UP TOP

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How To Activate Your AN / Chart Updating Program

By Frank Larkin, DVC-ON

As AN Staff Officers, we have taken on the leadership responsibility for the Aids to Navigation program. Here are a series of simple actions that can be taken to make your AN program a more productive and fun venture.

An important key to success for any program leader is to become knowledgeable about the various elements of their program. AN PowerPoint Presentations are available for each of the five aspects of the AN Program. Focus much of your initial effort on training yourself and your members. As a professional leader, you have to become a salesperson, the advertising manager, the training department, and the program manager all wrapped up in a single package. And, you have to convince your members to do the same. Keep in mind that, if you try to do it all yourself, you will undoubtedly fail. Don't be timid. Seek assistance from your AN Division, District, and National staff. That's why they were appointed in the first place.

Goals and Objectives for your AN Program.

You may opt to select your District AN Goals or you can set up your own. Some flotillas and division staff officers will be new on the job and will not be as trained or experienced as others, so they will want to focus on ATON training this year or on just working with only a few of the AN program aspects. As the AN Staff Officer, it's your call. One thing is for certain, if you don't set AN Goals and Objectives, you won't get anything done this year. It is a proven fact that many managers, who set goals, achieve them and, most often, over achieve them. So:

Set ATON Program Goals and Objectives that reflect the AN needs of your AOR.
Publish your ATON Goals and Objectives to your Flotilla FC or Division DCP.

More Winter Safety Jobs

By Charles Ford BC-OES

Every power boat has one system that requires maintenance for Safety Sake and is complicated by being below the waterline. Inboard motor, I/O, Outboard, and even jet powered boats have some device under water.

Now, if the boat is out of water is the time to plan for this maintenance.

Even if you keep the boat in the water over the winter you probably will haul it for care or painting the bottom,, you can plan now for this care.

Whether you do your own work or have the yard do it for you, get out the manual to make sure the inspection or service is done right. Some older boats have propeller shaft packing glands which must be pulled and repacked at certain intervals depending on the use. Newer boats have so-called "drip-less packing and there are a large number of new devices in this category that require more or less care annually. Check the manual, don't depend on someone else to be sure it is done properly.

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When you publish a goal, a strong sense of commitment becomes attached to that goal. Good methods for publishing your goals are in your monthly report or by sending a copy of your goals to the next level staff officer in the chain of command. Remember that goals can always be changed and modified later as you learn more about the overall AN program and experience the response from your members.

Develop a Plan of Action for your AOR

The difference between a dream and a goal is a plan. Nothing happens until you develop a plan. Your plan might consist of trying to find out how to do a plan or can be as intensive as a detailed time-line listing all of the tasks necessary to achieve your annual goals and objectives. Simple plans are the best. Here are some questions that you will need to ask in order to identify the AN program.

What are the needs of the CG Aid to Navigation Team in your area?

The Division or District AN officer in your AOR should set up a meeting with the local CG ANT Unit or Agency to discuss their needs and expectations for the Auxiliary for the upcoming season. The FSO-ANs should plan to attend and introduce themselves to the Coast Guard OIC. Here are some topics that you may want to cover:

Review your procedures for checking and reporting Federal Aid discrepancies.

Be sure that the CG Unit or Agency understands the report forms being used by the Auxiliary. Verify whether they are receiving the Auxiliary discrepancy reports in a timely manner.

Review the PATON Program needs of the CG Unit or agency in your AOR.

Review the procedure for PATON verifications. Is there agreement between both parties? Provide a list of available AV Qualified Auxiliarists within the AOR to the CG Unit. Decide whether an AV Qualification Workshop is needed. When and where would it be held? Who must attend? Decide whether there are any new AV Qualification Program needs in the AOR.

More Winter Safety Jobs

Outboard motors and some new propulsion units need special attention which may include draining the lower unit and refilling with fresh lubricant. No matter what service is recommended in the manual, now is the time to get it done for safety sake.

Nothing can spoil a spring cruise much more than sudden failure of a shaft packing gland and resulting flood in the bilge.

Boat Crew Training Program Revisions

FAQs

Q. When do the revised manual and qualification guides become effective?
A. 1 January 2007

Q. What if a member is partially through one of the older qualification guides?
A. All tasks completed in an older guide may be transferred to the new guide by the mentor, FC, VFC, FSO-MT, or FSO-OP provided they were performed less than 2 years ago. The original date and mentor's name must be used.

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Who will conduct the training? When and where will it be scheduled? Discuss any problems that have occurred with the preparation of Private Aid Verification Forms during the previous year. How will the problems be corrected? Offer assistance for updating PATON verification reports to ATONIS and with the filing of PATON Reports within the CG Unit or agency facility. Review the list of OPFACs and crew that are available as platforms to CG Units and agencies for Coast Guard personnel to use for making minor aid repairs or making aid surveys or investigations.

Review the follow-up activity that was performed for last year's reported PATON discrepancies. Was it satisfactory? How will problems be corrected? Some topics may be:

1. Number of non-permitted items reported to the CG Unit or Agency.
2. Number of owners contacted.
3. Number of new PATON permits issued that were initiated by these reports.
4. Number of PATON follow-up verifications made by the Auxiliary.

This meeting should conclude with an updated Federal ATON plan and an updated PATON Verification Plan tailored to your area.

Make a list of resources that you will need to accomplish your plan. Be realistic, often an evaluation of available resources forces a re-evaluation of goals. Here are some general ideas:

Plan to attend OPS workshops in your AOR to promote your AN message.

Provide "ATON Kits" for the OPFACs in your AOR. An ATON Kit can be as simple as a brief explanation of how to check and report an aid or a bridge for discrepancies.

Also, how to report AN activity to AUXDATA using an ANSC 7030 Activity Report – Mission.

Focus your AV-Qualified members on performing PATON Verifications.

You will need to know where they are located and whether you need more in some other

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Boat Crew Training Program Revisions

FAQs

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Q. What are the new annual currency maintenance tasks and what is the deadline?

A. *The member must have 12 hours underway each year and attend a 1-hour TCT refresher provided by the National Operations Department. These tasks must be completed (and recorded in AUXDATA) by 31 Dec or the member will go into REYR.*

Q. What will the 3 year QE check ride be phased in?

A. *For members due a check ride under the old program in 2007 or 2008, their QE check ride is due by 31 Dec 07. If due in 2009, due in 2008 and if due in 2010 or 2011, the check ride is due by 31 Dec 2009.*

Q. If a member missed tasks and/or hours in 2006, what do they need to do for 2007?

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areas. Your SO-IS can get you a list of the AV-Qualified members in your AOR. Encourage your AV members to re-qualify each year. Your CG Unit or agency may require annual AN workshops for requalification.

There are going to be members who won't do the job correctly, who complain, who are negative. Always be positive with them but focus your real efforts on the members who want to get the work done correctly. You have a lot to do and only a short time to do it. Schedule your time wisely. In the AN program, a few active, skilled, and committed members can do a lot of work in a short period of time.

You will need members to do Bridge Checks.

Bridges can be checked year round and from the shore. OPFACs are often not needed to perform these checks. Plan how you can train bridge checkers.

Encourage Flotillas to "Adopt a Chart" and to train members to perform this AN Activity.

Chart Updates can be performed year round and from the shore. OPFACs are not needed to perform these updates.

Encourage Flotillas to perform "SCF - Small Craft Facility Updates.

Small Craft Facility Updates can be performed year round. OPFACs are not needed but can be used to report these updates. This SCF program is a great tie-in to the Program Visitor (PV) program. Show your PV members how to make SCF reports to NOAA and offer to assist them with their PV coverage.

Take Action.

As the AN Staff Officer leader in your AOR, you have to initiate the momentum to put your plan into operation. That's what your job is all about. Set up monthly action schedules and follow them. Spend your time running on-the water training exercises rather than trying to do all the checking by yourself. Plan your patrols in advance so everyone knows what to do. Assign each crew member a task to perform and insist that they perform it with a high level of professionalism and accuracy.

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Boat Crew Training Program Revisions

FAQs

A. The missing hours (up to 8) are made up as a trainee. Missing tasks are not required.

Q. Do crew hours spent underway by a coxswain count toward coxswain time?
A. *Yes, crew time now counts as coxswain time.*

Q. Does Crew or Coxswain underway time count toward PWC Operator currency (or vice-versa)?
A. *If a member is qualified on both, they need to do 12 hours underway on each platform.*

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Focus on April through October for scheduling your on-the-water activity. Plan to schedule the completion of your lateral PATON verifications by July 1st. Continually follow up with your AN volunteers. Encourage and assist them. Keep your AN program active and productive. Be a prod, not a pain. Always project a positive attitude. Constantly, play both the leader and cheerleader roles in order to make your AN program likeable and desirable.

Report on your Progress

Every plan that is worth its salt needs a reporting mechanism in place to measures performance. The AN Program is no different. Never lose sight of your AN Program plans. Only you have the responsibility to get the job done and that should be your main focus.

Don't miss any opportunity to make presentation about your AN Program at Flotilla and Division Meetings. Encourage AN members and Staff Officers to teach the ATON classes in the Public Education programs both in the BS&S and ACN classes. Conduct AN Training before Flotilla Meetings. Contact your ADSO-AN and DSO-AN if you need help. Advertise your program activity continuously throughout the year. Stress the fun parts to generate new interest.

You are an important part of the Auxiliary Aids to Navigation Team. You make a difference by insuring that the Federal ATONs, the PATONs, and the Bridges in your AOR are kept up to standard. Your AN activity will have an immediate impact on the commercial and recreational boaters in your area. Be faithful to your oath of office. Make your AN Program one of the best and you will make a difference this year and have a lot of fun doing it.

The job is never done until the information is updated into AUXDATA.
Make it a point to get your AN activity entered into AUXDATA correctly.

Train all your AN members to submit their AUXDATA reports correctly. Include AUXDATA training with every workshop. Invite your SO-IS to assist with this training.

Boat Crew Training Program Revisions

FAQs

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Q. Do I have to take the TCT refresher and 5th year 8-Hour TCT in the same year?
A. *No, the 8-hour course will suffice for taking the annual refresher in a given year.*

Q. Does the annual TCT refresher replace the 5th year 8-hour TCT course?
A. *No, the annual refresher does not replace the 5th year TCT course.*
Q. Who has to take the Ops Policy Test for initial qualification?
A. *Only Coxswain and PWC Operators have to take the open book test.*
Q. Where can I take the Ops Policy Test and what is the passing score?
A. *90% is passing. The test is available on-line at: http://cgexams.info/testing/. OTOs have hard copies of the test. If the hard copy is used, it must be proctored.*

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The statistics for annual AN Awards are taken from AUXDATA as of December 31 each year.

The time and activity that you provide the Coast Guard is an important part of the annual support that the Auxiliary receives from the Coast Guard

Remember

Federal Aids should be continually checked during regular scheduled Safety and AN patrols.

You have to work out details with the OPS members and OPFAC owners in your AOR.

National AN Staff Support:

We have an aggressive program at National Aid to Navigation Department to produce an Operations Manual section for the five AN Programs ATONs, PATONs, BAP-Bridges, CU-Chart Updating, and SCF-Small Craft Facility Reporting. We will be reviewing the Auxiliary ATON/CU Training Guide and looking to upgrade the AN Program forms so that they are more comprehensive, user-friendly, and e-mail compatible. We will also be upgrading the National Aid to Navigation Web Site. In this process, we will be seeking advice from the DSO-ANs and anyone else that want to contribute to updating the Auxiliary Aid to Navigation Program to very professional level in order to provide high quality support to the Coast Guard.

Best of Luck with your 2007 AN / Chart Updating Program.
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