



**Homeland  
Security**

**U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary  
District 11 Northern Region**  
*Serving Northern California, Nevada, Utah*



Date: January 2014  
To: Richard Thomas, COS, EXCOM, District Board/Staff  
From: D11N DSO-OP, Commodore Gail L. Ramsey  
Subject: District OPS Report/ Respectfully Submitted

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

**OTO CORNER**

**REMINDERS & THANK YOU!!**

**REQUESTING ORDERS FOR SUPPORTING EVENTS**

**PATROL MEAL REIMBURSEMENTS**

**OPEX/OPTREXs – PLEASE GET YOURS ON THE 2014 SCHEDULE ASAP**

**OPS CALENDAR**

**OTO Corner January 2014:**

Happy New Year shipmates! I hope all of you had an enjoyable and relaxing holiday season. Hopefully, you had some time to recharge your batteries before plunging back into your post-holiday endeavors. This month, I have some useful links to pass on for determining the water temperature in your patrol areas, clarification regarding visual distress signals, and some more information on AOMS. We will jump back into the towing discussion next month.

I posted the regional QE program memo on my web page. Please take a minute to review it. I'm actively seeking QE candidates that meet the requirements spelled out in the policy. Submit applications the [d11auxnorthern@uscg.mil](mailto:d11auxnorthern@uscg.mil) web page if you are interested in being considered for this position of great esteem. I plan on convening the Boat Crew Advisory Board in February to review candidates so that we can start the training during the forthcoming annual QE workshop.

**Water Temperatures and Patrols**

The cold snap we endured here in the Bay Area in December certainly presented some challenges to those crews that stay active through the winter months with water and air temps dropping well below 50F. It's critical that coxswains, crewmembers, and PAC's pay attention to the weather forecast and current conditions during the mission planning process. Remember, if the water temperature drops below 50F, you and your crew must be outfitted in the Maritime Cold Water Survival System (MWCSS) to patrol. The MWCSS consists of a dry suit, layers I/II, neoprene hood, cold weather gloves system, etc. Currently, only a small number of crews working in DIV 11 have been equipped with the MWCSS. Please use the below links to determine the current water/air temperatures:

This web page covers the Sacramento River Area as well of some local lakes:

[http://cdec.water.ca.gov/jspplot/jspPlotServlet.jsp?sensor\\_no=14860&end=&geom=small&interval=2&cookies=cdec01](http://cdec.water.ca.gov/jspplot/jspPlotServlet.jsp?sensor_no=14860&end=&geom=small&interval=2&cookies=cdec01)

This web page covers the entire west coast and provides real-time data:

<http://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/>

DIV 7 operators can refer to this web page for condition on Utah lakes...currently ICE:

<http://www.stateparks.utah.gov/resources/conditions>

Please send me other links you may be using for determining water temperatures. In a pinch, you can use a pool thermometer if you are patrolling a lake that does not have an official monitoring system, but I urge you to defer to the safest course of action. Most of us are well educated on the effects of cold water submersion; don't put yourself or your crews needlessly at risk. I've been reviewing AOMS and take note of where you patrol and in what conditions you may be operating in. I will contact you if I have concerns about your patrol environment.

### **AOMS Clean-ups**

Starting last month, I began reviewing AOMS for outstanding patrols that had not been completed or submitted to FINCEN. I forwarded the list to the PAC's for them to follow up with the operators and owners. Please submit AOMS reimbursement data within 72 hours of completing your patrol. During the third week of each month I will review the previous month's AOMS patrol schedule and flag those patrols that have not been marked as "completed" or "Submitted". PAC's will be responsible for notifying the owner/operators. After 45 days of inaction, I will cancel those patrols that have not been reconciled. It's very important to stay on top of this. Each approved patrol counts as a financial commitment in our accounting software and must be expended by FINCEN or cancelled in order to free up those funds for future patrols.

### **Mythbusters- Visual Distress Signals Edition**

Are you required to carry flares on your facility? The short answer is "Maybe".

In order for your vessel to be approved as a facility, you must have the required number of Visual Distress Signals (VDS) onboard based on your vessel's size and where you operate it. 33CFR175.110 addresses the VDS requirements for recreational vessels (which AUXFAC's legally fall under for the purposes of Boating Safety Regulations). The federal regulation allows for different combinations of VDS to be carried onboard a vessel operating on waters where the USCG has jurisdiction. One of the accepted combinations is a Day Non-pyrotechnic VDS, such as the Orange emergency flag and one Night Non-Pyrotechnic VDS, such as the emergency strobe I issue to you in your SAR vest. Here's it gets tricky: The emergency strobe light is only acceptable as a Night non-pyrotechnic VDS shoreward of the COLREGS demarcation line. This means that if you patrol in inland waters only, as defined by the COLREGS, you are not required to have pyrotechnics onboard. A visual distress flag and your SAR Vest strobe will satisfy the requirements.

Now, if you patrol beyond the COLREGS demarcation line in the offshore approaches, the only Night Non-pyrotechnic VDS accepted is an electronic "SOS" light, which is only made

by a handful of manufacturers. In this case, I would recommend you purchase Day/Night combination pyrotechnics to meet the requirements.

Those of you that patrol inland lakes exclusively will need to refer to the state requirements for VDS.

That wraps up my rambling thoughts for this month. As always, I consider feedback a gift, so feel free to start a conversation if you have thoughts or questions.

**REQUESTING ORDERS FOR SUPPORTING EVENTS:**

**Requesting Orders for supporting events:** If you are requesting patrol orders for an event that hasn't been requested through Sector (or for Utah an OGA/MOU partner), prior to requesting those orders please let the OIA know about the event. The request will then be routed to the Sector Response Department Head to determine if it will be supported or not. What we are trying to avoid is having the AUX volunteer their support without prior approval of the Sector (OIA).

Leahey, Mark C LTJG

**REMINDERS & THANK YOU!!**

Linda Vetter sent this to all her Coxswains. It is so well written and needed that I am copying her excellent wording and passing this needed info on.

Reminders -

This is a new year, and most reports as to 2013 year-end totals have already been run, but if you have ANY outstanding orders in AOM for 2013, please complete them as soon as possible. Timely completion of year-end data also helps prevent inadvertent "REYR" status for you and your crew by getting all hours recorded. In addition, if you have orders out there for patrol requests that subsequently didn't occur for any reason but you have not yet cancelled them in AOM, please also do that asap, as outstanding requests "set aside" the funds until the orders are cancelled, and thus reduce funds available for real patrols coming up.

AOM seems to be working quite well for the most part. Minor updates and enhancements continue to be made, although slowly in the current funding environment. But new features have been added over time, so if it has been some time since you checked out the "Agenda" button or some of the other areas of the program, try to find some time to do so. If you do have any issues or questions with AOM, please utilize your Aux resources rather than burdening the CG active duty with questions or extra work. You can start with your FSO-IS or OPs staff officers in your flotilla, then Division, and if they can't help you with your questions, ask your PAC.

There was a complete expiration of everyone's AOM/AUXDATA passwords a couple months ago, so if you haven't signed on or updated your password since then you will have to do so before you can use AOM again. Most active coxswains have already done so. The next most common issue or question has to do with uploading receipts. Remember that in this District you are required to include your receipts for ALL claimed costs, including those under \$75.00. You need to scan (e.g., with an all-in-one printer) or digitally photograph (e.g., with

your cell phone or camera) your receipt to create a .jpg file, then please LOOK at it before using it to make sure it is readable (if you can't read it, then Sector OIA can't read it to send your claim to FINCEN, and the FINCEN auditors can't read it either!). Then in AOM when you click on "Receipt", do "Browse" to find the .jpg file you have saved, select it (click on it) and "Upload" it. PLEASE NOTE: It takes close to a full minute to do that upload usually, so BE PATIENT. Do NOT keep hitting upload again while you are waiting or close the screen, just wait. It will tell you when done, but again, please be patient.

Thanks again for all your help in 2013, and looking forward to another productive and helpful year in 2014. Happy New Year!

### **SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR) REPORTS:**

Several members have asked how to turn in SAR reports since we no longer need to snail mail our requests for reimbursements to our Order Issuing Authority (OIA) and is now taken care of with AOM.

You can fill out the SAR form and then attach it to your AOMs order just like you would a receipt for gas.

### **REYR???. Recertification:**

*It is your responsibility to keep track of when you are due for your NAV Rules (if a Coxswain), your mandatory 8 (now 4) Hour TCT, your 12 hours underway and when you are due for your QE Check ride.* All this valuable information can be obtained from AUXDATA in the "TRAINING MANAGEMENT REPORT" to be run by your FSO-IS. Many operational members are receiving REYR notices this year. Over 70% of these are failure to take the mandatory 1 HR TCT Class and the D11N OPS Workshop. If you receive a REYR notice please request the FSO-IS to verify what is lacking. Perhaps the task was not entered or another reason.

A member who fails to meet annual currency requirements for the year shall make up the missing hours as a trainee, under the supervision of a certified coxswain the following year. (Ex. If the member only completes 4 hours the previous year they must complete 8 hours as a trainee to regain certification.) Once the missing hours are completed the member is no longer a trainee. The member must then complete 12 additional hours to maintain certification. Members who fail to complete the triennial check ride must complete the check ride before being recertified.

Members who fail to complete all of the required hours for one to four years must complete twelve hours as a trainee to regain certification and 12 additional hours as a fully qualified member to maintain certification. Members who fail to complete the triennial check ride must complete the check ride before being recertified.

Members who do not have underway hours for a period of five years or more must re-qualify by completing all required tasks for the desired position.

### **PATROL MEAL REIMBURSEMENTS:**

There has been many questions and concerns about meal rates and times, i.e. "I get underway at 0800 therefore I should get reimbursed for Breakfast". The answer is NO, it is viewed that if you get underway at the last possible minute of a meal time you will not be reimbursed you should have already ate. If Auxiliarist under orders are able to eat at a dining facility without

paying, they should not seek reimbursement and should put a narrative in the remarks. A Coast Guard Dining facility is to service Active duty and reserves under orders first and, if so chooses, may accommodate the Auxiliary. The rates are checked and updated every calendar year along with mileage rates. Please ensure wide dissemination.

Attached is the 2014 meal and mileage reimbursement rate for Auxiliarist conducting patrols. Patrols starting at the end time of the previous meal will not be reimbursed, i.e. Patrols starting at 0800 will not receive \$2.55 for each crewmember for breakfast.

MEALS		MILEAGE RATE	
Breakfast	\$2.55	1/1/2014	0.565
Lunch	\$4.65	1/1/2013	0.565
Dinner	\$4.65		

v/r

BMCM T. J. Hudson  
 Chief, Operations Branch (BSX-12)  
 Auxiliary Division

**OPEX/OPTREXs – PLEASE GET YOURS ON THE 2014 SCHEDULE ASAP:**

Please work with your Division and chose the 2014 date for your Operational Event. Be certain to check the District Calendar as well as the OPS Calendar so there are no date conflicts. One event per Division with the exception of DIV 5 (one in the Ocean and one in the Delta) and DIV 3 (one at Lake Shasta and one in the Delta). The above areas are far apart and require different types of Facilities.

**OPS CALENDAR**

For flyers, regarding these events please go to the [District Calendar](#):

<i><b><u>2014</u></b></i>		
<i><b><u>OPERATIONS OPEX/OPTREX EVENT CALENDAR</u></b></i>		
<i><b>28 FEB - 01-Mar</b></i>	<i><b>MANDATORY QE MEETING</b></i>	<i><b>QES NOT AVAILABLE ELSEWHERE</b></i>
<b>APR 30-MAY 4</b>	<b>Flotilla 39 OPTREX</b>	Contact: <a href="#">Carl Pierce</a>
<b>MAY 3-4</b>	<b>Division 10 OPEX</b>	Lake Kaweah Contact: <a href="#">Rod Rollins</a>
<b>MAY 10</b>	<b>Division 1 OPTREX</b>	Contact: <a href="#">William Burns</a>
<b>AUG 2-3</b>	<b>Division 6 OPTREX</b>	Santa Cruz, Contact <a href="#">Wally Smith</a>
<b>SEP 19-20</b>	<b>Flotilla 88 OPTREX</b>	Braitos Marina, Clear Lake CA Contact: <a href="#">Bruce Rogerson</a>
<b>OCT 11-12</b>	<b>Division 10 OPTREX</b>	Millerton CA Contact: <a href="#">Rod Rollins</a>
<b>OCT 17-19</b>	<b>Flotilla 3-10 OPTREX</b>	Sacramento/San Joaquin Delta Contact: <a href="#">Dean LaChapelle</a>

Respectfully Submitted,  
 Gail Ramsey, DSO-OP

