



**United States Coast Guard Auxiliary**

*Public Affairs Primer  
for All Hands.*





# *“Instantaneously Live”*



- Media is often closer than your nearest PA office
- You never know when the media spotlight will turn toward you





# Objectives



- Define & explain the components and goals of an effective Public Affairs Program.
- Discuss your role in a robust unit PA program.
- Describe what the media wants and why they want it from you.
- Identify tools available to help you answer media inquiries.
- Explain techniques for delivering an effective interview.



# *What is Public Affairs?*



- ❁ Intentional, targeted communications between the Coast Guard , Auxiliary and others.
- ❁ Relies on the participation of everyone.
  - ❁ Commandant's policy states that we are all representatives of the service.
  - ❁ Our communications are designed to tell people who we are and what we do.
- ❁ Based on the public's right to know.

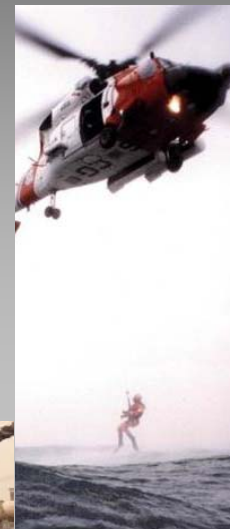
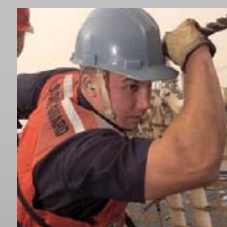




# *The 5 Goals of Public Affairs*



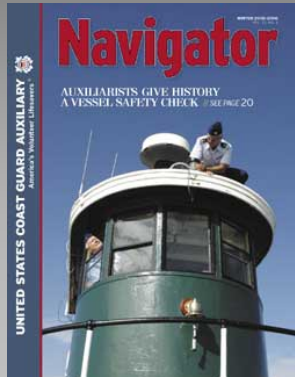
- Inform the public about the USCG and Auxiliary to increase understanding and support.
- Save lives and prevent accidents by educating the public.
- Inform public officials about the Auxiliary's and Coast Guard's role in their community.
- Improve morale, recruiting and retention.
- Show that the Coast Guard and Auxiliary takes an active role in the community.



# The 3 Elements of Public Affairs



## The Triangle for Communications Success



- ❖ Internal Information
  - ❖ Keeping your internal audience up to speed increases morale, retention and motivation.
- ❖ Community Relations
  - ❖ Contributing to the community.
  - ❖ Become “their” Coast Guard, not “the” Coast Guard.
- ❖ Media Relations
  - ❖ Media has a much farther reach than you, making it the one of the most effective ways to tell the Coast Guard’s and Auxiliary’s story.



# *Your Role in Public Affairs*



- Public affairs is a responsibility of command.
- Keeping lines of communication open between an organization and its constituent groups is a basic function of management.
- Commanding officers shall promote public understanding and support of the Coast Guard; keep the public informed of Coast Guard activities; and keep Coast Guard personnel informed and knowledgeable of Service plans, policies, and actions.

*U. S. Coast Guard Regulations*





# An Introduction to the Media



- Remember, media is a business trying to deliver a product to their consumers.
- Each medium has a different culture, with different reporting requirements.
- Media share a common process/structure.





# *What You Need to Know...*

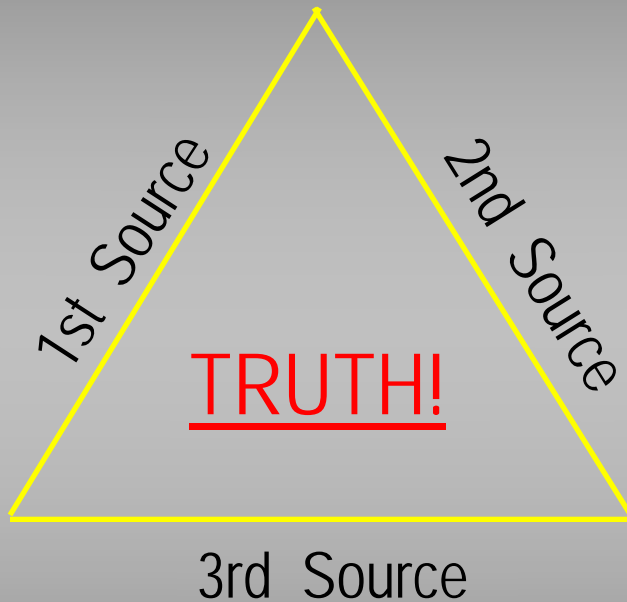


- 🚤 Who's who
- 🚤 Deadlines
- 🚤 Capabilities
- 🚤 Audience
- 🚤 Preferences
- 🚤 Mindset





# Reporters



- 🌐 Media are interested in finding the truth.
- 🌐 Reporters use triangulation to get to the truth.



# *What the Media Wants from You*



- Clear, concise, factual, well-reasoned answers
  - Free from “hype,” or “bureaucratic spin”
- Great imagery – Shoot video! It can get an ordinary case extraordinary coverage



# *Guidelines for Releasing Information*



- Regarding overall Public Affairs philosophy:  
**Maximum Disclosure with Minimum Delay –**

*COMDTINST M5728.2C, Para. 1.B.1*

- Regarding your role as a spokesperson: **If you did or are responsible for it, you can talk about it. If not, don't speak! –**

*COMDTINST M5728.2C, Para. 2.D.3*



# *General Guidelines*



- ❁ If you did it or are responsible for it, you can talk about it. If not, don't speak.
- ❁ If you're uncertain, seek guidance before speaking to the media.
- ❁ Be cautious answering questions related to law enforcement cases.
- ❁ Answer questions accurately or explain why you can't. Always follow up if you promise to get someone answers.





# *Before Releasing Information*



**Consider whether you have the...**

-  Ability
-  Competency
-  Authority

**...to release the information**



# *Remember the Four Limitations*



**Regarding Release of Information –  
Follow the SAPP Rule (COMDTINST  
M5728.2C Para 2.E.2)**

- **Security** – *Don't release classified or sensitive OPSEC information!*
- **Accuracy** – *Facts only. Don't speculate or address "unconfirmed" information*
- **Policy** – *Make sure your answer are IAW unit, district, area and HQ policies. Also, refer "policy" matters up your chain*
- **Propriety** – *Are you the right source for the info? Also use judgment to answer questions. Gruesome details of an accident may be "fact," but would be inappropriate to talk about*





# *Focus on Clearance, Coordination, and Consistency!*



- Surge in sensitive information.
- Consequences for mishandled incidents.
- Increases in USCG news coverage
- Closer mission match with DHS.
- Clearance, coordination and consistency required
- Use of designated spokesperson.
- Standard news release format and visual agency identification.



# *The Five Rights*

## *A Guide to Public Affairs Success*



The goal is to get the...

- ☪ Right information from
- ☪ The Right source with the
- ☪ Right clearance to the
- ☪ Right audience at the
- ☪ Right time



# *What to Do When It All Hits the Fan!*



- The odds are great that you'll need to give an interview before a PA can arrive on-scene.
- Stay calm and take a few minutes to prepare.
- Never forget that you're the subject matter expert. That's why the media want to talk to you!
- The following tools and tidbits will get you through even the most difficult interviews.





# *It's All About Clearance, Coordination, Consistency*



- ❖ Networks and national media require approvals from DHS and Headquarters for interviews or embedding
  - ❖ HQ approves and coordinates with DHS
  - ❖ Area/District develops “messages” and provides logistical support
  - ❖ Your unit can support as authorized
  - ❖ Individuals can be interviewed as authorized by HQ
- ❖ All other media can generally be handled at the local level. Please ensure that your supporting PA shop is aware that you may be in the news -Sector Commanders can approve reporters aboard AUXOPS.



# *Handling the Media During a Crisis*



Our primary PA goals during a crisis response are to...

- Retain the public's confidence in the Coast Guard and Auxiliary.
- Preserve relations with the community and the media.
- Protect and promote the welfare of Coast Guard members and their families.





# *Tools for Answering Queries*



- 🌀 The 5x5 method
- 🌀 The Triple model
- 🌀 LPTR Method







# *The 5x5 Method and Triple Model*





Both hinge on your ability to anticipate issues and questions from the media

## The 5x5 Method

-  What are the 5 most likely questions
-  What are the 5 toughest questions

## The Triple Model

-  Base on the verbal flagging method
-  Tell them you have something to say, tell them what you want to tell them, then tell them again



# *Answering with the LPTR Method*



- Listen – What Exactly is the reporter asking you?
- Pause – Don't just react immediately, give yourself time to ...
- Think – about you're going to say and how you're going to say it.
- Respond – answer the question and bridge to your key message.



# *Why is Empathy So Important?*





# *From the New York Post*



## *THESE CLOWNS AT NTSB NEED SENSITIVITY TRAINING*

*By Steve Dunleavy*

*“... a spokesman for the National Transportation Safety Board talked in front of grieving families as though he had an axe for a tongue.”*

*“... This man held his hands about 15 inches apart, and told them that there’s nothing more left of the bodies than about this size.”*

*“... not to expect to see their loved ones in one piece.”*

*“... [The NTSB] is an outfit that has treated the FBI like handmaidens, used the*

*Navy and Coast Guard as slaves and managed to disorganize any organization that could have existed here..”*



# *Tips for Surviving an Interview*



- Set ground rules!
- Maintain control.
- Repetition and consistency.
- Stay assertive, but refrain from arguing with folks who “buy ink by the barrel or videotape in bulk”.
- Stay conscious of your non-verbal body language.
- Make sure your entire crew knows what they can say!



# *Internal Communication's Responsibilities*



- Targeted email, websites, newsletters, and even snail mail.
- Communicating the programs within the Auxiliary early in the process, to obtain input and ***buy-in*** to these programs.



# *External Communication's Responsibilities*



- 🌊 Communicating the goals and accomplishments of the USCG & Auxiliary,
- 🌊 Communications with the media
- 🌊 Public Affairs activities as it relates to the public.
- 🌊 Web Sites.



# *Approaches*



- 🌀 Passive - planning response to external events that may require a PA message (includes preparation for response to queries).
- 🌀 Proactive - actively distributing message through media or displays.



# *Proactive Program Key Elements*



- ☪ Identify your audience.
- ☪ Know your target media.
- ☪ Prepare media contact list.
- ☪ Prepare appropriate releases and other promotional materials.
- ☪ Deliver the message ***consistently and frequently.***



# How?



- 🚤 Publish announcements in community calendars.
- 🚤 Write and get articles published.
- 🚤 Put out PSA's and video news releases.
- 🚤 Set up displays & safety stations.
- 🚤 Put out posters, billboards, newsletters



# *Four Steps*



- 🌀 Planning identifies the message, the intended audience, and media or other PA tactics.
- 🌀 Execution puts the plan into action.
- 🌀 Analysis determines the impact of a PA program.
- 🌀 Follow-up requires adjusting and repeating the effort.



# Resources for PA Officers



- ♻️ **CoastGuardVisualImagery**

<http://cgvi.uscg.mil/media/main.php> A comprehensive collection of photographs relating to the Coast Guard. Includes photographs of people, vessels, and activities. Search by any key word to find a specific images.

- ♻️ **AuxiliaryImageLibrary**  
<http://image.auxpa.org/>

This is where Coast Guard Auxiliary webmasters, members who are creating PowerPoint presentations, or anyone in need of images can find quality graphics and photos for use. If you have authored good quality images yourself, we urge you to submit them to this collection.

**AuxiliaryClipArt**

<http://image.auxpa.org/coppermine/thumbnails.php?album=5>

Contains Auxiliary and Coast Guard clip art



# *Nav aids*



- 🌐 USCG Auxiliary Public Affairs Guide, revised 1/2/09
- 🌐 USCG Public Affair Manual (COMDTINST M5728.2C)



# *Training and Resources*



## **Training:**

AUX-12 – Marketing and Public Affairs  
resident courses




<http://training.auxpa.org/aux12/>

On-line courses <http://www.training.auxpa.org/e-learning.shtml>



# *Every Story has an End, Here's Ours*



-  The success of the Coast Guard and Auxiliary's Public Affairs Program relies on YOU!
-  Don't be afraid to call on your senior leadership for support. The earlier you call, the easier your job becomes.
-  Document your stories with photos and video. A little video goes a long way.

*Remember... "Public Affairs  
is everyone's  
responsibility".*

