U.S. Department of Transportation
United States Coast Guard

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United States Coast Guard

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COMDTINST 3700.1

MAR 28 2001

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 3700.1

Subj: FLIGHT SAFETY FOR NON-AIRCREW COAST GUARD PERSONNEL

1. PURPOSE. To establish minimum Coast Guard standards for emergency egress and survival training and equipment for non-aviation designated personnel, hereafter referred to as non-aircrew, who frequently fly in other than scheduled air carrier aircraft in the performance of their duties. Members who require such aircraft travel on a monthly basis or repeatedly during response operations are covered by this instruction. Flights in aircraft operated by the Coast Guard, other military services, the Coast Guard Auxiliary except those involving only Auxiliary aircrew members with current training in accordance with Auxiliary directives, the Civil Air Patrol, Federal, state and local governmental agencies, and civilian aviation service providers are covered by this Instruction, but flights on scheduled air carriers are not. This instruction also establishes preferred standards for civilian companies that provide aviation services used by Coast Guard personnel.

2. ACTION. Area and district commanders, commanders maintenance and logistics commands, commanding officers of headquarters units, assistant commandants for directorates, Chief Counsel, and special staff offices at Headquarters shall ensure compliance with the provisions of this Instruction. No paper distribution will be made of this Instruction. Office distribution will be via the Coast Guard Directives System CD-COM and the Department of Transportation Website http://isddc.dot.gov//. An electronic version will also be made available via the Commandant (G-WKS) website.

3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. None.

4. BACKGROUND. Coast Guard operations often require frequent flights by Coast Guard personnel who are not designated aircrew. These official business flights are made in both rotary and fixed wing aircraft operated by the Coast Guard, other military services, the Coast Guard Auxiliary, the Civil Air Patrol, federal, state and local governmental agencies, and civilian aviation service providers. The civilian providers may be providing the service

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directly to the Coast Guard or they may be providing the service to a third party such as a shipping agent who pays for the transportation of the Coast Guard personnel. Examples of these operations include pollution response and investigation, port state control activities, verification of public and private navigation aids, Outer Continental Shelf inspections, and public affairs activities. Some non-aircrew personnel make such flights routinely while others fly very infrequently. With a few exceptions, these flyers have been provided little or no training beyond what is covered in a flight safety briefing immediately before takeoff by the aircraft's crew, and they may not be adequately familiar with available safety and survival equipment. In the case of civilian aircraft, the aircraft and crew may have met only the minimum Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requirements for maintenance; inspections; flight crew qualifications, experience, and training; and operation. There has been no Coast Guard-wide standard addressing safety and survival training and equipment for non-aircrew flyers, or criteria to be met by civilian aviation service providers.

5. DISCUSSION. Designated Coast Guard aviation personnel comply with strict standards that specify their training, equipment, currency of experience and the maintenance, inspection and operation of Coast Guard aircraft. Non-aircrew personnel who fly may face similar hazards, but the frequency and nature of the missions normally flown by non-aircrew flyers usually result in overall risks lower than designated aircrew but sometimes higher than the flying publics. Consequently, non-aircrew flyers do not necessarily require training and equipment identical to that provided to designated aircrew, but more thorough indoctrination than that required by the FAA for the public is appropriate in many cases. Likewise, higher standards than the minimum FAA requirements for the aircraft and their operation and maintenance may be necessary to protect Coast Guard personnel from minimally maintained aircraft and inexperienced flight crews. This instruction specifies appropriate levels of survival training and equipment for non-aircrew flyers and standards for the maintenance and operation of non-Coast Guard aircraft.

6. POLICY.

   a. Coast Guard regular, reserve, auxiliary, and civilian non-aircrew personnel are engaged in a wide variety of missions involving flight. Some may be more essential than others, and some may have suitable alternatives to the use of aircraft. Flight, especially those in other than scheduled air carriers, carries inherent levels of risk. It shall be Coast Guard policy to limit such flights by non-aircrew personnel to that necessary to accomplish assigned missions. Commanding officers and officers in charge are most intimately familiar with their mission requirements and will determine which non-aircrew personnel will be assigned to duties involving flight in aircraft covered by this Instruction.

   b. This Instruction shall not restrict subordinate commanders from issuing local policies requiring equal or greater training and/or equipment. It shall not preclude compliance

with applicable flight safety directives or requirements when Coast Guard personnel fly in aircraft of other military services. This Instruction does not apply to official business flights in scheduled air carrier aircraft, to off-duty recreational flights, to flying club operations or to Auxiliary flight operations by properly qualified Auxiliary aircrew members in Auxiliary aircraft. This Instruction does govern official business flight by Auxiliary personnel in other than Auxiliary aircraft and flights by other Coast Guard personnel in Auxiliary aircraft. Commanding officers may authorize temporary deviations from the provisions of this Instruction when necessary to respond to urgent incidents requiring unusual levels of flight activity by non-aircrew personnel. The policies and procedures herein are effective six months following the date of this Instruction.

7. PROCEDURES.

a. For non-aircrew members required to fly in other than scheduled air carriers consistently on a monthly basis or repeatedly during response operations, commanding officers and district division chiefs shall provide the following training, equipment, and contract carriers:

(1) Training:

(a) Non-aircrew fliers requiring helicopter transportation shall view the flight safety video "Emergency Helicopter Abandonment" or an alternate approved by Commandant (G-WKS), before his/her first flight while attached to their present command and subsequently annually.

(b) Individuals frequently dispatched on single engine fixed wing or helicopter flight beyond emergency landing distance from land shall complete basic water survival (to include swim test, hands-on equipment training, and review of egress principles/obstacles) and Egress Breathing Device/Shallow Water Egress Training (SWET) training. This training shall be accomplished upon assumption of frequent air transport duties, with biennial refresher training.

(c) Members frequently flying on single engine fixed wing or helicopter flights shall undergo initial land survival training for the applicable area of responsibility.

(d) As required by Coast Guard and Federal Air Regulations, the aircraft operator will provide final preflight briefing to include smoking restrictions, use of safety

belts, operation of doors and emergency exits, survival equipment, use of floatation devices for over-water flights, and supplemental oxygen (as required).

(e) Training records shall be maintained that document the dates of all training required by this Instruction.

(2) Equipment:

(a) For All Aircraft: Steel toed shoes, flight suit or cotton coveralls, flight gloves, and earplugs. Undergarments should be natural fiber (cotton or wool). The wearing of synthetic fabrics under flight gear may cause severe skin injury during a fire. The Coast Guard Air Operations Manual, COMDTINST M3710.1 (series) discusses desired qualities of flight clothing.

(b) For All Helicopter Flights: Flight helmet or HGU-25P (headset/cranial protection unit). This equipment may be issued to each member or maintained in a central equipment pool.

(c) For Over Water Helicopter/Singe Engine Fixed-Wing Flights: Life preserver/survival vest (equipped with Egress Breathing Device) and anti-exposure garments as predicated on air/water temperature requirements of the Coast Guard Air Operations Manual, COMDTINST M3710.1 (series). This equipment may be issued to each member or maintained in an equipment pool.

(d) Commanding Officers shall ensure flight equipment maintenance in accordance with the manufacturer's standards or guidance of the Aviation Life Support Systems Manual, COMDTINST M13520.1 (series).

(3) Air Carrier Selection:

(a) Except for scheduled airline flights, only authorize civilian aircraft flights for unit personnel on official business in aircraft operated by aviation service providers certificated under Federal Aviation Regulations Part 135, "Commuter and On-Demand Operations."

(b) Whenever practicable, only authorize flights for unit personnel in aircraft provided by vendors which have been inspected and approved by the Department of the Interior's Office of Aircraft Services (OAS). Approved providers can furnish documentation of approval from the OAS. In some cases, civilian inspection services can certify an operator to OAS-like standards.

b. Air Station Commanding Officers shall:

(1) Ensure non-aircrew personnel flying in Coast Guard aircraft are provided preflight safety and egress briefings and survival equipment in accordance with the Coast Guard Air Operations Manual, COMDTINST M3710.1 (series).

(2) Assist Coast Guard units within their area of operations in meeting training and equipment maintenance requirements above.

c. The Director of Health and Safety (G-WK) shall:

(1) Provide a library for the loan of the flight safety video "Emergency Helicopter Abandonment" to requesting units. This video was earlier provided to all marine safety field units, the Marine Safety School, and to each district office.

(2) Review available flight safety videos and approve acceptable alternatives to "Emergency Helicopter Abandonment," if any.

JOYCE M. JOHNSON
Director of Health and Safety