



Up Top In Operations

August 2002

Monthly Newsletter of the National Operations Department

Volume 8

Creating a National QE Program

Introducing the New "QE Guy"

*Written by: Robert O. Wells, BC-OEN
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I want to introduce myself as one of the newest members in the Operations Department. I was appointed as a Branch Chief in the Education Division with the initial mission of developing a National level program for Qualification Examiners. I am an AUXOP qualified coxswain serving as my flotilla's VFC and FSO-OP. I am also one of the Qualification Examiners in my flotilla.

The QE program stands as one of the primary certification programs that the Auxiliary has which can either "make or break" our credibility with the active duty side of the Coast Guard. We must insure that we provide adequately trained and properly qualified members to our counterparts so they can rest assured

that we are capable and prepared to assist them in the "new normalcy" of our operations.

Currently, each District, and sometimes down to the Division level, has established their own QE program. Many of these programs have excellent criteria and policies governing the actions of the QEs in their respective areas. I am hoping to call upon those who have ongoing programs and try to develop one from many.

I will be contacting various units and personnel in the near future and I am asking for your cooperation in advance to help gather information in this area. I also welcome any comments and suggestions from the mem-



bership at large regarding the QE program. Please feel free to email me any comments you may feel are pertinent to this project. The members are the ones who need to make this program a success so I ask for your advice and wisdom.

Areas that are of major concern include, but are not limited to,

- The selection criteria for QEs, requirements to become and remain a QE
- Training and certification
- Retention standards
- The unfortunate aspects of relieving a QE of the position

We need to have a National program that recognizes and takes into account the regional and territorial differences that exist around the country. This is a major undertaking and I am actively seeking your support and suggestions.

If you have a District or Division level QE program, please contact me so I can obtain a copy for reference purposes. Thanks again, and it is a pleasure for me to serve on your National Staff.

Sun, Heat and Dehydration

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The summer is here, and with it comes potential problems with sun exposure, heat, and dehydration. Let's first discuss the effects from the sun.

The most common result of excessive and unprotected exposure to the sun is sunburn. However, excessive, repeated or prolonged exposure may damage the skin, and may result in the development of skin cancers, including malignant melanoma — one of the most rapidly increasing cancers in young people and adults. In addition, sun exposure can also have an adverse effect upon the eyes, sometimes leading to blindness.

If you are participating in activities near the water or beach, your risks are increased because of your prolonged direct exposure and the reflection of the sun's rays from the water, the sand, or the reflective material on your personal flotation devices (PFDs). However, by knowing the risks, you can minimize your exposure to the sun's rays and still safely participate in those activities.

First, stay in the shade whenever possible. Next, wear a hat and appropriate clothing that is made of a material that is impervious to the sun's rays. Remember that clothes or hats of a loose knit or webbing may allow the sun's rays to get through to the skin or scalp.

For areas of the skin that cannot be covered, the use of an appropriate sunscreen effectively reduces the sun's ef-

fect of upon the skin. (Remember that Biminis, T-tops, canopies, and umbrellas block direct sun but not the reflected rays of the sun.) The regular use of sunscreen over the years may reduce the chance of skin damage, some types of skin cancer, and other harmful effects caused by exposure to the sun. In buying a sunscreen, be sure it protects from UVA and UVB rays. The UVA rays may contribute to skin damage and premature skin aging. UVB rays cause sunburn. The product's sun protection factor (SPF) identifies the number of times that a person's natural sunburn protection is improved by the sunscreen. Use a product with an SPF of 30 or higher.

In most instances, the sunscreen should be applied before sun exposure, rubbed in thoroughly, and reapplied every two (2) hours or after bathing, swimming, or excessive perspiring. Basically, follow the directions that accompany the product.

Although not as highly publicized, another effect of even low levels of exposure to UVB rays is harm to the lens of the eye that may lead to the development of cataracts. However, relatively simple preventive measures are available. The best protection is the wearing of plastic glasses or sunglasses with UV protection. The wearing of a cap or a hat with a wide brim decreases direct eye exposure to the sun's rays to a great degree.

There are a couple of special situations to remember. Lips also need protection. So apply a lip balm with similar SPF protection as for the skin. Also, when you wear short pants or a bathing suit, remember to use sunscreen on all bare areas.

Now, let's discuss heat and dehydration.

Dehydration can occur insidiously. When you realize you are thirsty, you are already behind in your drinking. It will be hard to catch up on your fluids that same day. So think ahead and stay hydrated.

First, to attain optimal hydration drink two or three glasses of fluid during the two hours **before** you actually start your patrol or other activity. Then maintain hydration by drinking four to eight ounces every half-hour or so. Do not drink caffeinated sodas, beer or other alcoholic beverages. They promote dehydration. Your best choice is cool water. Also, to maintain an adequate salt balance, eat regularly or snack on salt containing foods such as pretzels.

On particularly hot, sunny days, just as with sun exposure, seek shade whenever you can, and wear a cap or hat to lessen the effect of the sun's heat on your head.

Now *an important caution*: If you are *not* perspiring, and/or you are feeling hot or ill, you may not be adapting to the heat. Get into a shaded or cool area, wet and fan your skin, and seek medical care immediately. You may be on the verge of always-dangerous heat stroke or heat exhaustion.

Remember the proverbial, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." By employing these simple control methods, you decrease your risk of current and future health problems caused by repeated or prolonged sun exposure and the effects of heat and dehydration.



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Don't Let This Happen to You!

“We’re Aground!”

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It’s a cry heard all too often aboard cruising boats in tidal waters. Shifting sandbars, mud flats and ebb tide bends can catch an unwary skipper with their guard down. There is no need to panic, but on the other hand—depending on the wind and state of the tide—time may be of the essence.

Let us assume the skipper was aware of the possibility of grounding and was going slowly. In many cases, a prompt burst of power in reverse will do the trick. If that is successful, check for damage and possible water leaks caused by the impact and hopefully proceed to find the deep water.

There are many scenarios that are not that easy to solve. You are hard aground, now what? Of primary concern is the state of the tide. A prudent skipper may already know whether the tide is rising or falling. If the former is the case, there is no hurry unless the wind is picking up and a storm is approaching. As the tide rises, the boat may float off easily. In the meantime, why not take some soundings around the boat to be sure you know the shortest way to deep water. If you think the tide may need a little help, you can — while waiting — do a little planning. You can put your storm anchor in the dinghy and ferry it out, attached to your spare hawser, to deep water in the direction you have chosen.

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



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If you are in a sailing craft, there are several things which you might consider helpful. For example, in some keel boats, the deepest part of the keel is aft of the hull centerline. Moving your crew and any movable ballast forward will lessen the draft, making things easier. On any keel boat, causing the boat to heel will help; this can be done by shifting the crew and ballast to one side while heaving on the anchor line and applying engine power. It is even possible to swing a boom out to one side, stay it so it won't swing back, and have some crew climb out to heel the boat even more. Also, on almost any boat under power or winching on an anchor the action called “sally ship” may break the suction of a muddy or sandy bottom and free her. The crew on deck, in unison, moving from side to side may rock the boat enough to free her. In the early

sailing ship days, before tug boats, this maneuver saved many a warship and merchantman from having to wait for the next higher high tide to get on his way again.

A more daring and risky exercise is to put a second anchor far out, just forward of abeam, and attach it to the main halyard. Heaving or winching on the halyard until the gunwales are awash while hauling on the bow anchor may just slide you over to deep water.

If all efforts at self-help fail, you may have to call for assistance. If you get help from a commercial towing service you can usually assume they know their business and are insured. If you get help from a Good Samaritan, you will have to be your own “expert.” It is easy to damage a boat hauling it off a reef, or even a sandbar. For example, if your rudder is stuck in the bottom an attempt to pull the boat off stern first or by turning it pulling on the bow might bend or snap the rudder off.

No matter how you get free, or what you hit on the bottom, it is imperative that you make a thorough inspection below to be sure you are not taking on water before proceeding on your interrupted cruise.

