts, $\text{range} = 1.856 \times \text{elevation}/\text{angle}$. But all most of us need to do is to tell the authorities the finger count, or "percentage of fist," as it's known. Oftentimes, such as with hand-held flares, the signal will appear below the horizon. In that case, align your index finger with the horizon and provide the percentage of fist below the line.

The Clock Method

Note your current heading and position and, using the bow of your boat as 12:00, report the direction in which you sighted the flare as a time of day. Of course, if you can take actual bearing over your compass card, or with a hand-held compass, so much the better.

Flare Color

Red or orange flares are distress signals. White flares are "practice" flares, intended for testing flare guns. Green flares are often dropped from search and rescue (SAR) aircraft while looking for victims.

Your Next Move

When you sight a flare, help rescuers narrow down the search area by noting the following:



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- Your heading and position
- The time
- Flare color
- The interval between flares
- The duration of burn
- Flare trajectory (rising, falling, steady)

Call It In

If you sight a flare, get on the VHF and hail the Coast Guard. Would you want your flare ignored? Stay safe.

M. Two Cautions for EPIRB Owners

BoatU.S. Foundation

Two issues involving Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs) have underscored the importance of using correct maintenance and registration procedures to insure these life-saving devices work properly. The U.S. Coast Guard issued an alert last fall regarding replacement batteries after manufacturers reported finding unapproved batteries installed in their products. Special lithium batteries designed and certified for use in EPIRBs normally last five to six years and replacement should only be handled by an approved service-provider. The unapproved batteries found in an EPIRB returned to one manufacturer for service rendered the unit inoperable.

Owners making modifications to an EPIRB must have them approved by the manufacturer; improper replacement parts or batteries can lead to failure of the beacon when you need it most. To find an authorized service provider go to: www.acrelectronics.com for ACR, or for McMurdo (U.S. distributor), www.reveresupply.com.

In a separate incident involving the loss of a fishing vessel off the New Jersey coast last year, it was found that the EPIRB's registration numbers on file at NOAA, which administers EPIRB registration, did not match the numbers transmitted from the EPIRB's alert. The fishing vessel Lady Mary sank last year with six crew members lost, after an 87-minute delay in response because the unique 15-character code embedded in the vessel's EPIRB was off by one character, and the NOAA computer couldn't recognize the number.

NOAA has been conducting a verification effort to make sure numbers match for EPIRBs, Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs) and Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELTs), and have found at least 40 discrepancies. Boaters can check their numbers by going to the EPIRB registration website at www.beaconregistration.noaa.gov. If the

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numbers don't match, contact NOAA at 301-817-4515 or 888-212-7283. Owners should routinely update their information in the database. Normally, the person listed as the emergency contact is telephoned prior to sending out rescue to rule out a false alert. Last year, 195 lives were saved by the use EPIRBs. Anyone wishing to rent a GPS-enabled EPIRB do so from the BoatU.S. Foundation: www.BoatUS.com/Foundation/EPIRB.

N. Coast Guard Alert On DSC Radios

Elaine Dickinson, BoatU.S. Magazine

The auto channel-switching function on certain model DSC-VHF radios could create a safety hazard, to an alert issued by the U.S. Coast Guard. The auto could switch a skipper from a working channel in use to Channel 16 when VHF receives a DSC Mayday call, a distress call acknowledgement, or another DSC call in which a VHF channel number has been specified.

This switch of channels could happen without the skipper knowing; the operator could believe they're communicating on a working channel when they're on Channel 16.

This could happen at any time, so the Coast Guard recommends that the automatic channel-switching feature be disabled while an operator is maintaining a listening watch or communicating with another vessel.

All DSC radios certified by the Federal Communications Commission after March 25, 2009, are required to have disabling feature. To see a list of radio manufacturers or radios affected by this alert, go to: www.navcen.uscg.gov/marcomms/gmdss/dsc.htm.

O. Coast Guard Beefing Up Naval Security

BoatU.S. Magazine

You've heard of SUV's, but if you're cruising major U.S. ports in the few years, you're likely to see more of the Navy's new SEVs, Screening Escort Vessels, on the water. Although the 64-foot deep-vee monohulls carry U.S. Coast Guard markings and fly the Coast Guard ensign, they're actually owned by the U.S. Navy. As a domestic law-enforcement agency, the Coast the duty to accompany military vessels in and out of harbors, a 100-yard security zone – recreational boats, *stay back!*

Designed C. Raymond Hunt Associates, originator of the modern deep-vee hull, the boat's twin diesel-powered waterjets can push the top speed to more 30 knots. The fifth boat in the 12-vessel series delivered for service in Puget Sound in March, 2010.

P. Rescue 21 Goes Live in California

Elaine Dickenson, BoatU.S. Magazine

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California waters got a bit safer this spring as San Francisco and San Diego became the latest areas to get the U.S. Coast Guard's Rescue 21 system up and running. The new coastal radio system replaces the antiquated one but works the same for anyone using a standard marine VHF radio. Boaters who have a DSC-enabled VHF radio will be able to connect their radio to a GPS receiver and send an encoded mayday call at the press of a button. The system also includes better VHF coverage and signal strength, enhanced replay of broadcasts, highly accurate direction-finding, and the radio caller's identification number, which helps reduce hoax calls. The DSC features only work in areas where Rescue 21 is operating, now covering more than 35,000 miles of U.S. coastline.

"This system has already proven its capability at other Coast Guard sectors across the country. We look forward to having this technology in Southern California," said Petty Officer Thomas Winter, a senior search-and-rescue controller at Sector San Diego. "It will also cover the popular Mexican fishing spots immediately south of the border, further increasing our range of coverage."

Rescue 21 now covers the East and Gulf coasts, and the Pacific Northwest to San Francisco, CA. Later this year, Los Angeles/Long Beach is expected to be operational. Next year and beyond, the Great Lakes, Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, and Alaska will get Rescue 21 coverage.

Boat owners with DSC radios need to register to get their own nine-digit ID number called an MMSI. Registration information on the boat and the owner is fed into the Coast Guard's search-and-rescue database. MMSI registrations are available free from BoatU.S. through a partnership with the FCC and Coast Guard. Go to www.BoatUS.com for more details or to register online.