



December 3, 2003

Dear Member,

As the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) continues to grow and mature, so does the role of the Coast Guard within it. DHS is a conglomeration of many government regulatory and security organizations and agencies. Due to the nature of their missions, these DHS organizations and agencies require that the American public place a great deal of trust in their collective ability to ensure the safety and security of the nation without impinging on the rights and freedoms that Americans hold dear.

Because of the high level of trust that the nation places upon individuals within DHS, the Department's ability to demonstrate that its employees are worthy of the trust of the American public is essential. To that end, the Department is in the process of developing and defining its personnel security policy with the aim to ensure the best security posture possible. This policy will apply to all members of the DHS, including Coast Guard members and members of the Department's lead volunteer organization, the Coast Guard Auxiliary. Beginning in February 2004, the existing Auxiliary force, as well as all new enrollees, will be divided into a two-tiered background investigation process. The type of suitability check will be determined by each Auxiliarist's level of involvement in Coast Guard operations.

Approximately one third of the Auxiliary will fall into the *Direct Operational* category. These members hold qualifications involving surface operations, air operations, operations planning, interpreting, CMD/OPCEN/COMMS watchstanding, marine safety and security operations, and other positions as determined by Coast Guard operational commanders. These Auxiliarists will receive a National Agency Check with Law and Credit (NAC-LC), which requires members to complete three original fingerprint cards, the Questionnaire for National Security Positions (SF86), and the DOT Disclosure and Authorization Pertaining to Consumer Reports Pursuant to the Fair Credit Reporting Act Form (DOT Form 1631). The remainder of the Auxiliary will fall into the *Operational Support* category. These Auxiliarists, as well as all new members, will receive a basic fingerprint check, which requires two original fingerprint cards. These background checks will be conducted by government personnel, and at no cost to the Auxiliarists. All personal information will be held in the strictest confidence. Auxiliarists involved in the processing of the associated paperwork will be bound by non-disclosure agreements.

Membership in the Coast Guard Auxiliary after December 2004 will be contingent upon participation in the background check process. What are the options available?

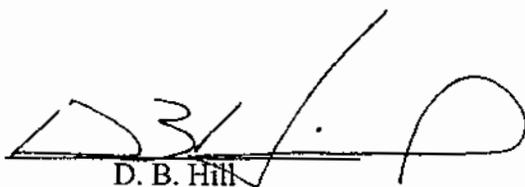
- a. Members who opt not to participate at any level will be transferred to retired status, if eligible (at least 15 years of service), or disenrolled effective 31 December 2004, or;
- b. Members who opt to participate only at the "Operational Support" level will be processed at that level and not be eligible to participate in "Direct Operational" assignments after they are notified to submit their paperwork (fingerprint cards), or;
- c. Members who opt to participate at the "Direct Operational" level will be able to continue their participation in that level and notified when to submit the required paperwork (fingerprint cards and SF86). The SF86 data is considered time sensitive and must be processed within 120 days of signing by the applicant.

Every effort will be made to make this process member friendly. At least one Auxiliarist from each division will be trained to take fingerprints and provide guidance and quality control for the completion of the SF86. The background investigation packages will then be forwarded to the applicable Director of Auxiliary for further processing at the Coast Guard Security Center (SECCEN). Due to the administrative workload associated with processing background investigations for 37,000 people, the SECCEN has allocated monthly quotas to each district. Quota distribution will be managed by the Directors.

The enclosed form must be completed and returned to your District Director of Auxiliary no later than January 15, 2004. The decision expressed on the form is not considered final. Submission of this information at this time is necessary for the SECCEN to determine the actual workload that may be anticipated since additional personnel will be hired to process the applications in a timely manner.

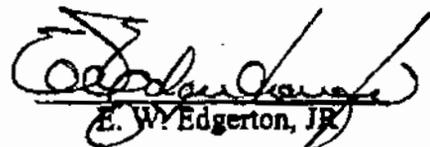
We encourage you to give this matter serious consideration and hope that you will agree this is the right thing to do and opt to participate in the program. Your continued service is essential as the Department of Homeland Security, Coast Guard and Auxiliary focus on national security and move forward in meeting the needs of the public and the Nation in these "new times."

Sincerely,



D. B. Hill

Captain, U. S. Coast Guard
Chief Director of Auxiliary



E. W. Edgerton, JR.

National Commodore
U. S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

Enclosure: U. S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Personnel Security Questionnaire