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9 Jun 2003

## MEMORANDUM

From: C. G. Honse  
CGD Seventeen (osr-2)

Reply to: osr-2  
Attn of: C. G. Honse  
463-2244

To: Commodore Gary Taylor

Subj: AUXILIARY PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Ref: (a) PERIRB/EPIRB Carriage Requirements for CG Boats, ALCOAST 572/02  
(b) Rescue and Survival Systems Manual, COMDTINST M10470.10E  
(c) Focus on People: Cold Weather PPE Readiness, R131219ZDec02 //G-OCS//  
(d) Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 Section 410  
(e) Focus on People: Personal Protective Equipment Policies, ALCOAST 243/03  
(f) Focus on People: Investigation Procedures for PPE, ALCOAST 251/03

1. Discussion. In accordance with references (a) thru (e), the Commandant of the Coast Guard shall ensure that all Coast Guard personnel including the Coast Guard Auxiliary are equipped with adequate safety equipment including hypothermia protective equipment where appropriate. In Alaska, the cold waters and unforgiving environment make it essential that personnel conduct the proper risk management and wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

2. Requirements. Coxswains and crew operating or being carried by Auxiliary Operational Facilities including the Auxiliary UTMs shall wear the hypothermia protection and survival equipment indicated in the enclosed table 3-1 from reference (b). The type of PPE required is directly dependent on both the seawater and air temperatures. The average seawater temperatures in Alaska where Auxiliary units operate range in the 40-50 degree range. Air temperatures vary significantly depending on the season and time of day from negative temperatures in the winter to high 80's on interior lakes in the summer. Although crew comfort is a consideration, following the mandates of the enclosed table is not optional and must be strictly followed. Coxswains shall ensure compliance of the PPE requirements for their crews. The Director of the Auxiliary (DIRAUX) or the Operations Training Officer (OTO) on a single mission basis only, may waive the requirement for wearing a hypothermia protection device only after determination that the risk management associated with crew performance degradation, thermal stress, and environmental considerations are offset by the benefits associated with the waiver. If the Director or OTO are not readily available to consider a waiver request, the Command Duty Officer (CDO) of the Seventeenth District Command Center may make the decision.

3. Equipment. All Auxiliarists involved in the Operations Program shall become familiar with the provisions and policies in Chapter 3 reference (b) and sign an acknowledgement letter (enclosure (2)). The following personal protective equipment shall normally be available onboard Auxiliary operational facilities under orders:

a. Kokatat Boat Crew Dry Suits. The dry suit worn with the required 2 layers of thermal undergarments provides the maximum protection for cold-water exposure. To standardize the

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equipment in the District and follow Commandant's directives, the Kokatat Dry Suit is the standard dry suit for the Auxiliary. Since the Kokatat Dry Suit contains no inherent buoyancy, a personal flotation device must be worn in conjunction with the dry suit.

b. Type III Personal Flotation Device. A Coast Guard Approved Type III personal flotation device (PFD) shall be worn with the dry suit.

c. Thermal Underwear. Coxswains and Crewman shall wear layer 1 and layer 2 thermal underwear under the dry suit. Light and/or medium weight polypropylene thermal underwear is the first layer protection worn against the skin. Light, medium, or heavy weight fleece is the second layer protection worn over the first layer. Cotton undergarments are not an authorized layer.

d. Anti-Exposure Coveralls. The anti-exposure coveralls commonly referred to as Mustang Suits can be worn when the air temperature exceeds 50 degrees.

e. Ocean Commander and Immersion Suits. Ocean Commanders and Immersion Suits are also carried onboard Operational Facilities. For qualification as a coxswains or crew, members must demonstrate the ability to don an immersion suit within 2-minutes.

f. SAR Vest. The boat crew survival vest is used to store survival components required during operational missions. Each Auxiliary coxswain and crew shall wear a SAR vest with an attached light, whistle, mirror, knife, and flares. At least one of the crew members shall also have a PEPiRB attached to their SAR vest as of June 1, 2004.

g. 406 MHZ EPIRB. Many Auxiliary facilities are equipped with either a Category I or Category II 406 MHZ EPIRB. These shall be registered with NOAA to expedite a quick response in the event of activation.

h. PEPiRBS. Each Auxiliary unit shall have a minimum of one crewmember carrying a McMurdo FASTFIND 406 MHz PEPiRB onboard all surface facilities while under orders. Per reference (a), this mandate goes into effect on June 1, 2004 since the availability of the PEPiRBS is limited.

4. Usage. Government provided PPE shall not be used in conjunction with personal recreation.

5. Supply and Distribution. The cost to properly outfit one Auxiliarist with the PPE listed above is approximately \$2.5K. The prioritized order in outfitting Auxiliary members and Operational Facilities is (1) **Qualified** UTM coxswains and crew; (2) **Qualified** QUANAHP coxswains and crew; (3) **Qualified** PWC Operators; (4) Operational Facilities with **qualified** coxswains as the owners of the vessel; (5) Operational Facilities with non-qualified coxswain owners; and (6) trainees. Forty Kokatat Dry Suits have been procured for the Auxiliary with 24 being issued to date. An additional order for 20 more dry suits with thermal undergarments was just submitted. There are approximately 100 Auxiliarists actively involved the Operations Program giving us a shortfall of 40 suits.

6. Maintenance. Proper maintenance and regular inspections of PPE is paramount for the equipment to provide the maximum protection to the member. There are detailed maintenance procedure cards in enclosure (1) outlining the procedures and maintenance intervals to maintain each piece of equipment. Auxiliarist Roy Stoddard should be contacted for major repairs to equipment since he has the tools and materials.

7. MISHAP Investigations. In the event of a MISHAP, a statement on whether the proper PPE was worn or not must be included. If the proper PPE was not being worn, an informal investigation shall be conducted to determine the reason for the discrepancy.

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Enclosure: (1) Rescue and Survival Systems Manual Chapter 3  
(2) Acknowledgement Letter