TEAM COORDINATION

PROBLEM   Human error continues to be the most significant cause of U.S. Coast Guard mishaps. Studies show that 60% to 65% of cutter and boat navigation mishaps have had human error as a contributing cause. Ninety percent of the human error-caused mishaps were due to:

- **Poor judgment** (67%), which includes: not knowing or understanding the situation, loss of situational awareness; inadequate assessment of risks or environment, made GO when NO-GO decision may have been prudent; using incorrect information in decision-making.

- **Inattention** (more than 16%), which includes: failing to monitor displays; not maintaining a good lookout; forgetting to do something; doing something improperly; negligence.

- **Ineffective Supervision** (more than 5%), that includes: lax enforcement of standards, procedures; inadequate oversight or not verifying job done correctly.

SOLUTION   *Team Coordination Training* (TCT) is a program that focuses on reducing the probability for human error by increasing individual and team effectiveness. Safety has long been the Commanding Officer's responsibility and, until recently, was assumed to be the logical result of finely tuned technical skills. USCG mishap data suggests that while technical skills are an essential component of any job, they alone will not ensure safety.

Safe, effective Coast Guard operations depend on coordinated actions among team members. Figure 1-1 demonstrates the effectiveness of TCT in reducing Coast Guard mishap rates. Rates have been determined from mishaps involving mobility and navigation of the vessel. Additionally, the total number of marine and marine-related Class A, B, and C mishaps have significantly decreased over the past several years (225 FY95, 158 FY96, 112 FY97, and 87 FY98).
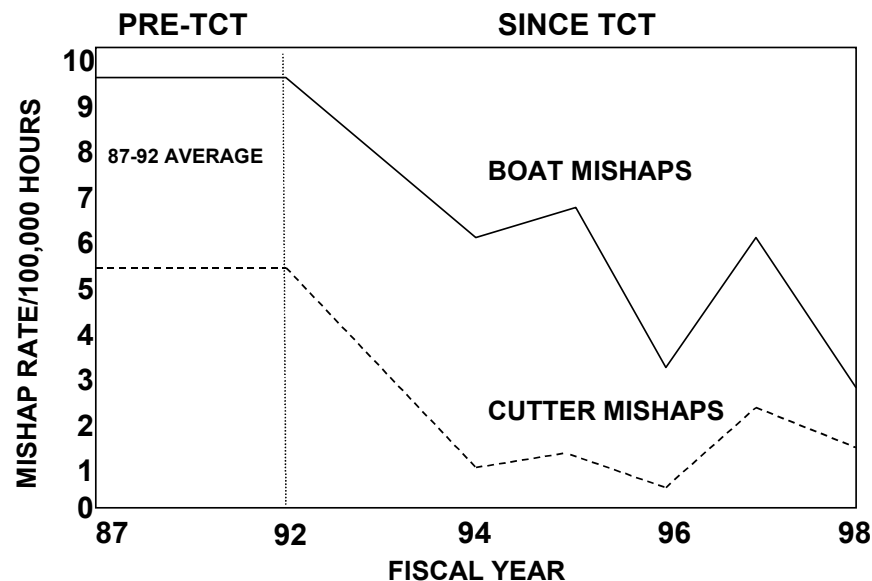
VESSEL MISHAP RATES

Figure 1-1

WHAT IS A TEAM?

A Team is a collection of people, built primarily on the technical capabilities of its members, working in pursuit of a common mission. They have been each assigned a specific function to perform. *Team Coordination Training* is directed at operational Coast Guard teams. Examples used in this program will focus on operational teams found throughout Coast Guard Operations.

TRAINING OBJECTIVE

This course identifies factors that affect performance. It is the responsibility of each team leader to provide the leadership necessary to increase team performance. This training has been developed for both afloat and shore-based communities. The concepts apply to a broad spectrum of afloat and shore operations and will benefit teams within operations, deck, and engineering departments. This training assumes that individual team members are technically proficient in their assigned tasks. Mission planning and execution will be conducted in accordance with Coast Guard directives and command leadership.

WHO IS PART OF YOUR TEAM?

In many Coast Guard operations, the team extends beyond the bounds of assigned personnel and Coast Guard assets. For example, a boat consisting of a coxswain and crew is one team, but seldom performs its mission without interacting with members of a larger team. **We must fully understand and be aware of who is included in our team at all times.**

- **Chain-Of-Command**. The assets on scene represent only a small part of the Coast Guard. Ensure that the organization that deploys you is part of your team; tap their resources and seek their direction. These team members could include mission coordinators, officers-in-charge, duty officers, or other Coast Guard assets.

- **Other Authorities**. When working with other federal, state, or local authorities, treat them as members of the "larger team." They will serve us better if they are integrated into our team operation.

- **The Customer**. The public we serve can be a valuable asset to our teams. They are often the focus of our mission. Do not forget to include them, lest you limit the capabilities of your team.

WHAT IS TEAM COORDINATION?

It is the process of coordinated action among team members that enables them to interact effectively while performing mission tasks. Seven critical team skills have been identified that can be employed to reduce the probability for human error. These skills are:

- Leadership.

- Mission Analysis.

- Adaptability and Flexibility.

- Situational Awareness.

- Decision-Making.

- Communication.

- Assertiveness.

Leadership

Directing and guiding the activities of other team members, stimulating personnel to work together as a team, and providing feedback to team members regarding their performance.

Mission Analysis

Making long-term and contingency plans, and organizing, allocating, and monitoring team resources.

Adaptability and Flexibility

Altering a course of action to meet changing demands, maintaining constructive behavior under pressure, and working effectively with other team members.

Situational Awareness

Knowing at all times what is happening to the team, the unit, and the mission.

Decision Making Applying logical and sound judgment based on the information available.

Communication Clearly and accurately sending and acknowledging information, instructions, and commands; and providing useful feedback.

Assertiveness Actively participating, stating, and maintaining a position until convinced by the facts (not the authority or personality of another) that your position is wrong. Taking action when necessary.

TRAINING HAS TO BE USED TO BE EFFECTIVE;

Your Role Team Coordination training is part of command and control, cutter, and small boat crew training. You should expect and encourage all Coast Guard teams to use these principles. Likewise, you are expected to apply these principles in your duties.

IS TEAM PERFORMANCE MEASURED? The seven critical skills for effective teams came from an examination of various team processes. These processes are:

- Orientation.
- Resource Distribution.
- Timing and Pacing Activities.
- Error Trapping.
- Procedure Maintenance.

Orientation	• How do team members get and pass information necessary for mission completion in the planning process?
	• How do members communicate during the mission about changes in equipment status, personnel readiness, changes in weather, and whether mission objectives are still applicable?
	• How are task priorities assigned or changed?
Resource Distribution	• How well are team member capabilities matched to task requirements?
	• How effectively are workloads balanced during the course of the mission?
Timing or Pacing Activities	• How effective was the planning process in identifying critical factors and forecasting the mission tempo?
	• How effectively was the team and individuals in adapting to mission tempo changes?
Error Trapping	• How effective was the team and individuals in detecting errors in the nature or timing of activities?
	• How well did the team and individuals adjust activities in response to errors and omissions?
Procedure Maintenance	• How well did the team monitor compliance with established mission standards, as in the proper coordination of individual activities?
	• How well did the team adjust to nonstandard activities?

Student Notes

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