



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

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WebWatch Division 8, 5NR May 2012

A. *USCGC DALLAS* (WHEC 716) DECOMMISSIONING

Adm. Bob Papp, Commandant and Gold Ancient Mariner

1. On 30 March 2012, after 45 years of faithful service to our nation, Cutter *Dallas* was decommissioned. The *USCGC Dallas* was a Coast Guard high endurance cutter commissioned in 1967 at the Avondale Shipyard in New Orleans. Throughout her service, *CGC Dallas* has always lived up to her motto, *Semper Nostra Optima: Always Our Best*.
2. Named in honor of Alexander J. Dallas, Secretary of Treasury under President James Madison (1814-1816), WHEC 716 was the second ship in the Secretary-class cutter fleet and the sixth cutter to bear his name. *CGC Dallas* was launched from Avondale shipyards in Louisiana and commissioned on 26 Oct 1967. Originally home-ported in Governors Island, NY, in 1996 she shifted her homeport to Charleston, SC.
3. From her commissioning, *CGC Dallas* had a long proud history of serving her country. *Dallas* served seven combat patrols in Vietnam, where she conducted combat, logistics and humanitarian support missions. She served as the command ship during the Mariel boatlift, during which 125,000 Cuban refugees set sail for the shores of Florida. Following the space shuttle challenger disaster, *Dallas* assumed on-scene commander for search and rescue efforts. She represented the coast guard at the 50th Anniversary of the D-Day invasion. Soon after, *Dallas* served as the flagship of a flotilla of 27 Coast Guard cutters during operation Able Vigil, leading the response to another mass migration from Cuba. In 2008, while deployed with the U.S. Sixth Fleet, *Dallas* participated in operation assured delivery, providing humanitarian supplies to the people of the Republic of Georgia.
4. During her last year of service, *CGC Dallas* cruised all ahead full, sailing for 177 days and over 27,000 nautical miles in support of Western Caribbean JIATFS counter-drug operations, and seized 2647 kg of cocaine. I know that it was her hard working crews that made these extraordinary accomplishments possible. Their achievements that gave *CGC Dallas* life truly honored our profession.
5. To current and past *CGC Dallas* crews, plank owners, shellbacks (golden, emerald, horned, or otherwise), subjects of the golden dragon, blue noses, and even pollywogs, Well Done. Throughout 45 years of service, *Dallas* and her crews admirably served the Coast Guard and the nation. Congratulations and *Bravo Zulu*.



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B. EARTH DAY 2012-COAST GUARD LEADERSHIP

A. Curry, Jr., Deputy Assistant Commandant for Engineering and Logistics

1. As the Environmental and Energy Executive and Senior Sustainability Officer for the Coast Guard, I encourage all Coast Guard personnel to make this forty-second anniversary of Earth Day an opportunity to lead in raising awareness and inspiring action for a sustainable environment.
2. With increased energy costs, growing environmental concerns in the Arctic, and our expanding missions, our duty to protect the marine and coastal ecosystem is clear. As a result, major initiatives have been undertaken within the Coast Guard to mitigate greenhouse gases (GHG) and pollutants that result from Coast Guard activities. Together, we are achieving the goals of preserving our natural environment for future generations.
3. Coast Guard units and Commands should use this occasion to cultivate environmental awareness and community partnerships and outreach. Every CG mission and its support element have a responsibility to respond to this challenge. As part of that responsibility we must diligently protect our valuable natural resources by: increasing our recycling efforts (since landfills emit greenhouse gases), further incorporating green procurement practices, and seeking alternative and renewable energy applications both ashore and at sea.
4. Earth Day is celebrated on 22 April. I offer a few suggestions as you look for more ways to lead your unit and community efforts: electronics reuse and recycling, energy efficient lighting, local cleanup drives, and selecting a unit theme to emphasize, e.g. sustainability.
5. Also for Earth Day, please view some artistic posters promoting coast guard sustainability efforts by visiting the link at <https://cgportal.uscg.mil/lotus/myquickr/coast-guard-energy-pogram>. I applaud your leadership to further our goals.

C. VADM BRICE-O'HARA'S FAREWELL TO THE COAST GUARD

To the Women and Men of the Coast Guard:

Today, I will retire from active duty and relinquish the Office of the Vice Commandant to Vice Admiral Currier, a good friend and colleague whose commitment to the Coast Guard is unquestionable. Before I am relieved of my duties and responsibilities, I want to reach out to you one final time as Vice Commandant to express my thanks for the inspiring Service you provide to our Nation every day.

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I feel pride, gratitude, a little sadness, and a lot of optimism.

Pride, in reflecting on both what has changed and what has remained constant in the 37-1/2 years since I completed OCS and started my career. Compared to then, today's Coast Guard is more important to the Nation's maritime safety, security and prosperity. Our missions and responsibilities have expanded greatly. Coast Guard men and women are expected to know more and do more - and, earlier in their careers. Today's Coast Guard is inclusive, offering significant opportunities to every person who serves. At the same time, many things have not changed: the great pride, dedication to duty, and willingness to sacrifice that were evident then are still thriving now.

I am grateful for the privilege of adding my Coast Guard service to yours and to that of those who came before us...we are each links in the long blue line that is our heritage and legacy. "Thankful" is appropriate, because, if you are like me, you can readily credit your successes to the mentors, leaders, and shipmates who support us every day. These are the people who encourage and push us, who serve as role models, and who help us realize and develop our full potential. I am glad for the trailblazers who opened doors of opportunity and kept them open for others to follow. And of course, our family members and loved ones are part of the extended Coast Guard family, and enable the work we do - we never say thank you often enough to them.

The sadness I feel in departing doesn't withstand the bright hope I see for the Coast Guard. Our Commandant has charted a solid course for the future and knows he can count on every one of his shipmates (you) to get us there.

Vice Admiral Currier is well up to the job - he brings experience, wisdom, enthusiasm, and determination with him to this position and is already a solid member of the Commandant's leadership team.

I'm confident that each of you will continue to improve the Coast Guard, to keep its best traits intact, and to make it even more valued by the Nation in the future. I know you will continue to accomplish great things, and I am confident that you will support and mentor the next generation of Coast Guard men and women who will add their service to ours.

Thank you to every active duty member, reservist, civilian employee, Auxiliarist, retiree, supporting contractor, and your families.

Semper Paratus!



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D. 45FT RESPONSE BOAT-MEDIUM HEAVY WEATHER CAPABILITY

VADM B. Salerno, Deputy Commandant for Operations

1. Purpose. The purpose of this message is to announce the heavy weather capabilities of the 45ft Response Boat-Medium (R-M).
2. Background
 - a. The operational requirements document required the RB-M to be mission capable in up to 8 foot seas, 30 knot winds and survivable up to 12 foot seas and 50 knot winds. The RB-M was evaluated at the National Motor Lifeboat School (NMLBS), STA Castle Hill, and STA Honolulu for operations up to 12ft seas, 50kt winds with no surf conditions. In addition, COMDT (CG-4) conducted an evaluation of the RB-M expected service life and the effects of heavy weather (HWX) use. The results of these evaluations support the use of the RB-M in HWX.
 - b. COMDT (CG-731), FORCECOM (FC-T), AND NMLBS collaborated to develop an Interim Exportable HWX Training Course. This was a HWX Coxswain Course (Course Code 502444), which provided a Train the Trainer component for HWX units with two RB-M's for this HWX season. The course was conducted by NMLBS instructors and subject matter experts who are most familiar with operating the RB-M in HWX. Members who attended this course are authorized, once approved by their CO/OIC, to train and sign off PQS.
3. Discussion
 - a. Since the RB-M HWX capability is newly approved, a systematic roll out of HWX units authorized to operate the RB-M in HWX parameters listed below will be implemented while training and safety aspects are assessed.
 - b. Currently, only STA Honolulu, STA Cape May, STA Castle Hill, and STA Juneau are authorized, with appropriate competency, to operate and train with the RB-M in HWX.
 - c. As additional units are provided training, I anticipate continued roll out to other HWX Stations.
4. Revised RB-M Operational Limits.
 - a. Only the HWX Stations who have received training from authorized personnel, followed certification requirements, and have a waiver from COMDT (CG-731) to operate and train on the RB-M in HWX are authorized to operate the RB-M in up to 12ft seas and 50kt winds with certified HWX Coxswains.

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- b. When operating in HWX it is required that the aft door and all windows are closed and that personnel are strapped in and wearing appropriate PPE.
 - c. All other HWX designated units with a RB-M shall limit operations up to 8ft seas and 30kt winds, until HWX training requirements are met and specifically designated in writing by COMDT (CG-731).
- D. The RB-M shall not be operated in surf.

E. SEASON TWO PREMIERE OF COAST GUARD ALASKA ON THE WEATHER CHANNEL

RDML K. L. Schultz, Director of Governmental And Public Affairs

1. This ALCOAST alerts all service members to the forthcoming season premiere of Coast Guard Alaska. Season two of the popular and critically-acclaimed prime time television show will premiere on Wednesday, 18 April 2012 on the Weather Channel Network. Please check local listings to confirm the exact time.
2. Background: the final episode of Coast Guard Alaska season one aired in mid-January on the Weather Channel Network. The show reached approximately 10 million U.S. viewers cumulatively and provided seven episodes which increased public awareness of your services operations in Alaska. Bolstered by the success of season one, the Weather Channel purchased thirteen new episodes for seasons two and three. These thirteen episodes are being filmed in the District Seventeen Area of Responsibility (AOR) from January through late July 2012.
3. Future: the continued success of this new series led to the creation of yet another reality-documentary show focused on the U.S. Coast Guard. The Weather Channel purchased from Al Roker Entertainment thirteen one-hour episodes of Coast Guard Florida in February. The new show is currently filming in the District Seven AOR from early April through October. That series will premiere on the Weather Channel in prime time hours during Autumn 2012. The premiere date will be posted on the services official blog, Coast Guard Compass. To view this, please visit www.uscg.mil.
4. External Affairs: It is unprecedented for our service to have 26 hours of dedicated prime time programming in one calendar year. This remarkable development builds on the significant efforts of all our service members who actively engage in external affairs: from local community and port partner engagement, to local and national media interaction, to the burgeoning capabilities and opportunities with social media, and to our continuing efforts with public education through support to major motion pictures and television shows. The External Affairs Mission is a team effort and you all are part of this team.

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5. Relationships: Noteworthy is the strength of the relationship between the U.S. Coast Guard, Al Roker Entertainment and The Weather Channel Network. Publicity surrounding the two series and consequently educating the public on our members, missions and assets in District Seventeen, District Seven and throughout the service reached approximately 500 individual news outlets including websites, blog posts, radio interviews, television interviews, newspaper articles, and magazine articles. Further, when Coast Guard Alaska premiered in November 2011, the Weather Channel worked with the Coast Guard Foundation independently to generate a large contribution that ultimately benefits our members. Also, Mr. Al Roker voluntarily supported a public service announcement to inaugurate this year's campaign for Coast Guard Mutual Assistance. To see this, please visit www.cgmahq.org.
6. Insight: U.S. Coast Guard support to entertainment productions is a complex process. In coordinating support to these projects, our Entertainment Liaisons in Los Angeles adhere to strict criteria, and to ensure this support is provided at no additional cost to the U.S. Taxpayer. The ultimate goal is to educate the American public on their Coast Guard. These collaborations require patience, experience, and professionalism. For every successful project on television that contains Coast Guard content, there are literally hundreds of unsuccessful proposals for documentaries, episodic shows, and feature length films. Once a project is confirmed for distribution on a television network, it takes almost 300 minutes of filming to capture one minute of finished production that airs. When our service members watch a finished project on air, they should appreciate the work by all our operators and support personnel involved, most of who do not appear on camera.
7. Conclusion: We remain very proud of all our men and women serving in District Seventeen and District Seven for the great work they do every day and for representing us to the public. Entertainment projects like Coast Guard Alaska and Coast Guard Florida are invaluable for they tell our story directly to the American public on prime time. No matter which members, communities, commands, assets, and missions are aired, the story our fellow Americans see is the story of their Coast Guard.

F. FOUNDATION FOR COAST GUARD HISTORY (FCGH) AWARDS

RDML Karl L. Schultz, Director of Governmental and Public Affairs

1. The Foundation for Coast Guard History has announced the winners of the 2011 FCGH Awards.
2. The Unit History Awards go to the Coast Guard units, one large and one small, that best further public awareness of current activities and honor the proud and rich heritage of the U.S. Coast Guard.

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- a. The Large Unit Award is awarded to USCG Air Station Clearwater. The volunteers at Air Station Clearwater restored HU-16E Goat CGNR 1023 after rescuing it from the now closed Pate Aviation Museum in Fort Worth, Texas. The restoration coincided with the 60th anniversary of the introduction of the Grumman HU-16 albatross into the Coast Guard fleet and the 35th anniversary of the units move from St. Petersburg to Clearwater, as well as the Centennial of Naval Aviation. CG-1023 now commemorates the crew of the CG-1240, lost in the fog on a rescue attempt on 6 March 1967.
 - b. The Small Unit Award is awarded to Station Hatteras Inlet. Station Hatteras Inlet has helped reinstitute an American pastime, the Beach Cart Drill as conducted by the crews of the United States Life-Saving Service in the years preceding the creation of the Coast Guard. The all-volunteer crew works in conjunction with the Chicamacomico Lifesaving Museum to present the drill twice per week using only tools available to 19th century lifesaving crews. The unit also works in conjunction with the North Carolina center for the advancement of teachers in presenting an annual one-week Guardians of the Sea seminar for visiting teachers from throughout the state, and participates in the Chicamacomico Lifesaving Museums Annual Heroes Day Celebration, among other ongoing projects dedicated to the heritage of the service both locally and nationally.
3. Book Awards.
- a. The winner of the best book in the category of Coast Guard Heritage was C. Douglas Kroll's book - A Coast Guardsman's History of The U.S. Coast Guard. The Award Committee found his book to be a unique exploration of era-specific heroes, well-researched, an easy read and an unprecedented contribution to the field of Coast Guard history.
 - b. The winner of the best book in the category of lighthouses was Steve Murray's - guardians of the Hereford inlet. The award committee described his book as a prime example of how an American lighthouse history book should be written, detailing both sides of the maritime disaster prevention and search and rescue response story.
4. The Foundation For Coast Guard History also recognizes individuals who have made important contributions in preserving and presenting the Coast Guards rich and varied heritage. The recipient of this years' Heritage Award for Achievement is Robert M. Green, USCG Auxiliary. Mr. Green, the Graphics Branch Chief of the USCG Auxiliary National Staff, took it upon himself to create a Coast Guard Heraldry Manual. His work is comprehensive, professionally written and the first attempt at the establishment of Coast Guard-Wide Standards of Heraldry Guidelines to be adhered to in all situations, including use by the media.



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5. The Foundation for Coast Guard History was formed on 4 August 1999 as a non-profit organization. Its objectives are to provide support for the Coast Guard Historian, encourage studies relating to the history of our service, and accord recognition to individuals and organizations who contribute to the goals of the FCGH. Inquiries and suggestions should be forwarded to the Foundation for Coast Guard History via their website: <http://www.fcgh.org>.

G. ASSAULT AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH AND RELEASE OF THE COAST GUARD SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE (SAPR) POLICY MANUAL VADM Sally Brice-O'Hara, Acting Commandant

1. The President has proclaimed April as Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. The goal is to raise awareness about sexual violence and to educate Coast Guard military and civilian personnel on how to prevent and respond to sexual assault. Although the month of April is a time for increased public focus on sexual assault awareness and prevention, we have a continuing duty to eradicate sexual assault from the Coast Guard.
2. As I stated in Shipmates 19, the crime of sexual assault injures people, undermines morale, degrades readiness and damages mission performance. Each incident of sexual assault is a deliberate act that violates law, policy and service standards. We will not tolerate this behavior in the Coast Guard. We will intervene to prevent or halt these acts when they are occurring. We will investigate and discipline those who have violated law and service policy. We will insist that all of our shipmates live by our core values. Duty demands courage, and eliminating sexual assault within our ranks is everyone's responsibility.
3. Sexual assault is in direct contravention to my guiding principle that we respect our shipmates, and is incompatible with our core values of honor, respect and devotion to duty. Our enduring goal is to eliminate sexual assault in our Coast Guard.
4. Today, the Deputy Commandant for Mission Support (DCMS) promulgated and is releasing the new Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month and release of the Coast Guard Sexual Assault Prevention And Response (SAPR) Policy Manual. The SAPR program establishes comprehensive policy and procedures designed to halt sexual assault in our service by building a culture of prevention through increased education and training, while also enhancing response capability, victim support, reporting procedures, and accountability. This manual is the culmination of a multi-year effort to put in place a more effective SAPR program across the service.
5. In 2011, the Vice Commandant chartered a SAPR Task Force co-chaired by DCMS and the Master Chief Petty Officer of The Coast Guard (MCPOCG). The task force is providing recommendations to improve policy, doctrine, communications, education, training,

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investigation and prosecution, and workforce climate and culture aspects that pertain to sexual assault. The task forces work has informed the new sexual assault awareness and prevention month and release of the Coast Guard Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Policy Manual and its final report will be used to further improve the Coast Guard SAPR program.

6. A digital version of the SAPR Policy Manual is available at:
<http://www.uscg.mil/worklife/sapr.asp>.

H. ANNOUNCEMENT OF 2012 USCG ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AWARD WINNERS

RADM Ronald J. Rabago, Assistant Commandant for Engineering and Logistics

1. On behalf of the Commandant, I am pleased to announce the winners of the 2012 CG Environmental Sustainability Award for their achievements during 2011. These awards are divided into four categories and identify significant achievement and commitment in each category. The awards, selected by a panel of cross-program experts, recognize superior environmental stewardship encompassing multiple categories of sustainability, energy, and environmental excellence.
2. Individual award: Ms. Ashley Cordi was selected by the awards panel for her outstanding achievement at the Coast Guard Academy. The Academy's sustainability program was significantly improved by augmenting the Qualified Recycling Program (QRP), by expanding electronics reuse, incorporating and benefitting from the sale of high-value construction and demolition materials (previously disposed of at a cost), and reducing 2008 base year solid waste generation by 69 percent. She also developed Academy Sustainability Policy and initiated a comprehensive environmental management program which included establishing a Cadet Sustainability Club that contributed to overall environmental awareness at the Academy and fostered community outreach projects. Additionally the cadets received national recognition in the Collegiate Recyclmania Competition, coordinated the restoration of an endangered water bird nesting area that had been destroyed by Hurricane Irene, and garnered much community appreciation due to these initiatives.
3. Team award: NESU Honolulu is this year's winner. Their Industrial Green Team significantly mitigated very costly utility rates by integrating a comprehensive array of energy saving devices and projects at the unit. These included installing solar powered heat pumps and tankless hot water heaters, retrofitting their perimeter lighting system with low demand-high performance lighting that actually improved light distribution with less cost, substituting low-flow water fixtures throughout Air Station Barbers Point, which reduced significant water and sewage costs, and provided educational events to local schools on the concepts of sustainability.



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4. **Small Unit Award:** The Rescue 21 Project Resident Office in Alaska was selected for their thorough research, testing, and then installation of a wind power turbine at a National Distress And Response System Repeater Site, reducing on-site propane use by 30 percent. They also partnered with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) to prototype fuel cell use at remote transmitting sites. This led to reduced air pollution, extension of maintenance intervals by increasing battery life, and in turn reduced the frequency of helicopter maintenance visits. Ultimately the unit expects to eliminate most propane use and significantly reduce their overall carbon footprint.
5. **Large Unit Award:** Base Portsmouth, Virginia excelled in multiple areas of environmental stewardship. Their recycling program recycled over 233,000 pounds of mixed scrap, cardboard, and brass and lead from the firing range, as well as batteries, cell phones, and reused cooking oil for heating buildings. Their natural resources program partnered with a non-profit preservation group to restore and maintain a 5-acre reforestation area by installing four rain gardens and permeable pavers behind the galley, which reduced storm water runoff. Their energy program partnered with the local utility to shed two megawatts of load during peak summer months by replacing windows and installing smart energy meters and solar panels on several buildings. In 2011, state inspectors found the unit to be in full compliance with their air permit and waste water discharge permit.
6. I congratulate all the winners and applaud all the nominees of the 2012 Environmental Sustainability Award Program. I appreciate the many contributions made to advance the sustainability program and to promote environmental and energy stewardship throughout the Coast Guard. All of you are making a real difference in our Coast Guard. Well done.

I. DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR OPERATIONS VERSION 3.0 IMPLEMENTATION

VADM B.M. Salerno, Deputy Commandant for Operations

1. This ALCOAST announces COMDT (CG-DCO) Version 3.0 HQ Organizational Adjustments, effective 06 May 2012.
2. **Background.** Directions to complete COMDT (CG-DCO) Version 3.0 implementation, including vertically aligning Prevention and Response functions from the sector through Headquarters levels, approving the COMDT (CG-DCO) Version 3.0 realignment plan. Version 3.0 is the final step in a series of COMDT (CG-DCO) refinements that integrate Operations Policy, Doctrine, Planning, International Affairs, and Capabilities under a single Deputy Commandant and align structurally with the USCG Sector Standard Architecture.



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3. Changes. COMDT (CG-DCO) Version 3.0 makes several resource neutral changes that will achieve vertical alignment with the Sectors, accommodate new CG Authorization Act requirements, and incorporate lessons learned from the recent "Deepwater Horizon" oil spill. The following links provide the COMDT (CG-DCO) version 3.0 organizational diagram, nomenclature change crosswalk, and current staff contact information at <https://cgportal.uscg.mil/delivery/Satellite/DCO>. Significant changes include:
 - a. Upgrades COMDT (CG-DCO) to a Vice Admiral position. This was included in the CG Authorization Act of 2010 and has been implemented.
 - b. Elevates the current COMDT (CG-5) flag to a COMDT (CG-DCO) Deputy position. The Deputy provides a Senior Ops Flag to share DCO external representation and outreach and serve as DCO Integrator for policy, doctrine, capability, strategy, and resource issues.
 - c. Elevates the Directors of Prevention and Response to Assistant Commandants, COMDTs (CG-5P) and (CG-5R) respectively. Elevating prevention and response reemphasizes the importance of these career paths, which are specified in the CG Authorization Act of 2010.
 - d. Establishes four CGHQ Directors to better align with the Sectors Incident Management, Enforcement, Inspections, and Waterways Management Divisions. In addition to developing policy and doctrine, the following four directors will serve as HQ stewards for these core operational communities and skill sets.
 - 1) Director of Incident Management and Preparedness Policy COMDT (CG-5RI), with subordinate offices of Environmental Response Policy, Search and Rescue Policy, and Crisis and Contingency Planning and Exercise Policy. This SES Director reports to COMDT (CG-5R) and will ensure an integrated approach to all hazards incident management and preparedness. This SES will also provide the senior level continuity needed to establish and reinforce crisis/incident management as a Coast Guard core competency.
 - 2) Director of Law Enforcement, Maritime Security and Defense Operations Policy COMDT (CG-5RE), with subordinate offices of Law Enforcement Policy, Maritime Security Response Policy, and Counterterrorism and Defense Ops Policy. This O-6 Director aligns with Sector enforcement and reports to COMDT (CG-5R).
 - 3) Director of Inspections and Compliance COMDT (CG-5PC), with subordinate Offices of International and Domestic Port Security, Auxiliary And Boating Safety, Commercial Vessel Compliance, Port Facility Compliance, and Investigations and Casualty Analysis. This O-6 Director aligns with Sector Inspections and Compliance and reports to COMDT (CG-5P).

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- 4) Director of Marine Transportation Systems Management COMDT (CG-5PW), with subordinate offices for Bridges, Waterways and Ocean Policy, and Navigation Systems. This SES Director (formerly COMDT (CG-55) aligns with Sector Waterways Management and reports to COMDT (CG-5P).
 - e. Shifts the reporting chain for the Director Of Commercial Regulations and Standards COMDT (CG-5PS) to the Assistant Commandant for Prevention COMDT (CG-5P).
 - f. Employs a combination of numbers and letters for better recognition of COMDT (CG-DCO) Assistant Commandants and Directors for both internal and external customers, e.g. COMDT (CG-SAR) for Search and Rescue, COMDT (CG-MER) for Environmental Response, COMDT (CG-MLE) for Law Enforcement.
4. These changes are intended to provide a standard organizational architecture, a clear division of labor, and operational program and career specialty alignment from policy doctrine development in headquarters to mission execution in the field. As with all previous versions of the COMDT (CG-DCO) organization, Version 3.0 changes were created by reprogramming existing COMDT (CG-DCO) resources.

J. MANDATED ANNUAL CG INFORMATION SYSTEMS SECURITY (ISS) USER AWARENESS

RADM R.E. Day, Assistant Commandant for Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Information Technology

1. The CG ISS User Awareness course is an annual mandated training requirement to be completed between 1 Aug 11 and 30 Jun 12. All CG Standard Workstation (CGSW) users (active, reserve, civilian employee, contractor, non-appropriated funds employees, and auxiliary) with active user accounts must complete the course. Individuals who do not have an active CGSW user account are exempt.
2. 30 June to 31 July is the compliance and reporting period. All CGSW users are strongly encouraged to complete the course as soon as possible in order to minimize burden on host servers toward the completion deadline. Any user whose annual period expires during July should complete the training prior to 30 June.
3. The CG ISS User Awareness course meets standards for personnel security awareness as promulgated by executive mandate. The web-based course guides users through information systems security as it relates to proper network access (including Common Access Card (CAC)), e-mail, social engineering, internet, intranet, and system use.

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4. All active CGSW account holders shall complete ISS training through the Learning Management System (LMS).
 - a. From a CGSW, personnel can access the LMS through CGPortal (<https://cgportal.uscg.mil>). ISS training can be located by selecting Training and Education, Learning Management System, Course Catalog, Mandated Training and then selecting the MT-A catalog.
 - b. The training can be accessed through CGPortal from home. This requires the use of CAC and CAC reader.
 - c. Upon successful completion of the course, the LMS will transfer your completion information to Training Management Tool (TMT)/CG Business Intelligence (CGBI). This process takes 48 to 72 hours. Completion certificates are no longer provided.
5. Contractors required to take ISS training shall normally complete ISS training through LMS. Contractors that have access to a CGSW shall take ISS training in the LMS by following the steps outlined in Paragraph 4a. Upon completion of the training, contractors shall print out a copy of their LMS transcript (found in MY ACCOUNT) and provide a copy of it to their Contracting Officer Representative (COR).
6. A CD-based version of the course is available for users or units unable to complete the course via methods in Paragraph 4 or 5 above. This method of course delivery requires manual entry into TMT or notification to COR.
7. Users who have already successfully completed their ISS User Awareness between 1 Aug 11 and the date of this message are not required to complete the course again until after 1 Aug 12. The DHS and DOD annual ISS course may be substituted for this course, but it is the responsibility of the user to provide proof of completion to their Training Officer who will update TMT (Military personnel and government employees) or to their COR.
8. The ISSO is the key point of contact for any questions pertaining to ISS User Awareness. Other questions related to training methods, including questions relating to the e-learning tools, should be addressed to your Training Officer.
9. Details pertaining to the ISS User Awareness course, FISMA scorecards, and other IA topics can be found on the CGPortal CG IA collaboration page.
10. Any issues and/or problems associated with completing ISS training (i.e., CACRAS, TMT does not show I completed the training, etc.) shall be reported by submitting a CGFIXIT ticket.



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K. CDR RAY EVANS OUTSTANDING COXSWAIN TROPHY ANNOUNCEMENT

RDML Mark E. Butt, Assistant Commandant for Capability

1. I am pleased to announce BM1 Casey M. Wardynski from Coast Guard Station Point Allerton as the winner of the 2011 CDR Ray Evans Outstanding Coxswain Trophy. This prestigious annual award recognizes a Coast Guard Coxswain who demonstrated sustained superior performance, exceptional boat handling skills, and exemplary leadership.
2. BM1 Wardynski displayed superb leadership, professional abilities, and devotion to duty while serving as a Certified Pursuit Coxswain on the CB-OTH and CB-L while assigned to the Deck Department onboard the *CGC SENECA (WMEC-906)*.
3. BM1 Wardynski demonstrated exemplary coxswain skills and sound judgment while performing non-compliant vessel pursuit and other law enforcement operations in diverse and challenging conditions from Maine to the Caribbean. BM1 Wardynski's key role in the first ever interdiction of a self-propelled semi-submersible (SPSS) in the Caribbean Sea is most noteworthy. He planned and briefed a complex multi-leg 140 NM transit in close proximity to shoal water and foreign territorial seas. The five hour intercept required numerous on-the-spot adjustments based on on-scene conditions and constant communication with the cutter and maritime patrol aircraft. Once on-scene, BM1 Wardynski coordinated a simultaneous intercept with *SENECA*'s embarked helicopter which caused the operators of the SPSS to immediately take actions to scuttle their vessel. With remarkable clarity of thought and outstanding judgment, BM1 Wardynski coordinated the boarding team's actions while directing his crew's safe retrieval efforts. His leadership and actions that day resulted in the interdiction of 6.4 metric tons of cocaine (valued at over 172M dollars), the arrest and prosecution of five drug smugglers, and the removal of a drug smuggling vessel from service. During the same patrol, BM1 Wardynski was underway as the Rescue Boat Coxswain during nighttime helicopter operations when a lifeline stanchion unexpectedly failed and three of his shipmates fell overboard. With the helo on deck and rotors still spinning, the cutter was delayed in its response until the deck was secured. BM1 Wardynski reacted instantly to the situation by locating the chemical personal marker lights in the darkness and quickly recovered all three crewmembers, turning a potential tragedy into a successful recovery with only minor injuries. BM1 Wardynski's professionalism and skills were similarly exercised in the harsh conditions of a winter patrol in New England where he served as coxswain during more than forty living marine resources boardings in sub-freezing temperatures. His adroit execution of maneuvers around all sizes of fishing vessels, in often choppy North Atlantic seas, facilitated the safe embarkation and debarkation of boarding teams and supported high-level objectives in the region related to the conservation of fishery resources. More importantly, BM1 Wardynski recognized an opportunity to develop the next generation of boat operations professionals and capitalized on the environment to train coxswains and crew in the most challenging conditions, leading to a team of highly proficient boat crew able to handle strenuous operations. In addition to his acumen as a coxswain, BM1 Wardynski provided a significant

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leadership role as the leading petty officer of *SENECA*'s deck department and as a qualified deck watch officer, while ensuring sustained mission capability through the certification of two coxswains and three boat crew members. BM1 Wardynski's judgment, experience, and commitment to excellence were integral to *SENECA*'s many patrol successes. His example is a standard to emulate for boat forces professionals throughout the service.

4. Each year it is extremely difficult to select only one recipient from the superb group of Petty Officers who are nominated for this award. Honorable mention goes to the following finalists:
 - a. BM3 Matthew Foussadier, STA Bodega Bay, and
 - b. BM1 Matthew Lowry, CGC MOHAWK (WMEC-913).
5. I am pleased with the number of exceptional quality nomination packages that were submitted and commend all those who took time to acknowledge the many outstanding coxswains we have throughout boat forces. The nominees for this years' award are listed below in alphabetical order:
 - a. BM1 Seth Aldrich, STA Woods Hole,
 - b. BM1 Bradley Barley, SMTC,
 - c. BM2 Joseph D'Amico, CGC BEAR,
 - d. BM1 Thomas D'Amore, STA Buffalo,
 - e. BM3 Caloeb Gandy, STA Jonesport,
 - f. BM2 Ian Kennedy, STA New York,
 - g. BM1 Andrew Kulig, CGC DILIGENCE,
 - h. BM2 Aaron Phillips, CGC BAYBERRY, and
 - i. BM1 Chase Ryan, CGC VIGOROUS.
6. Presentation of the 2011 CDR Ray Evans Outstanding Coxswain Trophy will be coordinated via SEPCOR.
7. The selection panel members are listed below:
 - a. CAPT Timothy Espinoza, COMDT (CG-731),
 - b. LCDR Jason Ingram, BFCO Yorktown,
 - c. LTJG David Ruhlig, COMDT (CG-731),
 - d. CWO Thomas Guthlein, Ancient Keeper,
 - e. CWO Mark Davenport, COMDT (CG-731),
 - f. CWO Fred Eshelman, Sector Boston,
 - g. CWO David Emerson, COMDT (CG-751),
 - h. BMCM Michael Leavitt, MCPOCG,
 - i. MKCM Terence Vanderwerf, DCO CMC,

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J. BMCM John DiCave, BM RFMC, and

K. BMCS Nicholas Pupo, CG Academy.

L. COAST GUARD SOCIAL MEDIA HANDBOOK

RDML K. L. Schultz, Director of Governmental and Public Affairs

1. This ALCOAST announces the release of the Coast Guard Social Media Handbook.
2. The Handbook is a guide to help all Coast Guard members and employees use social media responsibly whether in an official, unofficial or personal capacity. Summarized in eight pages, the Handbook includes graphics, checklists and a multimedia release decision tree.
3. The Handbook is not meant to be all inclusive. Rather it combines public affairs, operations security, intelligence, legal and information technology guidance as they pertain to social media into a useful and readily accessible job aid.
4. Official distribution of this Handbook will be available electronically via the Defense Video and Imagery Distribution System (DVIDS) publication site at <http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/441/coast-guard-social-media-handbook> and on the CG Portal at <https://cgportal.uscg.mil/delivery/Satellite/CG092/socialmedia>.
5. No paper distribution of this Handbook is planned although units are authorized to reproduce the Handbook as they desire.
6. Additional social media guidance and references, including a field guide on how to manage official social media sites, are available in the CG Portal at <https://cgportal.uscg.mil/delivery/Satellite/CG092/socialmedia>.

M. PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

VADM Sally Brice-O'Hara, Vice Commandant

1. Each year the President and Congress designate the first full week of May as Public Service Recognition Week in honor of the men and women who serve America as federal, state, county and local government employees. Every day, federal employees work hard to improve the lives of Americans, and their accomplishments are as important as they are diverse. Public Service Recognition Week highlights the accomplishments of the dedicated public servants who work tirelessly on behalf of all Americans and who rarely get the credit they deserve.



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2. Over the past year, Coast Guard women and men - Active Duty, Reserve, Civilian and Auxiliarists alike - continued to deliver premier service to the public. Five hundred and twenty-two civilians volunteered for the DHS Surge Capacity Force initiative to augment FEMAs workforce during major disasters or emergencies and support Coast Guard and Department of Homeland Security missions. In the Midwest, Coast Guard Disaster Assistance Response Teams augmented by Coast Guard Auxiliarists and reservists were among the first to respond to residential areas impacted by severe flooding. In the Caribbean, Coast Guard medium endurance cutters and seagoing buoy tenders interdicted and supported the multi-agency recovery of self-propelled semi-submersible vessels designed to deliver tons of cocaine to our shores, streets and schools. In the Arctic, the Coast Guard Cutter *HEALY* broke through 300 miles of Bering Sea ice to make possible the delivery of 1.3 million gallons of fuel to the 3,600 people of Nome, Alaska. Reservists assigned to Port Security Units continue to stand the watch overseas. Every day, Coast Guard employees across our Nation and beyond are hard at work, providing maritime safety, security, and stewardship.
3. Earlier today, Secretary Napolitano sent a message to DHS employees expressing her gratitude for your contributions and commitment to the Departments mission. The Commandant and I join the Secretary in that appreciation, and reiterate our respect for the hard work and dedication that each of you puts forth in serving the American public. *Semper Paratus*.

N. WHY ARE THERE SO MANY PWC ACCIDENTS - AND HOW CAN THEY BE AVOIDED?

Seaworthy Magazine, BoatUS

What's the first word that pops into your head when someone says Personal Watercraft (PWC)? Fun? Fast? Loud? How about crunch? According to the Coast Guard, PWCs have a higher rate of collisions than any other type of boat and there are several reasons why. The same person who wouldn't dream of lending a motorcycle to someone who has never ridden one will toss the keys of a fire-breathing PWC to a neophyte without a second thought. And because of its small size, many people consider a PWC more of a dinghy than a real boat, but the fact is that a PWC is a vessel as defined by the USCG and subject to all the same rules and regulations as a 40-foot power cruiser. It could be that, due to its quirky handling characteristics, a PWC might require more experience.

In this issue, Seaworthy looks at PWC collision claims to find out why there are so many accidents and how to make riding PWCs safer.

- Inexperienced Riders

The first thing that stood out among the claim files was that a large percentage of PWC accidents involved inexperienced riders. (USCG statistics bear this out as well – most accidents involve

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operators in the 11-20 year-old age group.) According to the claim files, owners were involved in only 18% of the accidents. The owner's siblings (29%) or friends (53%) account for far more accidents (see "Loaning Your PWC"). Some PWC models have a special key for new riders that limits the power output of the engine – a good idea, since according to a National Transportation Safety Board report roughly 84% of PWC accidents involved operators who had no boating safety education or instruction. In fact, 73% had been riding less than an hour when their accident occurred. Forty-eight percent of those injured had never operated a personal watercraft or had done so only once.

- Handling Characteristics

The claim files show that nearly 70% of PWC collisions are with another vessel, the majority of which are other PWCs. Inexperienced operators who are not familiar with judging speed and distances can suddenly find themselves on top of another boat (like other boats, PWC's don't have brakes and can take up to 300 feet to stop from 60 mph). PWC's have several handling characteristics that make them completely different from most boats and take some skill to master. One of the most common types of collisions is caused by PWC's inherent lack of steering whenever water isn't being shot out of the stern. There is no rudder. Some newer models have devices that assist off-throttle steering, but the boats still have very limited slow-speed maneuverability and nearly no maneuverability at high speeds when the throttle is suddenly closed. A study by the state of Florida showed that accidents due to lack of off-throttle steering is the second most common type. Typically, an inexperienced rider releases the throttle to try to avoid another boat, a dock, or a person in the water, and loses the ability to turn. Tapping the throttle is one way to regain steering, but it also increases speed (and severity of accidents) and must be practiced. In a few claims, a collision occurred because the engine died at slow speeds, rendering the steering useless. PWC engines must be serviced routinely and allowed to warm up before taking off.

PWCs are able to turn much sharper and faster than a typical boat and the forces generated by such maneuvers can throw a passenger or even the operator into the water. Smacking into the water at high speeds can cause serious injuries. For this reason, every state requires PWC riders to wear approved PFDs and most require safety lanyards that shut down the engine if the operator is thrown off.

- Injuries

According to the US Coast Guard, PWCs are involved in 30% of all reported boating accidents. And 36% of all boating injuries take place on PWCs. PWC collisions result in more injuries and deaths than any other type of PWC accident. And, unlike all other types of boats, PWC operators are more likely to die from blunt-force trauma than from drowning. Most often, riders strike another boat due to inattention, excessive speed, or loss of control. The collisions typically throw the rider and passengers off the boat, often resulting in broken limbs, sometimes from simply striking the water at

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high speed (Claim #9608267) Broken teeth and noses are common injuries after being in a collision, usually after striking steering bars.

Other injuries are caused by falling from a PWC, most often due to wake jumping or making sudden turns. Falling from a PWC is made more dangerous when other boats, typically other PWCs, are operating nearby; after jumping a wake, a rider in Florida was thrown from his PWC and then struck by his friend who couldn't see him in the water as he rushed to his aid (Claim #207157). Fortunately, the man survived. Not all riders are as fortunate; one man was killed in Canada after he had been thrown in choppy waters and then struck by another PWC (Claim #0107305).

Wake jumping, even without falling off, also causes other injuries, from broken tailbones (Claim #0338215) to broken necks (Claim #9601828). In most areas, wake jumping within 100 feet of another boat is illegal, not only because of the danger of landing, but because often the boat making the wake blocks the view and riders can be struck by an oncoming vessel.

- PWC Speed Cap?

Excessive speed is blamed for many PWC accidents. Several years ago, at the USCG's request, most manufactures of PWCs agreed to a speed cap of 65 mph. Phil Cappel, Chief of the USCG Recreational Boating Product Assurance Division, said the "gentlemen's agreement" has no teeth and the USCG would like to have a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the manufacturers which would put some authority into the agreement. The USCG has tested several PWCs and despite the fact that horsepower is rising (the original Kawasaki Jet Ski had an output of 32 hp while the most powerful on today's market has an astounding 265 hp), none of those PWCs have exceeded the self-imposed limit. Phil says it's because the size of the boats have grown – the 265-hp model is a three-seater that weighs 1,000 lbs. But some manufacturers who weren't making PWCs when the speed cap was agreed to, don't feel they should honor the speed limitation. Cappel is hoping the Person Watercraft Industry Association will help convince all PWC makers to agree to a new memorandum.

- State Requirements

Most states have minimum ages for PWC operators, ranging from 12 to 18. In some states, younger riders are permitted to operate PWCs if they are accompanied by an adult. In other states, the legal age of operation depends upon whether the rider has taken a state-approved boater safety course. (PWCs are subject to the same rules of the road as any other vessel and meeting, crossing, and overtaking rules must be obeyed.) Nearly all states require PFD's to be worn by the operator and all riders. In addition, many states require PWC rental operators to provide instruction or education in PWC operation. For a complete list, go to: <http://www.nasbla.org/refguide.php?queryID=3.11>



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- Loaning your PWC

A PWC may look like a dinghy, but it has the power of a much larger boat. Don't loan a PWC to anyone who doesn't have experience operating a PWC in addition to basic boating skills. The waterways are too crowded and a PWC too speedy and erratic. Let him or her take a boating safety course, even if it isn't mandatory in your state, and maybe gain experience crewing on larger boats before you introduce them to all the quirky handling characteristics of your PWC. This can't be done in a few minutes by showing someone how to work the throttle, make turns, etc. The BoatU.S. Foundation for Boating Safety has an online PWC course available at www.boatus.org/onlinecourse/watercraftcourse.htm. There is no substitute for hands-on experience. Spend time instructing a beginner until you are both comfortable that he or she knows how to safely operate a PWC. Finally, since their driving at first is likely to be erratic, make sure beginners stay well away from other boat traffic – remember that most PWC accidents involve collisions with other boats.

The USCG has an online safety brochure discussing kids and PWC's: <http://www.uscgboating.org/articles/boatingview.aspx?id=89>.

O. LIGHTNING! FLASH, BANG! YOUR BOAT'S BEEN HIT—NOW WHAT?

Seaworthy Magazine



Despite the installation of a fuzzy lightning" dissipater", this mast was struck. The next year, the boat was struck again; this time the bolt ignored the taller VHF antenna and hit the dissipater.

If you've ever been to your marina during a thunderstorm, you've probably wondered how likely it is that your boat will be struck by lightning. The answer is, fortunately, not very. According to the most recent (2000-2005) BoatU.S. Marine Insurance claim files, the odds of your boat being struck by lightning in any year are about 1.2 in 1000. In fact, the claim files show no lightning claims for 13 states such as Idaho and Nebraska (no surprise). But, for those of you with boats in Florida, nobody has to tell you the odds are greater—much greater. Thirty-three percent of all lightning claims are from the Sunshine State and the strike rate there is 3.3 boats per thousand. Surprisingly, the second most struck area in the country is the Chesapeake Bay (twenty-nine percent), and those who boat there in the summer can attest to the ferocity of the sudden thunderstorms. Not surprisingly, the majority of strikes are on sailboats (4 per 1000), but power boats get struck also (5 per 10,000); Trawlers have the highest rate for power boats (2 per 1000) and lightning has struck houseboats, bass boats, and even PWCs.



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One surprise: Multihull sailboats are struck more than twice as often as monohulls. Even accounting for the fact that a large percentage of multihulls are in lightning-prone Florida, the odds of multihulls being struck are still statistically much greater. Ewen Thomson, a well-known lightning researcher has a theory. Based on BoatU.S. supplied data, Ewen did an analysis of the “shielding effect” of nearby yachts. He theorizes that multihulls have a higher probability of being struck in a marina because their greater beam requires a wider berth. The result is less shielding from adjacent boats. Ewen cautions that his numbers contain a large uncertainty, though they appear to correlate with the BoatU.S. Marine Insurance claims history.

- **You Can Run, But You Can't Hide**

Volumes have been written about methods to mitigate damage or even avert a lightning strike. Lightning, however, doesn't seem to read them. As an example, one boat, fitted with a popular “fuzzy” static dissipater at the top of the mast was struck *twice* in one year; ironically, the second time the bolt hit the dissipater even though the VHF antenna right next to it was higher. Dewey Ives, a surveyor in Florida and member of the BoatU.S. Catastrophe Team who has seen his share of lightning damaged boats, says that lightning is unpredictable. “I've seen a small sailboat docked between two larger ones get hit and sometimes a powerboat in the middle of a marina filled with sailboats gets it. If lightning wants your boat, there's not much you can do about it.” Ewen Thomson agrees, “Current research shows promise in mitigating damage from a lightning strike, but there is nothing that is effective in *preventing* a strike.” Though not everyone agrees with that statement, in this issue of *Seaworthy*, we'll leave behind the sometimes contradictory expert opinions on how to prevent a strike and focus on what to do if your boat is hit.

- **First Things First**

Often, according to Carroll Robertson, vice president of claims for BoatU.S. Marine Insurance, the extent of the damage from a lightning strike is not immediately apparent. Carroll advises that the first thing that should be done if your boat is struck is to get it short-hauled as quickly as possible for a quick assessment of the hull. The reason, Carroll says, is that when lightning exits your boat, it can leave via a through-hull fitting or even through the hull itself. Even if the force of the bolt doesn't blow out a through-hull or cause hull damage, it may cause a gradual leak that could go unnoticed and sink your boat.



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- **Damage**

The amount of damage a boat sustains is determined in part by how the strike exits. In a properly bonded system that follows American Boat and Yacht Council standards, the strike should follow a low resistance path to a boat's keel or an installed grounding plate, though few boats are equipped from the factory this way. While no two lightning strikes are exactly alike, examining a typical claim can shed some light on the possible damages your boat might have if it's ever struck, some of which you may not have thought of. *Priority*, a 33-foot sailboat was struck in North Carolina during a July thunderstorm. Sailboats—and this one is no exception—are nearly always struck on the mast and a damaged or missing VHF antenna is typically the first sign that an unattended boat was struck—sometimes bits of a melted antenna are found on the deck. It's no surprise that electrical devices are susceptible to strikes; NOAA estimates a strike contains around 30,000,000 volts and a quick zap to a 12-volt device will certainly destroy it. But Carroll Robertson says that lightning is like horseshoes—close counts. There can sometimes be collateral damage when a nearby boat gets hit, either the result of the lightning's powerful electro-magnetic field (EMF), or the current induced by the field running through the boat's shore power cord. This can create strange problems.



During a lightning strike, a boat's electrical system can get overloaded, causing high voltage and amperage to surge throughout the system. Sometimes the damage is less obvious than this and the only sign of a strike is a couple of blown fuses.

In one instance, the owner of a 28-foot sailboat noticed an amber LED on his battery charger that he'd never seen lit before and his depth sounder had quit working. He couldn't figure out what had happened until his neighbor told him his boat had been struck recently (claim # 0107363). On another boat moored next to a struck boat, the compass readings were 50 degrees off and slowly returned to normal after a few weeks. But a direct hit usually causes more obvious—and substantial—damage.



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Sometimes in its hurry to get to ground via the water, lightning takes multiple paths. In this boat, dozens of exit wounds were made, but the hull was repairable.

When lightning exits at a through-hull fitting, there is often a branching pattern in the bottom paint. Though the hull itself is sometimes damaged, often the only repair needed is sanding and reapplying bottom paint.

Occasionally, lightning may take a path to the water directly through the hull. When it does, it can blow a hole through the fiberglass. The good news is that the damage is repairable. More good news: Most strikes don't cause this type of damage.

When a boat gets struck, lightning is trying to find its way to the water. In a sailboat, like *Priority*, gets struck, one of the paths it takes is down the mast; typically anything that happens to be close by on the way down can be destroyed—wind instruments, TV antennas, radar, lights, etc. Fortunately, the BoatU.S. Marine Insurance claim files have not shown that aluminum masts themselves get damaged; aluminum is a very good conductor and allows the strike free passage. However, wood and carbon fiber masts can get damaged since neither one is a good conductor. In one claim, a wooden mast that was partially rotted was destroyed when the charge heated up the damp mast causing the moisture to suddenly expand (witnesses said it “exploded”). Standing rigging is another path lightning takes and although stainless steel does conduct as well as aluminum, damage to the rigging is rare.

Though mast-mounted components are the most likely to be destroyed, anything on the boat that is electronic can be damaged. In the case of *Priority*, the wind, speed and depth instruments were destroyed as was the air conditioner controls, the battery charger, autopilot, mast wiring, the refrigeration controls, the stereo, and of course, the VHF. In other cases, battery selector switches, power panel breakers, volt/amp meters, alternators, and even cabin lights were damaged. As a general rule, if the equipment works OK after the boat was struck, it probably wasn't damaged—it's unusual for electronics to fail months later. Dewey Ives says that often the first sign owners have that their boat was struck is that some of the boat's electronics don't work. “Look for fuse failures,” he says. “If you have more than a couple of blown fuses, look to lightning as a possible cause.” Power boats, he says, though not struck as frequently, are just as likely to sustain electronic damage.

Powerboats are typically struck on the VHF antenna or bimini top. One member who took his new 23-foot runabout out near Tampa Bay, saw a storm coming and turned around too late to get back to the

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dock,. He heard lightning strike the fiberglass VHF antenna (“A sound I hope I never have to hear again”). All of the boat’s electronics were destroyed, but worse, the engine electrical system was damaged and the passengers had to endure the storm until the owner could wave down a passing boat. Although lightning struck an antenna that was only a few feet away, the passengers suffered nothing worse than temporary ringing in the ears. (Note: the fact that a boat’s electronics may be destroyed during a thunderstorm—including the VHF—underscores the need for non-electronic signaling devices such as flares in case your boat is struck at sea and is taking on water, or worse, if someone is injured.)

- **Hull Damage**

As hard as lightning is on electronics, it can be just as brutal to fiberglass. In the case of *Priority*, the lightning traveled down the mast as well as through the VHF coaxial cable. The cable had been disconnected and was resting against the hull inside the boat. When the strike exited the cable, it had no easy way to get to the water. After traveling a quarter of a mile through air, lightning has no trouble going through a fiberglass hull, and this is exactly what it did, blowing a three-inch hole on the way. Fortunately, the hole was above the waterline and the boat was saved from sinking. (Note: If you disconnect your VHF cable from your radio during lightning season, like some boaters do, be aware that anything near the connector, including you, can get zapped during a strike.) Other boats have not been so lucky.

Giving the lightning a low-resistance path to the water is a good idea, but if it’s not done right, the damage can be even worse. The owner of a 27-foot sailboat bonded his through hulls properly with heavy wire, but didn’t realize that underneath one of the seacocks, the through-hull fitting was made of Marelon—plastic. When the boat was struck, the lightning dutifully followed the wire, but instead of continuing to the water as it would have through a bronze fitting, it jumped across the plastic one, destroying it and partially sinking the boat.

Powerboats are also susceptible to hull damage and are less likely to have been fitted with a lightning protection system. Fortunately, the strike usually exits the boat through the props and rudders and aside from damage to the bottom paint, the running gear is not often damaged (although electronic engine controls sometimes are). Need another good reason to replace a leaking fuel tank? A 25-foot fishing boat with a small amount of fuel in the bilge exploded at the dock when it was struck, sending the contents of the boat’s cockpit nearly 100 feet away. Occasionally, lightning enters a boat’s electrical system and creates enough havoc to start a fire. Fortunately, these types of claims are rare.



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- **Minor Damage**

One component that was destroyed in *Priority* were two shore power ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI). Marine surveyors say that they are nearly always destroyed during a strike and can easily be overlooked. Though they may still power appliances, the protection circuit is often non-functional; GFCIs can be easily checked by pushing the test button on the cover. Other small items to check are hand-held radios and GPS's, bilge pumps, inverters, lights, and fans. It should be noted that lightning is fickle and boat damage varies enormously—one owner saw his boat struck on the mast and yet none of the electronics were damaged, and in fact the only evidence the surveyor could find of the strike was a blackened area on the masthead.

- **Getting Caught in a Storm**

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, you may be caught out in a thunderstorm. What to do? First, don't panic; though many boats are struck, the BoatU.S. claim files have few injury claims and only two fatalities over the years (one man was killed as he stepped onto the dock while holding onto a shroud and another had been swimming out to his anchored boat). One of the reasons is the so-called cone of protection offered by sailboat masts. The mast gives a circle of protection (for humans, not electronics) around the boat roughly equal to its height. Sailboats are almost always struck at the top of the mast and people under it are generally safe. However, since the strike can be conducted down the mast and rigging at the same time, it's important to not be between them since lightning can side-flash from one to the other. Touching anything that is grounded while touching the mast or rigging (engine controls, for example) could allow the strike to use you as its path to the water. The safest place to be during a lightning storm is down below, avoiding any metal objects. Swimming during lightning, especially near a boat is dangerous. One thing you shouldn't do, as one member learned, is keep fishing. Standing on his bass boat, he raised his fishing pole and lightning struck it. The bolt traveled down the pole, through his body to the boat, leaving him with a serious leg injury and burned shoes. Powerboats, especially small ones, don't have a cone of protection; the best defense is a good offense—leave the area as quickly as possible.



After a lightning strike, the damage may not be as apparent as this blown-out through-hull fitting, but may still be serious enough to jeopardize your boat.