



Quick, Honey, Put on a Life Jacket!

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A number of years ago, as I was doing a (free) vessel exam for the owner of a very substantial yacht, I got to the part where I ask to see the life jackets. (see SSP, "Life Jackets Save Lives - Maybe Yours", 2/11/09) He pointed me to a locker, which I opened to find the life jackets, stowed under an anchor, chain and additional rope. This column is about that.

No Good If You Can't Get To Them

I promptly asked him, "Sir, do you have any grandchildren?" "Why, yes, I do. 5 of them. Why do you ask?" I replied, "Imagine what forces you will be under when you say these words to your grandchildren, 'quick! Put on a life jacket!' and you point to this locker. Which one of your grandchildren will be able to move this anchor to get to the life jackets - which are still in their wrappers, btw." He blanched.

No safety equipment is of any use if you can't get to it. Or, no one knows where it is except you, the skipper, who is likely to be mighty busy just when safety equipment is needed. Talk about pressure!

Pre-Underway Check List

By USCG regulations, before we leave the dock on a mission - of any type or any duration - we must, as a crew, go through a check-list akin to a vessel exam. This includes, among many items, where are:

1. The extra life jackets (we must have ours on at all times, which is an EXCELLENT idea, skipper (see SSP, "Do I REALLY Need to Wear a Life Jacket", 9/24/08));
2. The medical kit - and ensure that none of the perishable supplies have in fact perished due to the passage of time;
3. The "visual distress signals", i.e., flares - and that they have not expired and are serviceable (see SSP, "Visual Distress Signals and the Private Boat Captain", 9/27/06);
4. The boat hook - a good tool for extending for retrieving something - or someone - that may be just out of reach;
5. The Man Overboard "apparatus", i.e., line and ring to throw to someone who has indeed fallen overboard (see SSP, "Maaaaaaann Overboard!", 11/19/08);

6. And fire extinguishers (see SSP, "Vessel Afire!", 3/14/07).

This list is by no means exhaustive but it represents some of the major categories of pending disaster that may befall a skipper. While you are dealing with the boat and how it needs to be used to respond to the emergency, your crew can be dealing with the crew's response. Whether it be a grounding (see SSP, "Hard Aground - Now What!?", 7/9/08), or far worse, a vessel sinking being dealt with (see SSP, "We're Sinking", 12/13/06), you as the skipper have a lot on your mind and a lot to deal with. Can you imagine yourself also having to stop dealing with the emergency at hand so that you can direct crew to emergency equipment that will protect them and you from the effects of that emergency?

But Everyone Has a Pressure Point...

Beyond which, they start to crack. What do you do if the crew can't handle the pressure as well as you are handling it?

Well, how about handing them the

laminated lay-out of your boat with the location of all the equipment labeled? Seriously, of all the risks that you spend time and money in preparing for and against, have you thought about panic as a risk? What then?

"Honey, hey, enough! Here, look at this - right now - and go get everybody in life jackets. Now!"

It is likely to reduce the panic because now the crew has something to focus on other than the water sloshing on the floor boards...

Oh, remember the comment about a (free) vessel exam at the start of this column? If you want one, email me below or see (SSP, "No Fuss, No Muss - and Your Favorite Price (free) - Vessel Exams", 4/8/08)

BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at JoinUSCGAux@aol.com or go direct to the D1SR Human Resources department, who are in charge of new members matters, at DSO-HR and we will help you "get in this thing..."

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Legislator Muratore Tours Brookhaven National Lab

Legislator Tom Muratore and his staff recently toured the Brookhaven National Lab facility in Upton, New York. The lab is one of seventeen U. S. Department of Energy national laboratories, and one of ten owned by the DOE Office of Science. Established in 1947, BNL is the only national lab located in the Northeast. It is a major enterprise with an operating budget of more than \$500 million, nearly 2,900 employees, and 4.0 million square feet of space in 334 buildings located on about 5,300 acres.

The tour included the Long Island Solar Farm, a 32-megawatt plant which is currently the largest solar photovoltaic power plant in the Eastern United States. The yearly energy output is 44,000,000 kilowatt-hours (estimated annual average), equivalent to the annual usage of 4,500 homes. The total area this covers is approximately 200 acres, with an irregular layout designed to minimize environmental issues.

The tour also touched on the National Synchrotron Light Source (NSLS), which began operating in 1982 and is one of the world's most powerful tools for observing the structure and behavior of matter at the atomic level. Now under construction is the next-generation synchrotron, NSLS-II, a one billion dollar cutting edge new user facility scheduled to be completed in 2014. When finished, NSLS-II will be the highest-performance synchrotron light source in the world and will provide capabilities for both basic and applied research that will only be available at BNL.

"Brookhaven National Lab is at the forefront of scientific and technological research, and this technology is right in our own backyard," stated Legislator Muratore. "Not only is education in science and technology extremely important to our nation's future prosperity, but Brookhaven National Laboratory continues to be significant to Long Island's economy and its environmental well-being." For more information on Brookhaven National Lab you can visit their website www.bnl.gov. For any of your legislative concerns, please call Legislator Tom Muratore's office at 631-854-9292 or email tom.muratore@suffolkcountyny.gov.



Legislator Tom Muratore (4th from left) joins some of his colleagues and members from Brookhaven National Lab and LIPA.