



# Up Top In Operations

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Monthly Newsletter of the National Operations Department

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## Influencing the Spectator Fleet

By Gail A. Fisher, DC-P

Summer is almost upon us, and that means that there are probably many marine events lined up in your AOR. And, the Coast Guard will often request additional resources to help maintain the safety and security of the spectator fleets of these events. When a boat gets underway to patrol an event, the coxswain and crew are well trained to handle the boat and assist in search and rescue. But, are they trained in public relations? That's a critical skill needed by everyone on board in a marine event! Here is some information to help you to effectively "influence the spectator fleet" at your marine event this year!

## Putting the Auxiliary Role into Perspective

The major concern when conducting a marine event is safety of both the participants and of the spectator fleet. The Coast Guard Captain of the Port issues an op order which describes the "rules" for the event such as a safety zone. It also includes instructions for the

units that will help to enforce these rules. All Coast Guard units are *responsible* for helping to ensure a successful event, including Auxiliaries participating in the evolution. However, only the Coast Guard has the *authority* to compel compliance with the Captain of the Port order.

What do we mean by responsibility? Responsibility can be defined as liable to be called upon to answer as the primary cause, motive or agent. Authority can be defined as the power to influence or command thought, opinion or behavior. As you can see, there is a difference! Although the Coast Guard has the authority to enforce a safety zone, the Auxiliary acts as its primary agent. The authority that the Coast Guard has is **not transferred** to the Auxiliary. The Auxiliary must rely on *influence* to support marine safety.



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## In the Attic?

By Charles B. Ford, BC-OES

Time for a clean sweep? When was the last time that you went through the attic space? Well, if the spirit moves you, please look around for some Coast Guard Auxiliary memorabilia.



There is a book under development that will be a pictorial history of our great volunteer service. This is no small undertaking, and it will take lots of subject matter to fill the pages. It is anticipated that over 200 photos will be needed. The goal is to highlight the best moments, the untold stories in our history. Ours is a service of quiet heroism. Ours is a service of action. If you have some of those action photos, please consider allowing those memories to be included.

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## Influencing the Spectator Fleet, continued

### Projecting the Right Image

Your ability to influence the spectator fleet depends on projecting the right image. Here are a couple of things you should keep in mind! Factors that influence the public's impressions of you include:

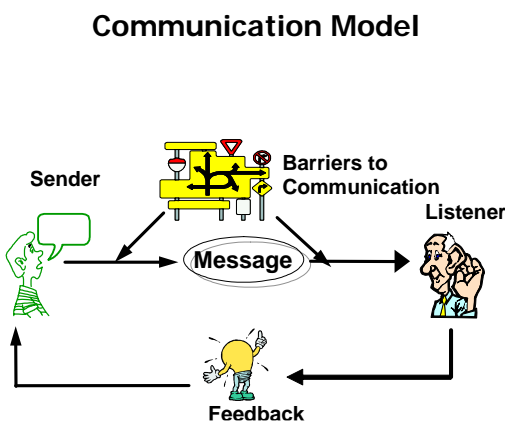
**Personnel:** Uniform, stance, body language, attitude, professional tone of voice, facial expression, eye contact

**Vessel:** Clean, well equipped, sign boards, activity of the crew, boat handling ability

As you can see, many factors contribute to creating the "right image" for the Coast Guard! We establish our "officer presence" with our positive image!

### Verbalizing the Message

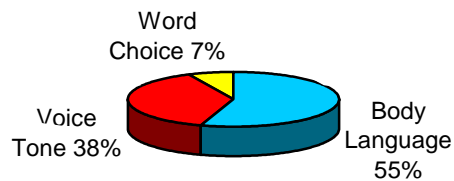
It is vital that the boating public hear your message and comply. But, communication is not an easy thing! There's a lot that can, and does, go wrong! The Communication Model is illustrated below.



Your overall message is impacted by three things: tone of voice, word choice and body language. But what is the contribution of each of these factors?

Vocal tone – our tone of voice, is a large contributor to how our message gets heard! In fact, what people "hear", may not be our words at all!

### message impact



Why then, is officer presence so important? Because our body language makes a dramatic impact on how we are perceived!

### Components of Task Direction

While patrolling a marine event, you will most likely need to direct the boater to do something – often times to move their boat to a different position. Giving directions is definitely not as easy as it sounds! It's no wonder the boater can be confused, misunderstand or appear non-compliant!

There are five components of good tasking. They are: Establishing the Communication Link, Outcome Statement, Rationale, Gestures and Courtesy & Closure.

### Establishing the Communication Link

Before you can expect the boater to comply with your task direction, you need to be sure that the boater can hear and understand you. Establishing the communication link is a critical first step in the process.

✓ Maneuver close enough to the boater so that you can be heard in a loud voice. Ask to speak to the Captain of the boat. Say "May I speak to the Captain, please?"

✓ Be sure that you can be heard above the elements. Say, "Captain, if you can understand me, nod your head up and down."

Once you have established the communication link, you can give effective task direction.

### Outcome Statement

How do you give clear task direction? Here are some guidelines!

- ① Determine behavior needed
- ② Describe behavior in terms that are clear, concise and specific:
  - specify compass direction, landmarks, distance
  - use very simple terms
  - speak loud enough to be heard above the elements (wind, wave conditions, engines, crowd noises, etc.)

### Rationale

Very few people respond well to "orders"! So when you are working with the public, it is important to tell the boater WHY you are requesting him to comply. When we are pushed, it is our natural tendency to push back! That's why a clear, concise explanation of the rationale is critical! The boater is far more likely to comply when they understand the reason they need to change!

Here are some examples of rationale.

- "You're in a safety zone established by the Captain of the Port."
- "You're in a safety zone. The wind could blow sparks from the fireworks this way."

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## Influencing the Spectator Fleet, continued

### Gestures

Gesturing to indicate direction can be a very effective way to orient and move the boater. But, since our body language conveys 55% of our message to the boater, we must gesture deliberately and appropriately. Here are some gesturing guidelines:

- ☞ Use 2 fingers or your entire hand to point. Avoid using one finger, it can be perceived as offensive!
- ☞ Use gestures to indicate direction, point out landmarks, etc.
- ☞ Avoid crossing your arms across your chest.
- ☞ Move to an outboard aspect of the boat.

### Courtesy & Closure

Never underestimate the value of courtesy. It reinforces the professional, positive image you are projecting. There are four essentials in treating the boater with courtesy!

- ✦ Greet the boater. Say "Hi, how are you?"
- ✦ Make requests by saying "please"!
- ✦ Always say "thank you" when the boater complies!
- ✦ Give the boater the benefit of the doubt, avoid "monitoring" the situation.

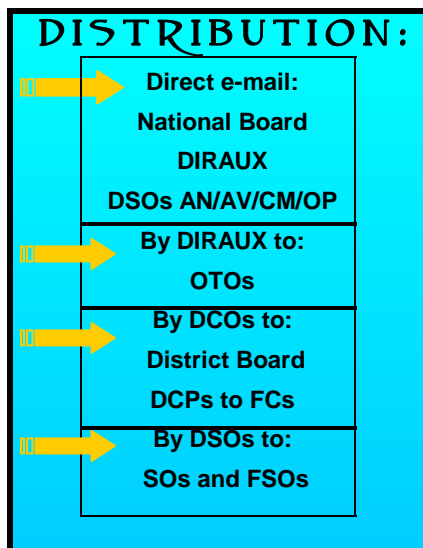
Remembering these simple principles will help you be an effective partner with the Coast Guard and project a professional image with the boating public!



## Of Wings and Things

According to Martin Phillips, Executive Director for the Coast Guard Auxiliary Association, shipment of AIRCREW wings and the PWC devices is expected by July. Initial distribution is through the DIRAUX upon certification, but additional or replacement devices can be obtained through your DSO-MA or district store. The Operational Excellence (OPEX) ribbon is also expected to arrive in July. The ANSC has the OPEX certificates and vessel decals in stock now.

If you need one of these devices, please contact your DSO-MA. They will receive updates when the devices are in stock and ready for you to order!



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## In the Attic, continued

The operations department is assisting the CG Auxiliary historian by collecting the following types of photos:

- photos that tell a story. We need photos that tell the story without words. We'd rather not have a picture of your boat, but rather of you and your crew participating in an activity.
- the memorable or prestigious awards, honoring those in the Operations program for their heroism.
- photos of multi-state, multi-district or regional work, like our response capability in natural disasters.
- photos of our operational activities from 1950 -1970 are in very short supply. Documentation from this time is really needed.

Technology today allows for scanning and retouching of the photos, so a "perfect" picture is not required. Please take a look around the house, the attic, the basement, or the file drawer for your little piece of Auxiliary treasure. For further information, contact Charles Ford, BC-OES at CBFord@aol.com or Kay Larson, N-H at cklarson@cloud9.net.

