FAQ on ICS....what all Auxiliary members need to know!

1. What do these abbreviations mean?

ICS is the Incident Command System and it is the accepted management scheme for incident management, including incidents of national significance. These events can range from something that is known and planned out, like an OPSAIL, to something unexpected, like an oil spill. **NIMS** is the National Incident Management System. The ICS is a major component of NIMS. But NIMS is a national plan, integrating many concepts and potential responding agencies or organizations. In the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Auxiliary, we will work with both. Each offers basic course work, designed to introduce you to the basic principles of management and the organizational design that allows the system to work.

2. What courses are offered?

There are over 50 courses offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Emergency Management Institute (EMI). They range from information for the private citizen to coursework for the Command and Control personnel. The coursework that applies to the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary include IS 100, 200, 700 and 800. In addition, a course designated as IS 210 will be introduced in February 2006 and will be required for selected members. You can view the course selection at http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/crslist.asp.

3. Who has to take the IS courses?

That depends on who you are and what you do for to support the Coast Guard. We all joined the Auxiliary to support its missions and to promote boating safety. Some of us made the commitment to provide direct operation support to the Coast Guard while others have assumed a leadership role in the organization. *If you provide direct operation support, you participate in*:

> Surface operations
> Air operations
> Operations planning
> CMDCEN/OPCEN/COMMS watchstanding
> Fixed/mobile radio facility operators
> Port Security or Marine Safety & Security

You will need to complete the IS 100 and 700 courses. In addition, if you are a coxswain, pilot, team leader or have been

elected to a leadership role in the organization, then you will need to take IS 200, 210 and 800. Although this list identifies most of the course participants, it is not intended to be "all inclusive". If the Operational Commander determines that you need to take IS coursework, then you should make every effort to honor that request.

4. Which leaders will need to take these additional courses?

Good question! Obviously all leaders will need to take IS 100 and 700. However, if you hold an elected office at the division level or higher, then you need to take IS 200, 210 and 800 as well. If you hold an appointed office in a program offering direct operational support to the Coast Guard at the division level or higher, then you need to take IS 200, 210 and 800 also. The reason for the additional requirement is simple. You may well be in a position to work with the Coast Guard to gather resources, like personnel and boats, or be directly involved in helping to manage these resources for the Coast Guard. You will need to know how the normal Coast Guard operation shifts to become a part of the bigger response picture.

5. Why do coxswains need to take additional courses?

Actually, it is not just coxswains, but pilots and anyone who leads a team, including all of the folks working in the Trident program at your local sector. You are known as a "single unit resource leader" (SURL). Each of you has responsibility for accepting direction and performing a function within the response. You are also responsible for directing members of your team, preparing reports to document your activities and providing summaries at the end of your patrol, mission or assignment. Therefore, you need to know more about how the system works and how you work within the system than other Auxiliary members.

6. What is the timetable to completion of these courses?

This simple chart shows the deadlines for completing these courses for both the Active Duty and the Auxiliary.

ICS NIMS Training Schedule

Course	Active Duty Deadline	Auxiliary Deadline
IS 100	31 March 06	30 June 06 (a)
IS 200	30 June 06	30 Sept 06 (b)
IS 210 (c)	unknown	unknown
IS 700	31 March 06	30 June 06 (a)
IS 800	30 June 06	30 Sept 06 (b)

a. *Failure of any Auxiliary member to meet 30 June 06 deadline will make them ineligible to participate in a CG exercise, drill or response event.* After this deadline, new members will not be certified as qualified in an Auxiliary operational program unless courses completed.

b. This deadline is only strongly encouraged. *There is no consequence for not completing course until 30 December 2007 when member will be considered REYR if courses not completed.* These courses are intended for all CG Auxiliary personnel potentially involved in response to incidents in a leadership role (see below for definition).

c. This is a four-hour course which basically covers the paperwork completion part of IS 300. Taking IS 300 is not feasible for Auxiliary members as it is a 4-day resident course and there are very few instructors available at this time and funds are limited. IS 210 is not available at this time.

d. A leadership role is described as, but not limited to, all incident commanders, command staff, general staff, branch directors, supervisors, unit leaders, etc, leaders of single resources (SURL) task forces, and strike teams (i.e. aircraft commanders, coxswains, boarding officers, LE and HAZMAT team leaders, federal on-scene coordinator representatives, pollution investigators, etc.).

7. How do I get these courses?

- These courses are available from FEMA at http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/crslist.asp. Testing is done online and FEMA responds by e-mail in 24 hours or less that you have passed the course. A certificate of completion arrives in the mail 4-8 weeks later. Once you get the e-mail, forward it to you IS officer for entry into AUXDATA. Save the certificate!

- If you do not have a computer or have a dial up connection, you may wish to order course materials on a CD through the Auxiliary National Supply Center (ANSC). Ask you MA officer to order a course and the materials will be shipped directly to your home. Testing is still done online. If you don't have computer access, you may need to partner with a friend to input the answers at either the FEMA or NATC websites.

- Some of these courses are also available in your community. Your local police or fire department might have a course that you can take if you prefer a "classroom" setting. Consider having IS training at a flotilla, division or district meeting. Since these are "independent study" courses, they do not need a certified IS instructor. Invite someone from the sector who has participated in these events or exercises to teach the class so that they can share some real world experiences!

8. **What is IS 210?**

   IS 210 is a course currently under construction. It is composed of a little slice of a lot of courses. It will focus on the nuts and bolts of response and how to fill out the paperwork! This course will be offered as a four hour classroom session and will require an IS certified instructor. Currently, the Coast Guard does not have many certified instructors, so the availability of this course will be limited at first. Eventually, anyone who was required to take IS 200 and 800 will need to take IS 210. However, there is no deadline for course completion at this point.

9. **Where can I get more information about the Incident Command System and the Coast Guard's efforts in National Incident Management?**

   The Coast Guard's NIMS Project team is located at TRACEN Yorktown, VA. They have an extensive website located on HOMEPORT – the Coast Guard's new web portal. You can visit the ICS site at
   http://homeport.uscg.mil/mycg/portal/ep/home.do. The ICS site can be found in the **LIBRARY** section. This site focuses on tools that the field units can use, including links to key documents and job aids. In addition, the ICS newsletter can be found here. This newsletter contains the latest information on courses availability and other items of interest.

   The ICS program managers are anxious to get Auxiliary members involved in the ICS system. In particular, if you have a good story about how the Auxiliary participated as an effective partner during a response event, let them know! They are looking for success stories from all corners of the Coast Guard community.

When the Coast Guard mobilizes to a surge response, it is not business as usual; rather it is business as unusual. The Incident Command System and the National Incident Management System help us to mobilize quickly, work efficiently and partner effectively with other agencies. Auxiliarists need to know ICS/NIMS so that we can stand shoulder to shoulder with the Coast Guard -