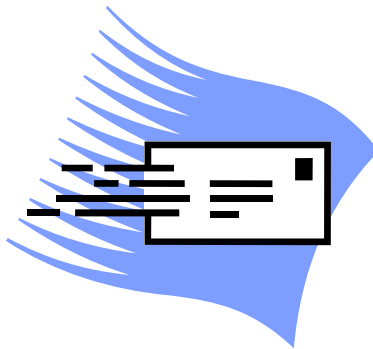


Electronic Communication

In the US Coast Guard Auxiliary



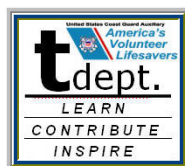
E-mail, Voicemail, Telephone and Face-to-Face Communication

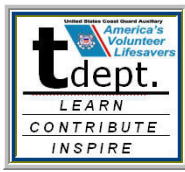
A Value-added Training Module

Produced by:

The National Department of Training

United States Coast Guard Auxiliary





Electronic Communications

In the US Coast Guard Auxiliary

Introduction

This course has been designed to provide members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary with specific information on when and to whom to send e-mail and some general information on how to write or respond to e-mail. Additionally, some general rules for the use of voice mail will also be discussed.

As members of the Auxiliary we observe many of the “rules” that govern the Coast Guard. Examples of this can be found in our Auxiliary Manual. Our Chain of Leadership and Management mirrors the Chain of Command within the Coast Guard. E-mail has become the most common way for Auxiliarist to communicate with one another and for the Coast Guard to pass information to us. Incorrect or inappropriate use of e-mail causes needless problems within our organization. While e-mail provides a readily available and inexpensive way to communicate, it often leaves open to the reader’s interpretation the meaning of the message. Care must be used when sending e-mail to insure that the receiver understands what the sender meant.

Voice mail presents its own issues that must be understood. Without being able to see the person who is leaving the message, an entirely different meaning might be taken from a voice mail message. The lack of visual clues to meaning that we normally get when we talk to an individual face to face require greater care when leaving voice mail messages if we don’t want to be misunderstood.

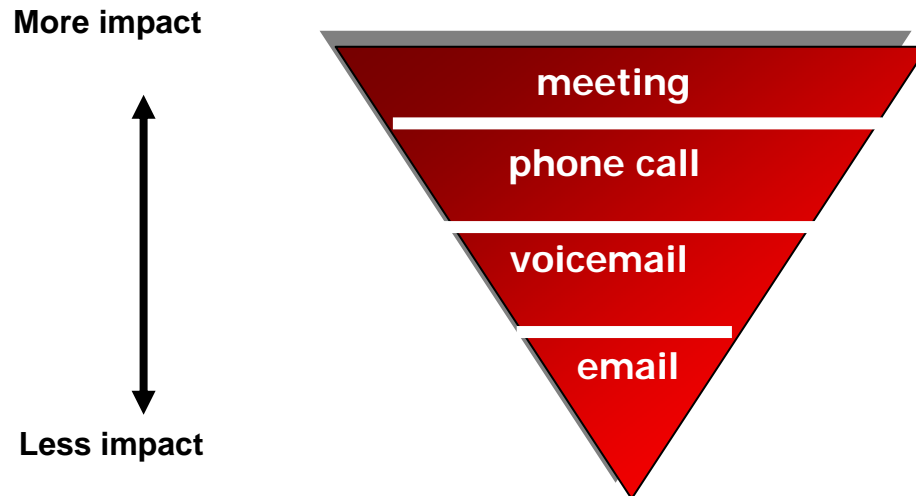
Learning Objectives

This course is designed to:

- ★ Provide guidance on how and when specific electronic communication tools should be used
- ★ Explain basic e-mail options and discuss their use within the Auxiliary
- ★ Instruct in the use of more advanced e-mail options
- ★ Explain how e-mail should be used within the Auxiliary
- ★ Furnish the student with simple rules that will assist them in using voice mail better

Nothing in this course can substitute for common sense. If the wording of an e-mail doesn’t read right to you, it most likely shouldn’t be sent. If you are not sure if all the people on your cc: list should get your e-mail, they most likely shouldn’t. Not sure your voice message conveyed the right message, use the delete option and start over. Common sense should always be “turned on.”

When Should I Use Each Type of Communication?



E-mail

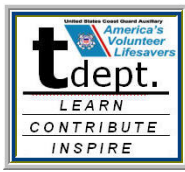
Without any visual or verbal clues and with our willingness to “read” into whatever we read what we would like it to say, e-mail is the easiest of all forms of communications to misunderstand. Couple that with the speed with which many of us write e-mails, or reply to them, without proper editing and you can quickly have the person who receives the e-mail getting an entirely different message than you thought you sent.

E-mail should not be used to discuss personnel issues or used for problem resolution between members of the Auxiliary. Avoid e-mail when dealing with any controversial subject or in any situation that requires very careful attention to very subtle or complex dealings with one or more people as the e-mails can easily be misunderstood.

E-mail is an easy way to convey a great deal of the information we deal with on a day-to-day basis in the Auxiliary. Reports, meeting notices, meeting agendas, and informational messages are examples of the type of e-mails that are easier to understand and the use of e-mail is more efficient than other forms of communication.

Use email when you want to...

- ★ Convey detailed information
- ★ Arrange meetings
- ★ Recap spoken conversations
- ★ Provide a carefully worded response
- ★ Create a paper trail
- ★ Send a consistent message to a group
- ★ Convey more details than you could via voicemail



US Coast Guard Auxiliary Value-added Training Topics

Avoid using email when...

- ★ You're angry
- ★ You're responding to someone who's angry
- ★ You're addressing a sensitive issue
- ★ You're chastising someone
- ★ The issue is very time-sensitive
- ★ You are sharing information you don't want to "travel" to others
- ★ You're gossiping, or engaging in water-cooler conversation

Flaming

The expression of extreme emotion or opinion in an email message is referred to as **flaming**.

Misinterpretation of the content or form of the email message **plus** the likelihood that the recipient will then fire off a hasty response often exacerbates the situation.

Voice mail

Voice mail should be limited to a simple statement of fact or to a request to have the call returned stating the subject that needs to be discussed. Avoid leaving any long detailed message about any subject and avoid any use of voice mail in dealing with any personal, personnel, controversial, or sensitive subject. The lack of visual clues coupled with the fact that the phone network does not transmit the full frequency range of your voice means that it is all too easy to have a voice mail message misunderstood.

Use voicemail when...

- ★ Your message contains a brief "Yes" or "No" response
- ★ You're addressing a time-sensitive issue
- ★ You want to pass along a quick update

Avoid using voicemail if...

- ★ You're angry
- ★ You need to respond to someone who's angry
- ★ You're addressing a sensitive issue
- ★ Your message takes more than 30 seconds
- ★ You need a paper trail
- ★ You need to chastise someone
- ★ You're sharing information you don't want to "travel"
- ★ You're gossiping, networking, or engaging in water-cooler chats



Here are some basic voicemail etiquette "reminders"!

- ★ Be aware of your "voice impression"
- ★ Take extra care when calling from a cell phone - speak slowly and clearly
- ★ Don't hide behind the system
- ★ Add introductory comments when forwarding to others
- ★ Change your greeting often: update it to reflect your schedule
- ★ Respect others' time: ask, "Is this a good time to speak?"
- ★ Respond to messages within 24 hours
- ★ Keep your voicemail box clean

Phone call

While not commonly understood, the phone network does not transmit the full frequency range of the human voice. In fact, the phone network transmits only a range from about 300 hertz to about 4000 hertz. We are able to hear sounds up to about 18,000 hertz (or higher if you are young) so the phone system isn't a perfect transmitter of human speech. The phone system also lacks any visual clues (body language) that help us all interpret what is being said.



The person may not hear subtle tones of voice or slight changes in pitch or volume, thus phone calls are not the best way to handle very sensitive matters. Phone calls are much better than either e-mail or voice mail because the other person can question you if they don't understand the point you are trying to get across. However, if you try to convey your message by slight change in your voice, you should be aware that the phone system may not pass small changes in inflection to the person whom you are talking to.

While subtle changes in tone may not be easily detected, the phone will leave an impression of intent between the parties. You can clearly hear concern, anger, sarcasm, defensiveness and a range of emotions with having to determine them via the written word.

Nevertheless, a phone call can facilitate a **DIALOGUE** between two parties, a distinct advantage over e-mail and voice mail. This dialogue can allow the parties to ask questions, gain clarity, check for understanding and enable shared decision-making.

Face to face

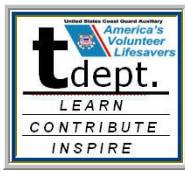


Whenever possible the most sensitive of subjects should be dealt with via a face-to-face meeting. In that way the person who you are talking to can get the full range of visual and auditory clues to help them understand what you are saying. In our organization given the distances involved, it is not always possible to meet with a person to talk over issues. In that case the phone is the preferred second choice. Just remember the pros and cons discussed above about capabilities of the phone system.



It's Time to Work Out! Answer the questions below.

1. What is your preferred method of communicating? Please circle your choice.
 Email Voicemail Telephone Face-to-face
2. Have you ever had the experience of **flaming** in an email? Yes No
3. Did you get the result you wanted? Why or why not?



4. What would you do differently the next time?

How to Use E-mail in the USCG Auxiliary

Introduction

Assume that your 8th grade English teacher is reading and grading every e-mail you will ever send – we would all write better e-mails! While it isn't practical for each of us to have our own personal English teacher, we can pay attention to what we write. Almost all e-mail packages support some type of spell checker and many have the ability to check basic grammar as well. You should avail yourself of any and all tools that will help insure that words are spelled correctly and that our language is used correctly.

One of the most basic of rules for writing e-mail is to read what you have written BEFORE you hit the send key. It is best to use the “**write once – read twice**” rule before you hit the send key. If it doesn't look right to you, it won't look good to the person who is getting it. This also gives you the chance to insure that you are saying what you really want to say. The “read before send” rule is even more important when you reply to an e-mail that you have received. A hasty reply may cause far more problems than it solves. Read and think before you hit the send key.

Formal e-mail versus Informal e-mail

Many e-mail messages are sent between close friends for various purposes. Let us assume that you want to arrange a patrol with a close friend for Saturday morning. You send an e-mail as follows: “Hey Chowder Head – any chance you will be out of bed by 1000 to crew on my boat Saturday? You bring lunch.”

Hardly a formal e-mail but possibly very appropriate if you know “chowder head” well, you often crew together, and you take turns providing lunch.

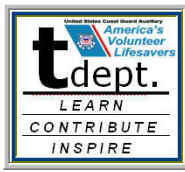
If you sent a similar message to the entire Flotilla about the same patrol, it might read like this:

“I have scheduled a patrol using my vessel *ESCAPADE* for Malletts Bay on Saturday from 1000 to 1600. You will need to bring a lunch and insure that you have adequate drinking water. Please respond to this message by 2100 Thursday if you would like to crew.”

This course will deal with formal e-mail.

Spelling, Grammar, Sentences and Paragraphs

Almost every e-mail package has a spell check tool; many can be set up so that after you hit the send key but before the message is sent, a spell check occurs. There simply is no excuse for spelling errors in any e-mail you send.



US Coast Guard Auxiliary Value-added Training Topics

With an e-mail you are projecting yourself and the idea you wish to get across to one or more other people. How would you feel if an important e-mail from someone “up” the chain were received only to have it contain very bad grammar and many misspellings? Likewise, long or convoluted sentences aren’t easy to read or understand.



It’s Time to Work Out! Answer the questions below. Circle your choice.

1. Do you think your outgoing emails are perceived as professional? Yes No
 2. Would you be willing to solicit feedback from a colleague about your emails? Yes No
- If **Yes**, please seek out your colleagues and get some positive and constructive feedback.

Do not use excessive punctuation. Remember, your 8th grade English teacher is watching!

Reading from a computer screen isn’t easy for many people, and the way you write your e-mails can make it easier or harder for them to understand what you are trying to say. Short, clear sentences coupled with the use of paragraphs helps you to organize your thoughts and the reader to understand the point you are trying to get across. The use of bullet points is very helpful in increasing readability.

Your e-mail should be gender neutral unless you are referring to a specific person.

Long e-mails will almost always get skimmed over and thus not fully understood. Write in as clear and concise a manner as is possible and keep to the point you are trying to get across. If background information is needed to insure proper understanding, include it as an attachment rather than in the body of the e-mail.

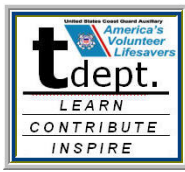
To:, cc:, and bcc:

The To: address field of the e-mail is for the person or persons who need to take action on the e-mail or who have been selected to receive the information in the e-mail. For a report this may only be the person to whom the report is going. For example: If you are an FC and are sending your monthly report to the DCP, the only person in the To: field is the DCP. If you wish to also let your VFC know what is going on, their name should be in the cc: field.

Copies of reports, information e-mails, etc. are sent to those that have some need to know but are not expected to take action on the e-mail. Remember, it is not correct to cc: up the chain. If you are the FC sending a report to the DCP, you don’t get to copy the RCO on the report. Another example; if you are the DCP sending information down to the FCs, you may choose to cc: the VCP and possibly other SOs as the need arises. Don’t cc: FSOs. That’s not your job - they aren’t in your direct Chain.

The use of the bcc: (blind cc:) should be avoided most of the time. If the need arises to let others know the content of an e-mail, without the knowledge of the members the e-mail was addressed to, forward them a copy with a covering note. The covering note should state that the original recipients are unaware that you have forwarded others the e-mail.

There is, however, one case when the use of the bcc: option makes sense. If you want to send an e-mail to a list of people and not allow them the option of using the **REPLY ALL** option, the following will work. List yourself in the To: field and all that you wish to send the e-mail to in the bcc: field. Anyone getting the e-mail will be able to reply only to you. While this option should work with most e-mail packages, it would be wise to test it to insure it works with yours.



US Coast Guard Auxiliary Value-added Training Topics

Subject Line

Always include a subject for any e-mail you send. Also try to make it as descriptive as possible. Many of us remember that we got an important e-mail on a given subject a week or so ago; trying to find it without a reasonable subject line is very difficult. Never send an e-mail without a subject – it may get ignored or treated as junk mail.

The subject line, “Patrol,” hardly conveys adequate information about what the e-mail is about. A more reasonable subject line might read, Patrol – Saturday. At least you have narrowed the possible patrols in question down to the ones to be run on Saturday. It might still be better to add the date if you run patrols most weekends.

Subject lines with only a single word are hardly ever adequate to allow the person getting the e-mail to know before they read it what the message is about. Therefore the subject line “Report” doesn’t explain much. Why not “Report on New Member Recruiting efforts on our Division.”

However, the subject line isn’t the place to start the great American novel. Keep it short and focused on what the e-mail is about.



It’s Time to Work Out! Determine if the subject lines listed below are appropriate and descriptive. Place an ✕ next to subject lines that are descriptive.

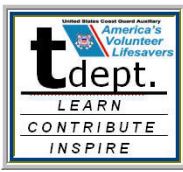
Subject Line	✕
1. Need to talk	
2. Agenda for Thursday’s Flotilla Meeting	
3. Can you help at the Boat Show?	
4. Important Update to OPS Policy Manual Attached	
5. VE Booth	
6. Help!	
7. District Conference Changes	
8. Flotilla “Haul Out” Party	
9. Fw: Fw: Re:	
10. Award	

Answers on Page 10

Replying To E-mail

The basic rule is, not all e-mails need a reply. If you are cc: on an informational e-mail, no further action is needed on your part other than to read the message. You should not send a “thank you” or a “got it” message as a reply. E-mails that are addressed to you obey the same rules. If the message is informational and does not need a response, don’t reply. If you are asked for specific information, a reply is needed and should be sent in as timely a manner as possible. E-mails that ask you to take some specific action need a brief answer; either “OK”, “will do”, or “no” and the reason why the report can’t be prepared. As an example, “Please prepare a report by 5MAY on our efforts to get wider media coverage for our VSC effort” needs either a positive or negative response in a timely manner. The actual report can follow at a later date; the short reply lets the sender know you got the message and are doing what was asked.

If you would not normally send a thank you to someone for whatever they did for you, don’t send an e-mail thank you. However, if you believe a thank-you is deserved, by all means, send an e-mail thank you.



US Coast Guard Auxiliary Value-added Training Topics

Answers

General E-mail

1.	False
2.	True
3.	True
4.	False
5.	True

Subject Line

1.	no
2.	x
3.	x
4.	no
5.	no
6.	no
7.	x
8.	x
9.	no
10.	no

Advanced E-mail Options

Forwarding E-mail

Forwarding an e-mail with FYI (for your information) added is an all-too-common way of “passing the buck.” Since you have forwarded the message, you can’t be held accountable if the person who got the message doesn’t have knowledge about the point in question – after all you sent them the e-mail!

You are assuming that the person who gets the forwarded e-mail has the time to read over what may be a long e-mail thread, starting at the bottom and reading up. The more complex the topic or the longer the e-mail, the more you are responsible for preparing a shorter version that contains all the information that is needed but is far easier to read.

Forwarding e-mail is appropriate under many conditions. Assume that you are an FC and get an e-mail from the DCP that provides specific information about an upcoming Division event. That e-mail can be forwarded to all your Flotilla members without your adding any comment unless you choose to add some additional information.

The rule of common sense should apply. If the original e-mail already is to the point and need not be shortened to make it readable, forwarding it on to those that need to see the information is OK. However, if the e-mail is long or requires action on your part, it is far better for you to condense what was written, and add your own thoughts, and then send it to those that need to see it.

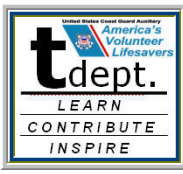
Exercise great care to whom you forward e-mails – sending messages “to the world” is counterproductive and you will quickly gain the reputation of someone whose e-mails can be ignored.

All of us have gotten multiple copies of the same e-mail. In fact, we’ve received so many at times that it starts to take on the status of junk mail. The higher up the chain an e-mail starts, the greater the tendency for it to be forwarded multiple times as it moves down the chain.



First, when an e-mail is prepared that might reasonably be forwarded, it should state at the beginning of the e-mail who the recipients are by position. When choosing to forward an e-mail, be aware of this list and try to avoid sending it to the same groups that already have the message.

Second, use the appointed chain for messages that clearly apply to them. Thus, a message that is about specific changes to the VSC program should go down the VE chain, not the elected chain. It is the responsibility of the appointed VE staff officers to act on this information.



US Coast Guard Auxiliary *Value-added Training Topics*

As many members of the Auxiliary have two or more positions within the organization, it is inevitable that you will receive more than one copy of a specific e-mail from time to time. However, if we all follow the rules and send e-mails to those only one up or one down the chain from our position, we can reduce the total number of e-mail we receive daily.

Smile Faces, and Other “Emotions”

The use of the smile face, :-), and any other combination of characters designed to convey feeling should be avoided. While the sender may believe that they convey more than adequate meaning to the e-mail, the person receiving the message may not. Thus, sending an e-mail that appears to express anger at someone but ending it with a :-)) may mean to you as the sender that you aren't mad at all; however, it may be ignored by the receiver and thus your message may convey an entirely incorrect meaning.



By all means, use these symbols in informal messages between friends, but they do not belong in any formal Auxiliary e-mail.

Jargon

E-mail within the Auxiliary should be treated as formal written communications. Jargon or IM (Instant Messaging) speak should not be used. Thus, BTW should become “by the way” or IMHO (in my humble opinion) might be better written as, “I believe.”

Informal e-mails between friends who also happen to be members of the Auxiliary can make use of whatever style suits the two members.

Formatting

It is best to avoid any special formatting that your e-mail package may allow you to use. While the e-mail may look very impressive to you, the receiver's e-mail system may not be able to display any of the special features that you included. In the worse possible case they may not be able to read your message at all. Plain text will get the point across; if special features are needed, include them in an attachment. Thus, if the attachment can't be viewed, the e-mail can still be read.

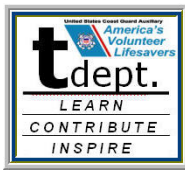
Length of E-mails

No one has ever or will ever win a prize for literature by sending an e-mail. E-mails should be kept short and to the point. Reading even a two-page e-mail on a computer screen is not an easy task for many people. Long e-mails either get ignored or only partially read, and therefore partially understood. While there is no hard and fast rule as to how long an e-mail needs to be, the general rule of “shorter is better” should be observed and violated for only very specific reasons.

Attachments

Many but not all members of the Auxiliary have a broadband connection for their computer, and thus large e-mail attachments don't present a huge problem. However, for those members who still depend on a dial-up connection, the size and number of attachments matter a great deal.

If an attachment is required and if it (or collectively if there are multiple) is large, it is better to send out an e-mail to all you intend to send the attachment(s) to and ask if they can handle files of that size. Do not send the attachment(s) to those that don't respond in the affirmative.



US Coast Guard Auxiliary Value-added Training Topics

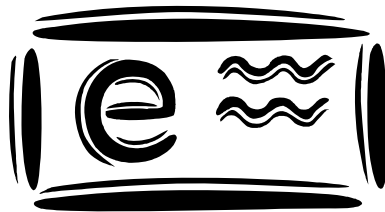
It is best to use well-recognized packages when creating an attachment. Thus, a text document in Word or Word Perfect should be able to be processed by almost all members of the Auxiliary. If special software must be used to create a file, include the description of the software in the text of the e-mail so the receiver understands how the file can be viewed.

Avoid the use of very specialized packages as most readers will not be able to view attachments you created using non-standard software.

Privacy

Most people assume that if they send an e-mail to just one person, that person is the only one who will see the message. While that is true most of the time, it is not true in all circumstances.

Someone in corporate communications may read e-mail sent from the work place. While this practice isn't universal, it does occur from time to time at different companies. Also, not all e-mail systems work correctly all the time. Messages may be sent in error to everyone in your address book or other collections of users not known to you.



careful.

Remember, e-mail isn't a great way to discuss any sensitive issue; lack of privacy is only one of the reasons why this true.

It is possible for the person to whom you address an e-mail to decide to forward the message on to others. In the worse case, if you comment on a fellow member of the Auxiliary to another member, the latter may decide to forward the message to the member you wrote about. Be

High Priority Option, Response Time, Notification of Delivery

Use the **high priority send option** sparingly. Members quickly learn that if all messages arrive with priority from you, they can be quickly treated as just normal e-mail. Use the priority option only when the message clearly requires a rapid response.

Many members assume that if they send an e-mail, everyone addressed will drop everything and respond quickly. Your e-mail may be one of several received, and the user may not even have their computer turned on at the time you sent the e-mail. Give members a reasonable chance to respond before you question them as to why they haven't.

When you receive an e-mail that requires you to take some action, respond as quickly as you can or let the sender know you got the message and will get back to them as soon as your schedule allows. In this way the sender knows you got the message and are working on the problem.



Avoid the use of Delivery Notification, as not all e-mail systems will respond the same way. If you need to insure that a message has been received, ask the person you sent the message to to send an acknowledgement.

CAPITAL LETTERS

Avoid the use of all capital letters. In an e-mail the reader will assume that you are **shouting**. An occasional Capitalized word can be added to insure proper emphasis. An example will help; "The patrol scheduled for Saturday morning has been CANCELLED" will insure that all who receive the message quickly realize that the Saturday patrol will not take place.

An ALCOAST from the Coast Guard will always be in capital letters. This is due to the limitations of some communication equipment that cannot process both capital (upper) and lower case letters. Upper case letters were chosen as the preferred option for communication with this equipment and any ALCOAST will always use only upper case letters.



What impression do
your emails leave?

Common Uses of E-Mail in the Auxiliary

We will look at how e-mail is used in the following situations:

- ★ The Auxiliary Chain of Leadership and Management
- ★ Requests
- ★ Reports

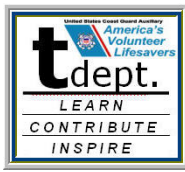
The Auxiliary Chain of Leadership and Management

The Auxiliary Chain of Leadership and Management is similar to the Coast Guard Chain of Command. E-mail should be addressed only to the person up or down the chain from your position.

Some examples may help in understanding this requirement. Let us assume you are a Flotilla Commander and need to convey information to your Division Captain but think the Rear Commodore also needs to know. Send the e-mail only to your Division Captain with a request that it be sent up the Chain. Do not copy the RCO on the e-mail you send to the DCP. If you wish to send an e-mail to the RCO, send it via the DCP. Under almost all circumstances do not jump the Chain at any time or for any reason. The use of the cc: is jumping the chain, and it should not be used in this manner.

While the general rule is, "Don't jump the Chain", it is permitted at times and always at the request of the person "up" the Chain. Again, an example may help. You, as an FC, are working on coordinating an event that will involve your DCP, RCO, and DCO. Various schedules need to be arranged so everything flows smoothly. Your DCO has sent out an e-mail that includes the RCO, DCP, and you on the distribution list dealing with the specific issue of the coordination of the event. It is proper to include the DCP, RCO, and DCO on any reply or new message about the specific event. However, if any new topic needs to be brought to the attention of the DCO, it needs to go via the DCP without a cc: to either the RCO or DCO. When in doubt err on the side of sending e-mails only one up or one down the Chain.

Does this mean if the current DCO is a friend and frequently crews on your boat and you want to send this person an e-mail asking if they can crew this coming Saturday, that it needs to go up the Chain until it gets to them? NO! In this case your e-mail to the DCO is not about Auxiliary business that needs to go via the Chain. It is from one member to another. However, it is not correct to presume on the friendship and send a message directly to the DCO about specific Auxiliary issues that are bothering you. That message needs to follow the Chain. Judgment is called for; remember, if it deals with Auxiliary business it, needs to follow the Chain.



US Coast Guard Auxiliary Value-added Training Topics

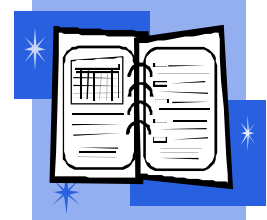
Many of us in the Auxiliary have more than one position. Thus I may be the elected DCP and the appointed SO-MT. If you are an FSO-MT, I am in your MT Chain; it is proper for you to address and e-mail to me about any and all MT issues. However, if you are having a problem with your FC, it is not proper for you to send an e-mail to me requesting that I take action as the DCP. That e-mail needs to follow the correct Chain. In this case your e-mail should go via the aforementioned FC. If you are in the Chain, you don't get to decide not to forward an e-mail; add your input and forward it up or down the Chain as requested. This last point is important. You are the DCP and get a request or report from an FC with a note asking that it be sent to the RCO. You don't get to make the decision not send it on. You may add any and all comments that you want before it is sent – but send it! If you believe that it shouldn't be sent, call the FC and talk over the issue with them. If the FC withdraws the request, it need not be forwarded. However, if they wish it sent, you are required to send it on.

Requests

Requests can be broken down into two broad categories: requests for specific action via the Chain and requests for general information or assistance.

Any request for specific action (e.g. a request for orders), should follow the appropriate Chain. This is not always the Elected Chain. If as the FSO-OP I need to make a specific request of the SO-OP, it need not, and in fact should not, go via the Elected Chain. It would be proper for me to cc: my VFC to inform them of my request. Under no circumstances should I cc: the DCP or VCP. They aren't directly in this Chain.

Requests for general assistance or information can be sent to a broader audience. As an example, assume that you are the FSO-OP seeking boat crew for a patrol Saturday morning. An e-mail to the entire Flotilla, stating the specific information about the patrol is appropriate. What if a member of the Flotilla happens to be the current DCO? Can you still send them a copy of the e-mail? Yes, in this case they are viewed as a member of the Flotilla not as the DCO so you are not jumping the Chain.



Reports

Many of the roles we fulfill within the Auxiliary require that we prepare reports. The tendency with e-mail is to give these reports the widest possible distribution. It is critical that the Chain be followed in these circumstances.

However, what is the correct "chain" to follow? Let us assume that you are the SO-PE and have been asked to prepare a report of your Division's PE activities by the DSO-PE. Who gets the report? The report should be addressed to the DSO-PE. They requested it and it should be addressed to them. It is appropriate to send copies to your FSO-PE's within your Division (they most likely provided you with the raw data for the report), and a copy to your VCP (that person is the Chief of Staff for the Division and needs to be aware of the activities of the SO within the Division). However, you need to resist the urge to distribute the report to a wider audience. Rather than being viewed as "brilliant" for having produced such a fine report, you will be viewed as filling members' e-mail inboxes with reports they don't need to see directly.

Top Ten Rules for E-Mail

10. Use the Spell Check
 9. Use a meaningful subject line
 8. Avoid smile faces and IM jargon
 7. Use the "Reply All" sparingly
 6. Remember – Your 8th Grade English teacher will read your e-mail
 5. You're not writing a novel – Be Brief
 4. Don't "cc" up the Chain
 3. Use the "Bcc" very rarely
 2. If an e-mail makes you mad, wait 24 hours BEFORE you send a reply
- And the #1 Rule for E-Mail...*
1. Read BEFORE you hit the send key!

Voice Messages

Voice messages are the second form of electronic messaging that this course will discuss. As stated earlier, voice messages are second in the order of messages that are easily misunderstood. It is important that any member of the Auxiliary use care when using voice messages to conduct any form of Auxiliary business.

Voice messages need to be direct short statements spoken clearly. Any attempt to be subtle, to attempt to convey any special feeling via slight changes in the tone of your voice, or to use dry humor will almost always lead to misunderstandings and thus not convey the message you were trying to get across. Remember, the telephone isn't a perfect means of transmitting the human voice; it sends only a small portion of the frequency range that our ears can pick-up.

Below are five simple rules for leaving voice messages. Follow them and you lessen the chance that your messages will be misunderstood.

Rule 1 – Do not have a conversation with the answering machine, they don't understand anything!

How many times have you listened to a voice message and wondered what the person was talking about? What happened is easy to figure out but hard to deal with. Say I dial your number and your phone rings until the answering machine picks up; it then plays your greeting saying how nice it is that I called and how sorry you are that you can't take the call but leave a number and you will call back. By that time I have already gotten half way through what I wanted to talk to you about. I just pick up in "my" conversation with you. You, of course, are now listening to me talk on about something that you don't understand and can't figure out why I called and what the heck I am talking about.

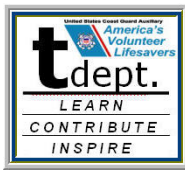
Rule 2 – If you don't want what you are saying to be on the local 6 o'clock news, you shouldn't leave it as a message.

It is important to realize that you do not control who hears the messages that you are leaving. They may be heard by other family members, the person you wanted to hear the message, or worse case, they may be heard by the person you are leaving a message about if they happen to be visiting the person you called when the message is played.

Rule 3 – Just because you left a voice mail message, don't assume it was heard by the person you wanted to hear it.

You and a number of friends are scheduled to run a patrol starting at 0500 Saturday morning. Something comes up and you need to delay the start of the patrol to 1000. You leave voice mail messages for the three members who are your crew. Two get the message - one doesn't. When you show up at your boat at 1000, you find a very upset crew who has been there since 0500 wondering what happened. Just because you left a voice message, don't assume that it was received. Technical problems might have prevented it from getting heard, another family member might have heard it and forgotten to pass it on, or none one may be aware that there is a message waiting to be played back.





US Coast Guard Auxiliary *Value-added Training Topics*

Rule 4 – Speak slowly.

HeyJohnIneedyououttogivemeacallateightsevenfouronenineseventwoassoonasyoucan.

How about, “John, please call me at eight – seven – four – one – nine – seven – two as soon as you can.”

Think about the person you are leaving the message for; they are the ones that need to understand what you are saying.

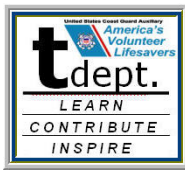
Rule 5 – Voice messages aren’t for solving problems.

Do not assume that you can solve any problem via voice messages. Short answers to a specific question are OK. Example, “Mary, in answer to your question about the time of the meeting on Monday, it will start at 1900.” However, remember Rule 3. If it is important that Mary be at the meeting, be sure that she got the message. Your message might be better worded as, “ Mary, in answer to your question about the time of the meeting on Monday, it will start at 1900, please confirm that you got this message by Sunday.” Note that the answer in the above example stated the specific question that was asked along with a very easy-to-understand answer. It did not deal with anything controversial, sensitive, or secure. Nor did it touch on any personnel matter. All of these topics are off-limits for voice messages.

Follow these simple rules and you are on the road to leaving easy to understand, delivered, and acted-upon voice messages. Ignore them at your peril.



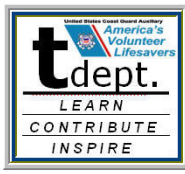
It’s Time to Work Out! Take the Learning Check on the next two pages. How well do you understand the rules for professional electronic communication?



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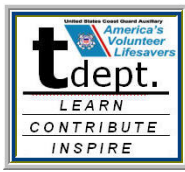
Electronic Communications Learning Check

1. When replying to an e-mail the **reply-all** option should always be used to insure that everyone reads your answer. T/F
2. E-Mails are not easy to read and comprehend; therefore, you should be careful about what write about and how you write it. T/F
3. You are running a Patrol this coming Saturday July 23. You need to send an e-mail to the members who will crew with you. The best Subject line for the e-mail is:
 - A. Patrol
 - B. Patrol Saturday 23JUL
 - C. 23JUL
 - D. Notice to Crew
4. You should use voice messaging to accomplish the following goals:
 - A. Tell a member about the time of a meeting.
 - B. Inform a member that their actions at the last meeting were not appropriate
 - C. Ask to have someone return a call
 - D. A and B
 - E. A and C
 - F. None of the above
5. You are the FC, the DCO is a good friend and member of your Flotilla, the following e-mails from you to the DCO are OK
 - A. An invitation to Crew next Saturday
 - B. Notice of a Flotilla meeting
 - C. Comments about the DCP whom you don't like
 - D. A report on Flotilla VSC efforts
 - E. All of the above
 - F. None of the above
 - G. A and B
 - H. A, B and D
 - I. B and C
6. The use of the bcc: (blind cc:) should be avoided most of the time. T/F
7. The format of an e-mail is important because:
 - A. All who receive the e-mail can display any e-mail format
 - B. Special formats allow you to send more readable e-mails
 - C. Not all who receive your e-mail can display all e-mail formats
 - D. Special formats make e-mails easier to send and therefore should always be used
8. Informal e-mails between friends who are also members of the Auxiliary always need to follow the rules as outlined in this course. T/F



US Coast Guard Auxiliary Value-added Training Topics

9. You have been asked to prepare a report. The original request came from the DCO, via the RCO, via the DCP, to you the FC. Your report should be sent to:
- A. The DCO, with copies to the RCO and DCP
 - B. The DCP, with copies to the RCO and DCO
 - C. The RCO
 - D. The DCP
10. The spell checker takes many resources to use; therefore, it should be used sparingly. T/F
11. When replying to an e-mail, always send the original message. T/F
12. The order from hardest to understand to easiest to understand in communication is:
- A. E-mail, phone call, face-to-face, voice message
 - B. Phone call, face-to-face, e-mail, voice message
 - C. Face-to-face, phone call, voice message, e-mail
 - D. E-mail, voice message, phone call, face-to-face
13. The To: field of an e-mail should contain the name of anyone who should see the message. T/F
14. When replying to an e-mail it is important to:
- A. Start an new message so the recipient won't be confused by the original message
 - B. Insure that the reply references the original
 - C. Insure that you cc the DCO on any reply you send
 - D. Always use the Reply-All option
15. Privacy is never assured for any e-mail that you send. T/F
16. When you leave a voice message, it is important to:
- A. Speak slowly and clearly so you can be understood
 - B. Leave a very long and detailed message
 - C. Speak quickly so as not to use valuable recording time
 - D. Assume that the person "got" the message
17. E-mail attachments can:
- A. Be of any size and number because all members have broadband Internet connections
 - B. Be too large or numerous and cause problems for some of our members
 - C. Only be sent if they have full motion video contained in the attachment
 - D. Never deal with the subject of the e-mail
18. The use of capital letters in an e-mail is:
- A. Considered shouting if the e-mail is in all capital letters
 - B. Always permitted
 - C. Used in an ALCOAST
 - D. A and C
 - E. None of the above
19. In order to insure that your e-mails are always read, always send them with a high priority. T/F
20. Voice messages should not deal with the following topics:



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- A. Personnel, personal, or sensitive subjects
- B. Answers to specific questions
- C. Request for a return call
- D. Time of next Flotilla meeting



Learning Check Answer Key

Answers

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1. F | 11. T |
| 2. T | 12. D |
| 3. B | 13. F |
| 4. E | 14. B |
| 5. G | 15. T |
| 6. T | 16. A |
| 7. C | 17. B |
| 8. F | 18. D |
| 9. D | 19. F |
| 10. F | 20. A |

Scoring

If you got this many correct:

18-20	You are a genius! Congratulations!	
14-17	Very good! Just remember to refresh on the rules every so often!	
14 or less	Try going back and look up the answers you got wrong. This will help you to remember in the future.	