



Coast Guard Auxiliary Informational Exhibits

Prepared by the US Coast Guard Auxiliary National Marketing Group

Introduction: “We’ve always done it that way” may have worked in the past but effective methods of reaching target markets have changed with the times. Take a moment and ask yourself, what is the purpose of having the exhibit? We believe you will agree the reason is to communicate effectively with visitors in several key areas, not just one or two. So make good use of these tried and tested “out of the box” concepts that will make your *exhibit* a success.

Purpose: To make an *exhibit* displays say, “Come see me” so Auxiliarists can market core programs and current initiatives to the recreational boating public and recruit new members.

Method: To apply proven marketing techniques and use standard professionally prepared materials to effectively communicate all preferred key messages, not just one or two.

Goal: Recruit new members and simultaneously reduce boating fatalities by encouraging boaters to wear life jackets, obtain a vessel safety check (VSC), take America’s Boating Course (ABC) and not boat under the influence; and, reach boaters most at risk for a fatality with these messages. Also enhance homeland security by promoting America’s Waterway Watch Program.

Core programs:

- Recreational Boating Safety: You’re In Command – Boat Responsibly. Wear life jackets, obtain a VSC, take America’s Boating Course and never boat under the influence.
- Auxiliary recruitment and retention.
- America’s Waterway Watch (homeland security)

Other initiatives depending on the geographical area or season:

- Danger of Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning (all areas/all seasons).
- Safe paddling.
- Safe PWC operation.
- Hypothermia.
- Zebra Mussel infestation.

Groups of boaters most at risk for a boating fatality:

- Operators of open outboard motor boats 21’ and smaller, anglers and hunters
- Males 20 – 50 years old
- Canoe/kayak paddlers
- Personnel Water Craft (PWC) operators

Exhibits:

The reason they are called *exhibits* and not *booths* is you are exhibiting what you offer. Booths are for storing things. Accordingly, call what you do an *exhibit* because your flotilla is at the event for business, to sell! According to *Guerrilla Trade Show Selling* (by Levinson, Smith and Wilson), it takes a visitor less than four seconds to walk the length of a ten foot exhibit space. And, you’re in competition with all the other event distractions for that short time.

Any exhibit and those staffing it must be able to get a visitor's attention. In addition to planning the display, selecting the right Auxiliarists to operate it is equally important. The concept for a successful exhibit is for visitors to be able to relate to Auxiliarists as "affable" rather than "authority" figures. And the Auxiliarists must be physically and mentally able to perform the duties. Avoid problems by having those volunteering for duty read this guide and the Exhibit Operating Procedure (a format sample is on page 6) so they know what is expected.

The Exhibit Operating Procedure covers procedures, personal appearance and hygiene, which are important considerations. Table tops are for display items and not a resting place for hats, jackets, water bottles, etc. Eating at the exhibit should not be permitted and breath mints are a good idea. Attendants should stand or use backless stools (no chairs) to maintain eye contact, and not more than two in an exhibit per shift. Socialize with family and other flotilla members away from the exhibit area so visitor access is not discouraged by a crowd.

The Undress Blue – Summer Alpha uniform or Undress Blue – Winter uniform (when appropriate) is specified in the Auxiliary Manual for boating safety exhibits. Hats are not worn inside and ribbons are not worn with these uniforms. **ONE (not both)** Auxiliarist staffing the exhibit should wear an inflatable PFD to show off new style PFD's. Visitors to the exhibit should be able to identify those staffing it as Auxiliarists. Wearing a PFD covers up the uniform collar insignia and name tag. Boaters also relate better to approachable figures so wearing the Tropical blue long or Service Dress Blue Alpha uniforms are discouraged. Besides, wearing a PFD can damage shoulder boards and ribbons and would look out of place with those uniforms. Those staffing an exhibit should also understand how inflatable PFD's work and are rearmed to be able to answer questions.



Note: This is only a suggestion. Recommend the Auxiliary member device rather than elected or staff office insignia be worn when staffing exhibits, much like when we work side-by-side with the gold-side. This is because many visitors to an exhibit are former enlisted personnel who will relate better to members rather than those they mistake for military officers because of insignia.



An open exhibit draws visitors into the space, enabling you to engage them more readily. Having a U shaped table arrangement with an open front encourages visitor access. Having a table across the front of an exhibit creates a barrier and is discouraged. Use table cloths and table skirts. Paper products for both needs are available. Encouraging the boating public to wear "today's" life jackets is a primary objective. A colorful life jacket display should be the first thing people see when they pass or enter your exhibit space. Ensure PFD's are secured when the exhibit is not staffed to avoid theft. An inexpensive 1/8" steel cable with loops made on both ends can easily be fabricated with materials from a hardware store. Bicycle cables and locks also work.

An attention getting "You're In Command" banner (#3000) should be prominently displayed as the center piece of all exhibits.



Display new style PFD's in bright colors. Table top PFD display stands are easy to fabricate from Plexiglas and free standing from PCV pipe or metal. District Operation Boat Smart Coordinators received new style PFD's a few years back. If it is not available, contact a local retailer and borrow the newest PFD's. Most are usually accommodating about letting you borrow a few choice designs, especially if they know you will tell visitors where they came from. Do not display old style orange "horse collar" PFD's; they are a reason PFD's are not worn. Attach a card to each PFD so those staffing the exhibit can answer questions about price and source. Use free Auxiliary National Supply Center (ANSC) materials to round out the exhibit.



ANSC posters advertise recruiting, VSC, ABC and America's Waterway Watch. All can be taped to a foam board (\$3.00 a sheet). Tape boards together on the back-side to form a "V". More lasting displays can be made using aluminum (surplus street signs, painted and hinged together). Laminating posters and printed pages is a good idea. Develop local relationships with county/city officials and they will help you with these items to promote boating safety. Include a printed list in large type of VSC mandatory and recommended items for 16-21' boats (most common). If you display an ABC book, secure it to the board. The flare gun and cartridges displayed are inert and so marked. Cover outdated YIC logos and print and display the current YIC logo. Update outdated titles like "Courtesy Marine Examination" with Vessel Safety Check and add a sixth block for "Maritime Domain Awareness" on the ANSC 3507 Join the Auxiliary poster.

Most people like to see symmetry and order. Which is why displays work much better, and attract more people, if items are organized and if they all have a similar "feel" about them. That's where using logo branded "You're in Command" (YIC) materials make the difference. Display them using ANSC #9018 – 5 slot RSVP Literature Display rack or the newer ANSC #9018a, a 6 slot version suited for the new narrow YIC pamphlets. Visual clutter is avoided by using literature racks or inexpensive plastic holders which can be purchased from an office supply store. Using individual holders permits displaying brochures in front of related posters. Limited decals or oversize items should be neatly stacked on the table. For America's Waterway Watch brochures and decals, order plastic holders from ANSC (#3026f). Do not use outdated materials.



Post your flotilla's boating course and VSC schedule; and have sign-up forms for both available. Space permitting, a large screen VCR at an indoor exhibit is a crowd magnet. If you play the "You're in Command" ABC/VSC loop video and/or America's Waterway Watch video, ensure a large, easy to see, attention getting viewing screen is used. Small screens are ignored.

Boat show exhibits offer an excellent opportunity to sell ABC and knot tying CD-ROMs, Davis cards, teaching GPS for Mariners Courses, pre-selling BS&S texts before the date of the next PE class, signing up students for classes, and demonstrating a VSC on a PWC or boat.

Some owners of 26' or larger boats are not aware of the requirement for an oil pollution and garbage placard to be displayed on-board. They particularly appreciate receiving ANSC #4064 Placard FWPIA Oil Pollution and #4067 Sticker Garbage Dumping Restrictions Offshore (or #4068 for the Great Lakes, or #4069 in Spanish or #4070 in Vietnamese). Providing these free decals is an excellent ice breaker and lead-in to scheduling the boat owner for a VSC.

There are also decals ANSC #4063 Reporting Marine Pollution and #3020 VHF - Emergency Radio Call Procedures, which are popular with off shore and Great Lakes boaters. And, it's a good idea to have some CG recruiting literature available at the exhibit.

Engage visitors as soon as they come into your space. You can then inquire about their interests, and guide them to materials they might like to have. The ANSC 3026 series America's Waterway Watch materials (pamphlet and sticker) appeal to patriotic instinct. If you have a boating enthusiast, the You're In Command Boat Responsibly brochure is excellent because it is encompassing. However, don't hand out literature to everyone. Even if the literature is potentially interesting, thrusting unwanted literature at visitors is offensive. Your exhibit should not be a contest to see who can give away the most. Why, because it costs money and if a visitor is burdened with unwanted literature it winds up in the nearest trash can or worse.

Exhibit security is always a concern and attendants should be alert for shop lifters. Items should be secured at night. That means extra work but it will also avoid problems, especially if you are displaying borrowed items. It is also a good idea to use empty CO2 cartridges for any inflatable PFD's on display, or remove the cartridge to preclude pranksters from inflating them.

Maintaining a Watch Log provides a record of who staffed the exhibit for reporting, what was sold for accountability, inquiries received so they can be responded to, or even the number of meaningful contacts for an after action report. It also provides information so subsequent watch standers know what occurred on previous shifts. A correctly maintained log would show where items stored for security the night prior can be found or where additional literature is stored. Moreover regardless of all the advance planning and best intentions, there may still be some who arrive to stand watch in the incorrect uniform or not understanding the NEW operating ground rules. The log book would be a good place to have this guide and Exhibit Operating Procedure available for them to read. Also, include contact information and numbers.

Auxiliary National Supply Center (ANSC) items are ordered by the FSO-MA from ANSC by snail mailing or faxing an order form to them. These order forms can be found in the back of the ANSC catalog. There is a series of pre completed order forms where the requestor only has to enter quantity but there is one blank order form as well. What frequently occurs is a new item will be announced via e-mail or on the Auxiliary Member's What's New Page but it will not yet be listed on one of the order forms. All the FSO-MA needs to do is write in the item on the bottom of one of the forms, use the blank form, or even attach a piece of paper to a form.

Brochures and pamphlets have maximum ordering quantity limits. When more than the maximum is needed, include a short justification. For example: "Needed for the Jones Boat Show, estimated attendance 5,000; or needed to stock 10 marine dealers in the Spring. When

ordering, keep in mind one event Marketing handled for the past four years averaged 30-35,000 visitors over three days but we gave away less than 300 of the most popular item (#3006 Federal Boating Regulations), and usually 100 or less of the other items. Order enough for the event and justify the larger amount on the form. These materials are free to your flotilla but cost the Coast Guard money to produce and ship. Plan for the anticipated crowd but avoid waste.

Visit http://www.cgauz.info/g_pcx/publications/misc/DCAT.pdf for the ANSC catalog. Or go to www.cgauz.org, select "Members", then on the right side select "Chief Dir of Auxiliary", then on the left top under MANUALS select "ANSC Catalog", then at the top of this page under Auxiliary Manuals select "ANSC 2007" which is the 5th item down and you will access the ANSC catalog. **Prior planning is always a good idea because some items can be out of stock**, especially at the end/beginning of a new fiscal year. Here is the key literature/poster list:

ANSC literature and accompanying decals (** indicates should always be used at events):

- 3002 Brochure Your Guide to Towing (YIC) (6" wide)
- **3003 Pamphlet You're In Command (YIC) - Boat Responsibly
- 3004a Pamphlet (State Farm provided) Keep Your Boat Afloat.
- 3005 Pamphlet Carbon Monoxide Poisoning (YIC)
- 3006 Pamphlet Federal Boating Regulations (YIC) or State Boating Regulations
- 3009 Pamphlet Global Maritime Distress & Safety System (GMDSS)
- **3023 Pamphlet Join the Auxiliary
- **3026 Pamphlet America's Waterway Watch
- **3026a Decal America's Waterway Watch
- 3031 Pamphlet Safe Boating for Anglers and Hunters (6" wide)
- **3032 Pamphlet How to Choose the Right Life Jacket (YIC)
- 3033 Pamphlet Beware of Boat Propellers (YIC)

ANSC Posters

- 3003b Poster Take the ABC Course (8 ½" x 11")
- 3003c Poster Get a VSC (8 ½" x 11")
- 3005a Poster Carbon Monoxide (8 ½" x 11")
- 3507 Poster Join the Auxiliary (16"x 20")
- 3026c Poster America's Waterway Watch - large
- 3026c1 Poster America's Waterway Watch (14" x 12") – laminated.
- **3505 Poster Which Life Jacket For You? Laminated, free standing – excellent item.
- 3506 Poster Ten Ways to Paddle Safely (11" x 15")

ANSC Videos to play in the VCR:

- 3003vi Video ABC/VSC Loop Video
- 3024b America's Waterway Watch Video

BoatUS Foundation has several good brochures on their web site which has an order form (<http://www.boatus.com/foundation/brochure/default.htm>). Their telephone number is (703) 823-9550 X3200. Up to 200 each of several brochures, to include bilingual materials can be ordered. Allow several weeks for shipment. Their materials include:

FD009 Hey Kids, Lets Go Boating (w/stickers)
FD010 Life Jackets (in English and Spanish)
FD011 Alcohol and Boating (in English and Spanish)
FD015 Boat Handling Decal

Personal Watercraft Industry Association (PWIA) provides their “Riding Rules for Personal Watercraft” brochure. Phone: (202) 737-9768 or email info@pwia.org

ANSC children’s materials:

4014 Officer Snook Coloring and Activity Book or #4013 Officer Snook for the Great Lakes
4062 Officer Snook pull off stickers (one sheet accompanies one book).

If a large number of children are anticipated, invite a Coastie robotic boat to participate on the peak day. Scheduling Coastie should be done as far in advance as possible. Many Districts have a PFD Panda and Officer Snook costumes. These are also great attractions and often easier to schedule than Coastie. There is no reason why all cannot participate at a show.

Everyone likes to receive something for free. Sources of free boating promotional items are Coast Guard recruiters (pens, pencils, rulers, decals, refrigerator magnets), State Boating Law Administrators (floating key rings, whistles, PWC registration tubes), US Army Corps of Engineers (orange trash bags which double as a visual distress signal, coloring books, and whistles). Although available from other services, only use Coast Guard recruiting materials.

A National Marketing Group Coordinator is available to assist flotillas with exhibits. Contact Stu Soffer for assistance, at (870) 247-1177 after 0900 CST, or cgaugstu@yahoo.com.

Guide updated October 13, 2007

Sample EXHIBIT OPERATING PROCEDURE
(Modify for local use)

1. Exhibit Goal: Recruit new members, promote recreational boating safety by encouraging boaters to wear life jackets, obtain a vessel safety check, take America’s Boating Course and not boat under the influence. Simultaneously promote America’s Waterway Watch Program.
2. Concept: The concept for a successful exhibit is for visitors to be able to relate to Auxiliaries as “affable” as opposed to “authority” figures. And the Auxiliaries must be knowledgeable, physically able to perform exhibit duties and wear the correct uniform smartly.
3. Setting Up:
Include specific set up, break down and night time security information here. Remember, free exhibit space sometimes does not include a carpet. Many venues rent them. If your exhibit space is carpeted, or you bring your own carpet, it has to be cleaned daily so think about a vacuum cleaner or broom.
4. Operating the Exhibit:

a. Only two Auxiliarists should staff the exhibit at one time. Socialize with family and other Auxiliary members away from the exhibit area so visitor access is not blocked or discouraged.

b. The Undress Blue – Summer Alpha uniform (collar insignia) is designated and hats are not worn under cover. Tilley or garrison hats are not appropriate for this mission. Key rings, knives or other non-uniform items should not be worn on belts or hooked to belt loops. Gold chains or other inappropriate jewelry should not be worn in view. It's always a good idea to review the Auxiliary Manual on uniform and accessory wear policies before meeting the public.

c. Encouraging the boating public to wear "today's" life jackets is a primary objective, so a new style PFD should be the first thing people see when they enter our exhibit space. One of those staffing the exhibit should wear an inflatable PFD to show off both styles. The PFD pouch is an ideal place for cell telephones and car keys, pen and pad, sun glasses, etc.

d. Event access passes must be returned to the "Will Call" booth upon completion of each shift. They must be available for the shift subsequent to the one that relieves you.

e. Engage visitors as soon as they come into your space, inquire about their boating interests, and guide them to materials they might like to have. The America's Waterway Watch pamphlet appeals to patriotic instinct. If you have a boating enthusiast, the "You're In Command" boat responsibly brochure is good because it is encompassing. Do not tell "sea stories".

f. Don't hand literature to everyone. Even if the literature is potentially interesting, thrusting unwanted literature at visitors is offensive. Do not pre-bag literature for visitors. This is a waste of literature. Let visitors select or ask for what they want or you can suggest items.

g. Ensure all are wearing the uniform of the day correctly before taking photographs. This is especially important if a photo is going to be published in a newspaper, magazine or on a web site. One frequently overlooked item is wearing an incorrect hat or prohibited items on belts.

h. Watch standers are required to log in and out in the Watch Stander's Log. Record the location of any items secured for the night, literature out of stock, contacts to be followed up on, estimated number of meaningful contacts for each shift and any other pertinent information.

4. Be Professional and Effective:

a. Don't Sit. If you sit, visitors get the impression you don't care to be bothered. Use the stools provided to rest because they permit eye contact to be maintained. No chairs please.

b. Neatness. Table tops should be kept neat and orderly. Do not place hats, jackets, water bottles and other personal items on them. Store all items not in use out of sight.

c. Don't Read. For every 10' of linear exhibit space, you have just four seconds to impress a visitor enough to get them to stop. It's not impressive to see someone reading a newspaper.

d. Don't Chew Gum. No one wants to talk with someone who's chewing.

e. Don't Eat or Smoke: Take a break. Remember, garlic, onions, and some foods cause unpleasant breath as does tobacco. Carry breath mints or other breath cleansers. Some mouth wash products contain alcohol and can give the false impression the user consumed alcohol.

f. Don't Ignore Prospects. One of the rudest things you can do is ignore a visitor, even for a few seconds. Nobody likes to be ignored. If you're busy when someone approaches at least acknowledge them and subsequently try to include them in the conversation.