



Up Top In Operations

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Above and Beyond Minimum Standards: In the Pursuit of Excellence

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Annual currency maintenance is something that all of us in surface operations know and love, right? The annual currency maintenance tasks are the **MINIMUM** required to demonstrate that we have the skills necessary to participate in surface ops.

I realize that some people are constrained by time, and in some years, it is hard for them to do more than the minimum. But if you think like I do, you are looking for more of a challenge, a way to train with your shipmates to increase your skills and value to the Coast Guard and the boating public!

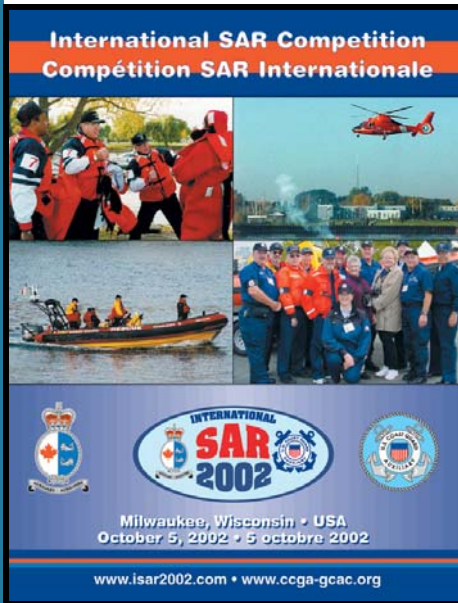
Have you heard about ISAR, the International Search and Rescue competition? For the past three years, six teams from the U.S. and six teams from Canada have squared off in a series of judged SAR events, including Search Area Planning, Underway SAR Exercise, First Aid, Heaving Line, Pump OPs, and more.

The teams competing in ISAR are all winners, typically they have had to win competitions at the District or Area level in order to ad-

vance to the International competition. Without exception, EVERYONE who has competed in ISAR has sharpened their skills, learned to work better as a team, and had a great time. ISAR competitors are NOT Auxiliarists who are just interested in doing the MINIMUM, they want to be the BEST they can be.

You can get a feel for last year's event if you point your web browser to www.ISAR2002.com. Here you will find a schedule of the events, a copy of the Official ISAR Program, list of winners, and much more. This year, ISAR 2003 will be held in St. John's, Newfoundland on Friday, 26 September 2003 at the Canadian Coast Guard Base and on Saturday, 27 September 2003 at the Royal Newfoundland Yacht Club (RNYC) in Conception Bay South.

Your DSO-OP has a copy of the team briefing that was given to all the ISAR 2002 competitors. This outlines last year's events, and describes them in



Above and Beyond...

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enough detail that Auxiliarists could use it as a training aid. Interested in forming a team and seeing if you have what it takes to compete in ISAR 2003? Contact your DSO-OP!

What about those of you looking for a challenge, whose schedules will not permit you to travel to Newfoundland at the end of September? Let me open the OPS curtain just a bit, and let you take a sneak peek at the soon to be released Operational Excellence Program.

This program will allow a boat crew TEAM to perform a series of proctored tasks. These tasks go above and beyond those required to be certified in the boat crew program. If the TEAM performs these tasks to a high standard, their achievement will be recognized with Operational Excellence Program ribbons for the TEAM members, and an "E" decal for the coxswain's OPFAC.



What type of tasks will the TEAM have to perform? The tasks will include:

- Search Planning
- Search Execution
- Pump Drill
- Communications
- Currency Maintenance Tasks

Teams that perform well enough to earn the Operational Excellence Program award will truly have demonstrated their Excellence. You can expect to see and hear more about this exciting new program soon!



Cold Weather Operations — Dress for Success!

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Safely operating your OPFAC in cold weather will require that you take certain precautions. Cold rain and high winds can develop in a short period of time, and put you and your crew at increased risk. When people have to endure rough seas,

cold temperatures and wet conditions, hypothermia can set in, reducing the crew's effectiveness and jeopardizing the mission. Preparing for these conditions and understanding their effects is essential for safe operations.

Coast Guard policy requires the use of anti-exposure coveralls and dry suits when air and/or water temperatures drop to a certain point. Make sure you check with your order issuing authority to determine if anti-exposure coveralls or dry suits are required for your patrol.

Wearing layers is a good way keep warm. The first layer should be designed to help you stay dry. Clothing worn next to the skin should "wick" moisture away from the body. Modern synthetic fibers such as polypropylene do not retain moisture and help to draw it away from the skin to an absorbent insulating layer.

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Cold Weather Operations

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This next absorbent layer should provide insulation. Insulation is all about trapping air, and loose knit or fuzzy material works best. This layer traps air, which helps retain your body heat, while at the same time absorbing moisture from the first layer. Wool and cotton are acceptable insulators, but the newer synthetic fleece materials do a better job.

The outer layer is required to stop wind and water from penetrating to the inner layers. Examples of outer layers are rain gear, dry suits, and anti-exposure coveralls. Rain gear and dry suits do not provide any insulation, so extra insulation in the second layer may be required. Dry suits don't "breathe," therefore, the second layer should be extra absorbent, so that the moisture wicked away from the skin has someplace to go.

Remember, if you are the coxswain, you are responsible for the safety of your crew. This not only means driving the boat in a prudent manner, but also ensuring that your crew is dressed appropriately for the mission and conditions. Make sure that cold/wet weather clothing is a part of your pre-underway checklist.

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



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Internet Links for SARDOGS!

Following are some links that you might want to check out while getting your Facility ready.

Pre underway and underway checklist
 (USCG Auxiliary National Web site)

<http://www.cgaux.org/cgauxweb/operations/chklist.pdf>

Light Lists online (annual editions, plus correction information)
 (USCG Navigation Center)

<http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/pubs/LightLists/LightLists.htm>

Local Notice to Mariners
 (all districts)

(USCG Navigation Center)

<http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/lnm/default.htm>

Notice to Mariners, online chart corrections, online light list updates

(NIMA Maritime Safety Information Center)

<http://pollux.nss.nima.mil/index>



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