



# Up Top In Operations

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## Fighting Crew Fatigue

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**A**uxiliarists that are active in surface operations are often called upon to assist boaters in less than ideal conditions.

These conditions can cause boat crews to reach the limits of their physical and mental endurance much more quickly. When a crew member becomes fatigued, it is more difficult for them to do their job efficiently, and it is more likely that they will take risks and disregard prescribed safety precautions. Following are some examples of situations that may cause fatigue:

- Operating in extreme hot or cold weather conditions
- Eye strain from hours of looking through sea-spray blurred windshields
- The effort of holding on and maintaining balance
- Stress
- Exposure to noise

- Exposure to the sun
- Poor physical conditioning
- Lack of sleep
- Boredom

It is the coxswain's responsibility to be aware of signs of stress and fatigue, and to take corrective action to minimize it. A good coxswain is always watching for the following symptoms of fatigue:

- Inability to focus or concentrate/ narrowed attention span
- Mental confusion or judgment error
- Decreased coordination of motor skills and sensory ability (hearing, seeing)
- Increased irritability
- Decreased performance
- Decreased concern for safety



The presence of any of these symptoms can threaten the safety of the mission and crew. The coxswain should never hesitate to call for assistance when fatigue starts to impair the efficiency of the crew. In addition, the coxswain should make use of the following techniques:

- Make sure the crew is adequately rested
- Dress appropriate for weather
- Rotate crew duties
- Provide food and refreshments suitable for conditions
- Observe other crew members for signs of fatigue

Expect the unexpected when it comes to weather. Crew members must have clothing available (hot or cold weather) for rapidly changing conditions. Being able to stay warm in cold weather or cool in hot weather can help minimize crew fatigue.

For more information on crew fatigue, refer to Chapter 3 in the *Boat Crew Seamanship Manual*. Above all, remember to make risk assessment an important part of all of your operational activities. Be safe out there, we need you!

COMMS will participate in  
ISAR this fall...

## Comms Corner

By: Warren Schneider, DVC-OT  
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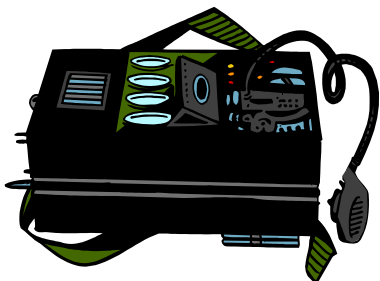
**I**t is again time to remind all that we will be celebrating the sixty-third year of the Coast Guard Auxiliary's existence at the ISAR competition in Milwaukee WI.

The date will be 05 October 2002, and while the ISAR competition is taking place, we will also be conducting an International Radio Net drill. We would like representation from all Districts/Regions to make this a very successful program, as it has been in the past. You may contact Joseph Rzucidlo, BC-OTM, or Daniel Amoroso, BC-OTT, for further information. Their e-mail addresses are:

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Last year we had an excellent turnout and we would like to see an even better result in 2002.

**LET'S GET STARTED NOW!**



## The Coast Guard Auxiliary Communications System

Written by: Joe Rzucidlo, BC-OTM  
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Warren Schneider, DVC-OT

**T**he primary purposes of the Auxiliary communications system are listed in precedence:

- A. Coordinating authorized Auxiliary activities in support of Coast Guard operations.
- B. Augmenting the Coast Guard communications system, when required.
- C. Communicating urgent matters of official Auxiliary business.
- D. Training

**Who is responsible for the control of the Coast Guard Auxiliary communications system?**

- A. The District Commander is responsible for control of the Coast Guard Auxiliary communications system. This includes such activities as training and drills. Auxiliary radio facilities may use certain fre-

quencies designated by the district commander for specific authorized Auxiliary activities. These activities include regattas, coordinated CME efforts, patrols, drills, training and administration.

B. Auxiliarists must conduct operations on Coast Guard frequencies per current instructions.

C. Coast Guard and Auxiliary communications plans may include frequency assignments and Auxiliary call signs. If then, they must reference publications that contain such data.

D. Each Auxiliary district must conduct communications drills, at least quarterly. Operators of radio facilities must conduct these drills using the guidelines issued by the Coast Guard district telecommunications branch.

E. District Commanders may authorize the use of the Federal Telecommunications Systems (FTS) and local Coast Guard landline voice and data systems for relay of official Auxiliary administrative messages. District Commanders may also issue FTS 2000 calling cards to selected Auxiliarists to relay official Auxiliary communications.

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Keep your eye on the sky!

# Microbursts and Macrobursts

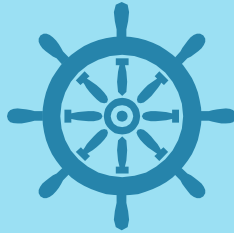
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**J**ust exactly what is a microburst or a macroburst? They are essentially the same thing, except a microburst confines its downward energy to a small circle of the ground or water (about 1 1/4 mile in diameter), whereas a macroburst spreads it out over an area ten times as large and consequently is not expected to do as much damage.

This term first hit the National news about twenty years ago, when two major airline crashes in the Western states, and an excursion vessel capsized on one of the Western rivers with a large loss of life. All of which were attributed to microbursts. A replica Chesapeake Clipper, the "Pride of Baltimore," lost south of Bermuda may have been caused by a microburst.

Not all microbursts hit the headlines, but they occur often and over the entire country. Commercial airlines have learned to avoid them and we, as operators of pleasure boats, should learn to avoid them or at least prepare for them in time to avoid serious injury or damage.

**"Up Top in Operations" is the monthly newsletter of the National Operations Department of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary.**



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Perhaps before the term microburst was coined, or in general use, you may have called them squalls, white squalls, black squalls or just plain windstorms. Sometimes they have mistakenly been described as tornadoes. Downbursts in general, and microbursts in particular, are associated with thunderstorms. They can be described as a violent downdraft caused by the sudden cooling of uprising warm air that falls with a high velocity. These vertical downdrafts strike the land or water, and fan out in all 360 degrees of the compass. In other words when a microburst occurs the wind coming from whatever direction might suddenly change to any possible direction with a velocity of 100 miles an hour.

What can you do to minimize the possible injury or damage from a microburst? First you try to avoid operating in the presence of an anticipated thunderstorm. When you see those towering hammer-head clouds forming, waste no time in making for a safe harbor. Shorten or douse your sails, if sailing. Batten down your hatches, secure all loose gear, close and lock ports and windows and ready the PFDs for the worst.

Whether it is the season for such storms or not, keep a

close watch on the skies for those telltale thunderheads particularly to the west of you. If you are caught out and your decision to return to port was made too late, slow your boat speed, head into the apparent wind, and keep a sharp eye out for a sudden wind change. Be sure to keep enough power on for steerage way so you can change course rapidly enough to avoid being caught broadside. Also be aware that these bursts may be accompanied by large hailstones and protection of the boat occupants is a major concern.

