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CGD8INST 3501
15 OCT 2006

EIGHTH DISTRICT INSTRUCTION 3501

Subj: READY FOR OPERATIONS PROGRAM

- Ref:
- (a) Sumner I. Kimball Readiness Award, COMDTINST 1650.2
 - (b) Coast Guard Boat Operations and Training Manual (BOAT), COMDTINST M16114.32 Vol. I and II
 - (c) Special and Emergency Operations and Procedures (SEOPS) Training Manual, LANTAREAINST M3502.1
 - (d) Rescue and Survival Systems Manual, COMDTINST M10470.10E
 - (e) Training and Education Manual, COMDTINST M1500.10B
 - (f) Cutter Training and Qualification Manual, COMDTINST M3502.4G
 - (g) Coast Guard Navigation Standards, COMDTINST M3530.2A
 - (h) Mandatory Use of the Training Management Tool, COMDTINST 5270.2
 - (i) 41' UTB Operator's Handbook, COMDTINST M16114.2C
 - (j) 47' MLB Operator's Handbook, COMDTINST M16114.
 - (k) 49' BUSL Operator's Handbook, COMDTINST M16114.22A
 - (l) Boat Crew Seamanship Manual, COMDTINST M16114.5C
 - (m) Non-Standard Boat Operator's Handbook, COMDTINST M16114.28
 - (n) Defender Class Operator's Handbook, COMDTINST M16114.37
 - (o) AOPS User Guide

1. **PURPOSE:** Unit and operational commanders must ensure the day-to-day readiness of their operational platforms and crews. This instruction promulgates policy, standards, and guidance in support of the formal Ready for Operations (RFO) evaluation process and establishes operational guidelines for ensuring the highest state of readiness among cutters, small boat units and other boat crews throughout the Eighth District.
2. **ACTION:** Sector commanders shall comply with this instruction.

DISTRIBUTION – SDL No. 140

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NON-STANDARD DISTRIBUTION: *D8 Sectors, D8 Stations, D8 MSUs, COMDT (G-RCB)

3. DISCUSSION:

- a. Introduction: Cutter and boat operations are inherently challenging and dangerous, made more so by adverse weather, turbulent seas and the complexities of mission tasking. When considering these environmental and performance factors within the context of an increasingly junior work force, it becomes evident that training tempered by experience must be the priority for ensuring the safety of our crews and successful mission outcomes. Inattention to these priorities and mission over tasking can lead to, and has resulted in, unintended deficits in our readiness posture. To prevent such degradations in readiness, this instruction specifies a standard for achieving and maintaining proficiency. These performance standards are mandatory operational activities that, when accomplished, have been shown to correlate positively with performance.
- b. Goals: A dedicated Coast Guard infrastructure exists to provide resident and exportable training, standardization certifications, and evaluations by various assistance teams. However, this infrastructure is not a replacement for unit oversight by operational commanders and/or unit-level training that is essential in the maintenance of unit readiness. The goal of the Ready For Operations (RFO) Program is to communicate a clear and consistent approach to assessing unit readiness and to provide operational and unit commanders with clearly defined readiness requirements to evaluate and act upon.
- c. Unit Evaluation Requirements: A variety of factors that support unit readiness shall be continuously evaluated by commands to ensure units remain fully mission capable. This constant evaluation is guided by a variety of programs that include, but are not limited to, daily checks, Preventive Maintenance System (PMS) schedules, and regular, self-audited readiness evaluations. Self-audits of materiel readiness (as required by shipboard regulations) shall be conducted on an ongoing basis to assist units in maintaining work lists and Current Ships Maintenance Project (CSMP) records. Reports related to other aspects of unit readiness as addressed by continuous-monitoring systems, such as PMS completion, shall be submitted in accordance with applicable directives.

4. PROCEDURE:

- a. Sector Commanders will ensure their Ready for Operations (RFO) programs establish a continuum for measuring, on an annual basis, boat crew proficiency, compliance with standardization/ configuration requirements and overall operational readiness on all cutters, Aids to Navigation Teams (ANTs), Marine Safety Units (MSUs) and stations on all surface assets. Readiness and Standardization Assessments conducted by the Standardization Teams (STAN) for small boats and the Special and Emergency Operations Procedures (SEOPS) Teams for cutters may not be substituted for the unit RFO evaluation. The process should not be perceived as event driven, but rather as an ongoing and consistent standard for the way the unit conducts business on a daily basis.
- b. Due to unique operating conditions in each Sector, commanders may impose additional requirements provided these requirements do not contradict policy guidance contained in this instruction or other published directives. Sector Commanders shall outline additional local

- requirements in appropriate written directives in order to ensure consistency among assigned operational units.
- c. The Sector Commander shall designate a RFO evaluation team in writing and ensure that each RFO evaluator is thoroughly familiar with the applicable references and enclosures contained in this directive pertaining to their specific area of responsibility or expertise. The team shall consist of at least the following elements:
- (1) Team Leader: The team leader should normally be the senior person on the team and preferably senior to the unit commander receiving the evaluation.
 - (2) Operations Representative: An operations representative with the most operational expertise or relevant experience should conduct the deck/operations evaluation.
 - (3) Engineer: An engineering representative with the most engineering expertise or relevant experience should conduct the engineering evaluation.
 - (4) Sector Aids to Navigation (AtoN) Officer: The Sector AtoN Officer or his representative shall attend RFO visits for AtoN cutters and AtoN shore based-units to evaluate buoy deck evolutions, rigging and associated logs, and AtoN folders.
 - (5) Sector Naval Engineer: The Sector Naval Engineer or his representative shall attend all RFO visits to assist in the evaluation of the material condition of all cutters and boats and review all applicable administrative records pertaining to the unit's Engineering Department.
- d. Specific requirements and procedures outlined in this instruction may require advance preparation by RFO team members to ensure proficiency. Additionally, RFO team members should periodically review previous RFO reports and evaluations for units within their AOR to determine trends and areas of concern, ensuring members are fully prepared to address such trends during subsequent RFO visits.
- e. RFO Teams are expected to attend all STAN and SEOPS team visits in their AOR. RFO team members will use these assessments to remain current on new policy and procedural changes that may affect unit readiness.
- f. Safety of personnel and the preservation of equipment are paramount when conducting underway evolutions. In order to maintain absolute safety during the evaluation, the following procedures apply.
- (1) Cutter Commanding Officer (CO)/Officer in Charge (OIC) or Coxswain Responsibilities: The CO/OIC/Coxswain is ultimately responsible for the vessel and all persons aboard during a mission, including RFO evaluations. If an unsafe condition exists or may eventually arise, the CO/OIC/Coxswain shall halt the exercise until the unsafe situation or condition is corrected.

- (2) Evaluator Responsibilities: Evaluators shall utilize all available and appropriate means to eliminate or minimize risk (Green/Amber/Red (GAR) model, risk assessment, etc.). Evaluators shall specifically discuss the importance of safety during in-briefs and prior to each drill. When an evaluator observes an unsafe condition, he or she shall immediately inform the CO/OIC/Coxswain. If, in the evaluator's judgment, serious risk to personnel or property exists, they shall terminate the exercise and subsequently brief the CO/OIC/Coxswain.

5. READY FOR OPERATIONS EXECUTION:

General Timeline. This section prescribes the timeline of events in the RFO assessment visit cycle.

- a. Unit notification. Sectors shall notify units by memo of the RFO schedule of events at least 90 days prior to the visit with a copy to CGD8(dxr).
- b. Unit preparation. RFO teams shall make every effort to complete a full inspection of the unit's program. Incremental or partial visits are to be avoided. In order to facilitate the efficient execution of the RFO, units shall have the following items (platform applicable) pre-deployed or set aside prior to the arrival of the RFO team as part of the administrative review:
- (1) Training Records (Training Management Tool (TMT)/Abstract of Operations (AOPs) will suffice)
 - (2) Unit level training instructions
 - (3) Survival Systems Log
 - (4) PMS Logs
 - (5) Command Administration List (collateral duties list)
 - (6) Watch Quarter Station Bill (WQSB)
 - (7) Casualty Control Manual
 - (8) Engineering Standing Orders
 - (9) Machinery Log
 - (10) Current Ships Maintenance Projects (CSMP)/Shipalt Log
 - (11) Cutter Engineering Report (most recent)
 - (12) CO's Standing Orders
 - (13) Navigation Standards

- (14) Unit Watchstation Job Qualification Requirements (JQRs)
- (15) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP/SORM)
- (16) Rigging Log
- (17) ATON Folders

6. UNIT INSPECTION FRAMEWORK:

a. Stations/ATON (Ashore Units)

- (1) Discussion. The Office of Boat Forces (G-RCB) has developed and promulgated the Sumner I. Kimball Readiness Award, (COMDTINST 1650.2B) which is a thorough multi-mission small boat station standardization program. Furthermore, the Small Boat Station Standardization (STAN) Team serves as an effective tool to address unit readiness and training. Similarly, many Sectors have performed RFOs per requirements set forth in the BOAT Manual, COMDTINST M16114.32A. In addition, there have also been other Sector-based approaches to the RFO for various types of platforms and geographic factors. In order to assure maximum standardization and consistency across Sector platforms, the Station/ATON ashore RFO program has been incorporated into this instruction.
- (2) Unit in-brief. Upon arrival, the RFO Team shall conduct an in-brief with all-hands; introducing the team to the unit, discussing the agenda, and outlining expectations during the evaluation. In addition, the team shall address any safety concerns or other pertinent matters raised by the unit/crew. If appropriate (in addition to the all-hands in-brief), RFO teams may elect to conduct an in-brief exclusively with the command.
- (3) Materiel Inspections. The Boat Forces Center (BFC), with the concurrence of Coast Guard Headquarters, has developed and implemented inspection sheets for all standard boats to be utilized during any RFO inspection. These inspection sheets address both the materiel condition of the vessel and standard carriage requirements. These checklists can be found at the following website: <http://cgweb.tcyorktown.uscg.mil/UTB/Stan/index.asp>. Use the links for the specific boat types to the left of the screen on this website.)
- (4) Knowledge Based Test: The RFO team shall administer knowledge based tests to all certified boat crew personnel for their specific positions. The exams should challenge them on the boat types in the unit's inventory, first aid, SAR ops and procedures, basic engineering practices, navigation and piloting, rules of the road, operating boat equipment and rescue and survival equipment. The results of the tests will provide the command feedback as to the knowledge level of the crew and assist the command cadre to better tailor their future training programs.
- (5) Physical Fitness Evaluation: Evaluate all crew-qualified personnel, including the CO/OIC, XO/XPO and EO/EPO, in the performance of the entire battery of boat crew physical fitness standards. Physical fitness standards like RFOs are not intended to be one-time events. Although the manual requires annual certification,

the standards are ongoing and should be able to be met at any given time

- (6) Drills. BFC also developed standard drills (located on the STAN Team website). The drills test the required skills and knowledge needed to perform the missions. Utilizing these drills, RFO teams shall test boat crew proficiency in navigation, man overboard and other drills that the Sector may require during a RFO visit.
- (7) Operations Administration. In addition to requirements set forth by the BFC, pertinent sections of enclosure (1) of this instruction address administrative requirements for ashore units. Section I of this checklist will cover the CO/OIC and coxswain administrative requirements for safe navigation.
- (8) Training Administration. Checklists, developed by BFC, used to help evaluate training records have been incorporated into the "Training Administration" section of enclosure (1). The Training Administration checklist is a complete and accurate tool for assessing operational readiness for this particular portion of the RFO. This review will address individual training records as well as the unit's training plan and pertinent documentation.
- (9) Law Enforcement (L/E). Paragraph 6.C of this instruction specifically addresses L/E requirements. All ashore units that perform L/E or homeland security operations will be subject to requirements identified in the checklists set forth in this instruction as part of their RFO inspection.
- (10) Rescue and Survival. BFC also developed a Rescue and Survival checklist. This standardized R&S checklist can be found on their website and shall be used to evaluate Station/ATON units.
- (11) Underway evaluations. Upon successful completion of the materiel inspection and administrative review, the RFO team shall begin the underway portion of the assessment.
 - (a) When evaluating underway drills, RFO teams are required to use the drill checklists found on the following website:
<http://cgweb.tcyorktown.uscg.mil/UTB/Stan/index.asp>. If a particular drill checklist cannot be found on the TRATEAM website, RFO teams shall use the checklists found in the Cutter Training and Qualification Manual (CTQM) or the Navy Fleet Exercise Publication (FXP-3).
 - (b) Required Drills: The RFO team shall observe and evaluate the following drills: Main space fire, underwater hull damage, man overboard and low visibility. Additionally, the RFO team shall evaluate a minimum of 2 Basic Engineering Casualty Control Exercises (BECCEs)
- (12) Out-brief. Upon completion of the visit, a RFO out-brief shall be conducted with the unit command. An optional all-hands out-brief is encouraged in order to provide more timely and pertinent feed back on unit performance, as well as address any distinguished effort or actions put forth by the unit and crew during the evaluation. During the command out-brief, the RFO Team's assessment and findings will be reviewed and recommendations for change and/or improvement will be made. The Sector Division Chief responsible for unit readiness, is at a minimum, required to

attend the RFO out-brief.

- b. SEOPS / Non-Tailored Ships Training Availability (TSTA cutters 175' and below)
- (1) Discussion. Unlike small boat stations that have COMDT standard checklists and are evaluated by the STAN Team process or large cutters that participate in the TSTA cycle, SEOPS cutters are not subject to a formal inspection mechanism that determines unit readiness other than the RFO evaluation. Sectors are dependent upon the effective application of the RFO process. Thus, an RFO that includes a materiel inspection, an administrative review and evaluation of both operations and engineering departments, and the execution of underway drills will provide operational commanders with an improved assessment of their small cutter fleet's operational readiness. Enclosure (1) of this instruction is a master checklist that has been developed to assist RFO teams in their assessments of the cutter fleet under their review.
 - (2) Unit in-brief. Upon arrival, the RFO Team shall conduct an in-brief with all-hands; introducing the team to the unit, discussing the agenda, and outlining expectations during the evaluation. In addition, the team shall address any safety concerns or other pertinent matters raised by the unit/crew. If appropriate (in addition to the all-hands in-brief), RFO teams may elect to conduct an in-brief exclusively with the command.
 - (3) Materiel Inspection. A thorough space by space materiel inspection shall be conducted on all cutters. Materiel inspections are not only valuable to the unit in determining operational readiness, but the inspections also serve to identify potentially hazardous/alarming trends or "best practices," that can be immediately communicated to operational commanders and/or the fleet. Such communications can potentially avert fleet-wide problems before they become systemic or operationally limiting in nature.
 - (a) Enclosure (1) contains a materiel condition checklist that should be used for CPBs, WLBs, WLRs and WLICs.
 - (b) In addition to addressing general materiel condition, the inspection also serves to identify damage control (DC) equipment requirements for each space. RFO personnel will conduct Section II of the Engineering Administration review, noting requirements for particular pieces of equipment.
 - (4) Knowledge Based Test: The RFO team shall administer knowledge based tests to all PQS certified personnel for their specific positions on the Watch Quarter & Station Bill (WQSB). The exams should challenge them on DC procedures and equipment, first aid, basic engineering practices, rescue and survival equipment, shipboard firefighting, egress and cutter boat launch and recovery. The results of the tests will provide the command feedback as to the knowledge level of the crew and assist the command cadre to better tailor their future training programs.
 - (5) Physical Fitness Evaluation: Evaluate all crew-qualified personnel, including the

CO/OIC, XO/XPO and EO/EPO, in the performance of the entire battery of boat crew physical fitness standards. Physical fitness standards like RFOs are not intended to be one-time events. Although the manual requires annual certification, the standards are ongoing and should be able to be met at any given time.

- (6) Training Administration. In order to avoid duplication of effort, the Law Enforcement Training Administration section of enclosure (1) should be reviewed in conjunction with the general Training Administration checklists. This will help prevent multiple reviews of Training Management Tool and/or unit records.
 - (a) Section I of enclosure (1) of the Training Administration checklist addresses the general training administrative requirements, including unit instructions, training records, formal schools requirements and General Military Training (GMT).
 - (b) Section II specifically addresses the cutter fleet and its unique training requirements. All SEOPS cutters shall execute training per applicable LANTAREA SEOPS instructions. The LANTAREA SEOPS training is designed to be integrated with Navy DCPQS and applicable Coast Guard PQS for areas not addressed by LANTAREA SEOPS instructions. In addition, this section will also address drill documentation requirements.
- (7) Law Enforcement. All cutters shall complete a Law Enforcement RFO annually. Normally, the Law Enforcement RFO should be conducted in conjunction with the standard RFO (previously described in this instruction). Paragraph 6.C of this chapter outlines procedures for the Law Enforcement RFO.
- (8) Operational Administration. This portion of the checklist in enclosure (1) details the operational administration requirements for all SEOPS cutters. Specific items that will be reviewed include: the Cutter Organization Manual (CORM), WQSB, logs, and required unit instructions.
- (9) Engineering Administration/Equipment. The engineering section of enclosure (1) is composed of three sections addressing basic engineering administration, damage control (DC) equipment, and engineering equipment.
- (10) Rescue and Survival (R&S).
 - (a) A review of the R&S equipment and administrative records shall be conducted using the RFO R&S checklist found in enclosure (1) depending on the unit being inspected.
 - (b) While conducting the equipment inspection, inspectors are encouraged to refer to maintenance procedure cards (MPCs) found in the Rescue and Survival Systems Manual.
- (11) Underway evaluations. Upon successful completion of the materiel inspection and administrative review, the RFO team shall begin the underway portion of the assessment.

- i. When evaluating underway drills, RFO teams are required to use the drill checklists found on the following website:
<http://cgweb.lant.uscg.mil/LANTAREA/aoft/drillsheets.htm>. If a particular drill checklist cannot be found on the TRATEAM website, RFO teams shall use the checklists found in the Cutter Training and Qualification Manual (CTQM) or the Navy Fleet Exercise Publication (FXP-3).
 - ii. Required Drills: The RFO team shall observe and evaluate the following drills: Main space fire, underwater hull damage, man overboard and low visibility. Additionally, the RFO team shall evaluate a minimum of 4 Basic Engineering Casualty Control Exercises (BECCEs).
 - iii. Optional Drills: The RFO team may also observe any of the following optional drills. Steering casualty, abandon ship, and towing. Sectors may want to incorporate the homeland security (HLS) drill detailed in the CTQM. However, the HLS drill requires significant planning and preparation. Due to the aggressive planning requirements associated with the HLS drill, Sectors should provide advance notification to units in the pre-arrival letter.
- (12) Out-brief. Upon completion of the visit, a RFO out-brief shall be conducted with the unit command. An optional all-hands out-brief is encouraged in order to provide more timely and pertinent feed back on unit performance, as well as address any distinguished effort or actions put forth by the unit and crew during the evaluation. During the command out-brief, the RFO Team's assessment and findings will be reviewed and recommendations for change and/or improvement will be made. The Sector Division Chief that is responsible for unit readiness, is at a minimum, required to attend the RFO out-brief.
- c. Law Enforcement:
- (1) Discussion. The post-9/11 environment, recent Area-level emphasis, and more diverse operational demands placed upon units necessitate even more diligence surrounding the training and qualification of law enforcement personnel and execution of law enforcement operations. Despite the diversity of law enforcement operations, ranging from HLS to counter-narcotics to living marine resources (LMR), the core requirements of the law enforcement program are very similar and critical to effective prosecution of operations. A Law Enforcement RFO will ensure continued standardization of training and operational effectiveness.
 - (2) Goals. This section covers the foundation necessary to maintain an effective law enforcement program at an operational unit. This checklist (enclosure 1) is not platform specific as law enforcement is a CG-wide operational mission. All units should be able to use this checklist and validate compliance with the basic L/E requirements as set forth by COMDT. Because the L/E inspection only focuses on the basic aspects of that particular mission, advanced/tactical, or more specialized L/E unit material/operations will not be addressed.
 - (3) Requirements. All units which may be required to perform a law enforcement mission are required to undergo a law enforcement RFO inspection annually. The

L/E portion of the RFO shall be incorporated into the Sector RFO (in order to maximize efficiency of the RFO process).

- (4) Unit assessment: The Law Enforcement section of enclosure (1) details the specific program requirements and equipment for all SEOPS cutters engaged in the Law Enforcement mission.
- (a) Training. This section is based on the minimum requirements necessary to maintain an effective L/E training program. These requirements do not include operational, area-specific, or specialized unit training requirements that may be imposed by COMDT, Area, or other cognizant authority in the unit's chain of command. Reviewing all training at once will eliminate the need for the RFO team to access TMT and training records on more than one occasion.
- (b) Equipment. Inspection and verification of L/E equipment is essential to validating the effectiveness of a L/E program. The checklist contains the minimum equipment requirements and optional equipment based on the mission the unit will be performing.
- (i) RFO Teams shall require each member of the L/E program/team to break out their individual equipment and don it to ensure fit and availability. In addition to donning standard L/E gear, L/E personnel shall also be directed to produce additional mission-specific PPE (radiation meters, gas meters, EEBD, etc.) to ensure members have been issued this equipment and are aware of any applicable carriage requirements.
- (ii) The equipment section contains both optional and recommended equipment (based on mission requirements). RFO Teams should ensure that units are maintaining mission-essential equipment and carry adequate amounts of such equipment. (i.e., a unit performing an Alien Migrant Interdiction Operations (AMIO) mission will need more than ten identification bracelets).

7. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

- a. Sector Commanders will provide their RFO schedule to CGD8, Chief, Force Readiness Branch (dxr) by 01 Oct for the following FY. All cancellations or schedule changes will be communicated to the Force Readiness Branch via msg traffic.
- b. Sector Commanders will forward a copy of all RFO assessment reports to Coast Guard Eighth District, Force Readiness Branch (dxr) and the Naval Engineering Support Unit (NESU) within 30 days of the RFO assessment. All RFO assessment reports will be endorsed by the Sector Commander and shall state measures taken with projected timelines to affect repairs or replace equipment that was found to be restrictive or disabling in nature during the assessment.
- c. Following a rating of unsatisfactory on a Standardization Team visit, Sector Commanders will submit a plan within 5 working days D8 (dxr) outlining measures to be taken to restore unit readiness.

8. PROGRAM MANAGER: The Eighth District Force Readiness Branch (dxr) is the RFO Program Manager. Every effort has been made to make this instruction useful and applicable to all aspects of cutter, boat and training operations. In situations where this instruction does not address a specific organization construct or relationship and the application of a particular provision is unclear, users should seek clarification from their chain of command and advise Coast Guard Eighth District, Force Readiness Branch (dxr) of the need to clarify the instruction.

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W. J. Reger

Captain, U.S. Coast Guard

Chief of Planning and Force Readiness

Encl: (1) RFO Checklist