

Note: November 2022.

This Directive may no longer be current. Please check with the program office responsible for this Directive to determine if there are any updates or if the Directive is no longer in use.

U.S. Department  
of Transportation

United States  
Coast Guard



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COMDTINST 16500.16A  
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COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 16500.16A

Subj: COAST GUARD AUXILIARY AIDS TO NAVIGATION PROGRAM

Ref: (a) Aids to Navigation Manual-Administration, COMDTINST M16500.7  
(b) Auxiliary Operations Policy Manual, COMDTINST M16798.3 (Series)

1. PURPOSE. The purpose of this instruction is to provide guidance for the employment of the Coast Guard Auxiliary by district commanders in the Coast Guard's Aids To Navigation Program.
2. ACTION. Area and district commanders, commander of maintenance and logistics commands, and commanding officers of headquarters units shall ensure compliance with the provisions of this instruction.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. COMDTINST 16500.16 is cancelled.
4. BACKGROUND. The Coast Guard Auxiliary has previously been authorized by the Coast Guard to verify all classes of private aids to navigation (PATON). In today's funding and resource limited environment, the Coast Guard must make better use of the Auxiliary by eliminating unnecessary programmatic restrictions and employing the Auxiliary as a force multiplier in all phases of the Coast Guard's Aids to Navigation Program.
5. DISCUSSION. To maximize the employment of the Auxiliary in the Coast Guard's Aids To Navigation Program, district

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commanders are authorized to employ qualified Auxiliarists in all phases of the Coast Guard's Aids To Navigation Program consistent with this instruction. Qualified members of the Auxiliary may assist or support ATON units in servicing federal aids as well as being tasked to verify position and characteristics of private aids to navigation.

6. PROCEDURES. District commanders shall:
  - a. Establish appropriate procedures to administer Auxiliary participation in the Coast Guard's Aids To Navigation Program per reference (a) and to ensure that only qualified Auxiliarists are assigned duty, under orders, in this program per reference (b).
  - b. Authorize ATON units to employ an Auxiliarist in any capacity within the scope of this instruction, consistent with their qualifications and capabilities, as necessary to meet mission demands.
  - c. Ensure each participating Auxiliarist receives the proper training and that they maintain the qualifications necessary to participate in the Coast Guard's Aids To Navigation Program.
  - d. Provide each Auxiliarist participating in the Coast Guard's Aids to Navigation Program with a copy of this instruction.
7. FORMS/REPORTS. This program requires the use of either the Aids to Navigation Report form (CG-5474(AUX)), which may be ordered through normal channels from the Auxiliary National Supply Center (ANSC), or the form approved by district commander (oan) as indicated in each enclosure.

/s/ J. A. CREECH  
Acting Chief, Office of Navigation  
Safety and Waterway Services

- Encl: (1) Guide for Using the Coast Guard Auxiliary to Verify Private Aid to Navigation.  
(2) Guide for Using the Coast Guard Auxiliary to Assist or Support Coast Guard ATON Units in Servicing Federal Aids to Navigation.

**NON-STANDARD DISTRIBUTION:**

Coast Guard Auxiliary  
All "AV" qualified Auxiliarists  
All Flotilla Commanders

GUIDE FOR USING THE COAST GUARD AUXILIARY TO VERIFY PRIVATE AIDS TO NAVIGATION

1. ADMINISTRATION. This program will be administered by the director of Auxiliary (director), working with the cognizant district commander (oan), using appropriate Auxiliary Staff Officers and available Coast Guard units.
  - a. The director may delegate administrative responsibility to ensure success of the private aids to navigation verification program.
  - b. Directors and Auxiliary district commodores shall coordinate the actions of the Auxiliary District Staff Officers-Aids to Navigation (DSO-ANs) in furthering this program. Assistant DSO-ANs shall be coordinated as necessary by the DSO-AN.
  - c. The existing Coast Guard organization for verification of private aids remains in place, with Auxiliarists assisting at the different levels (unit, group, and district), and with supervision of the Auxiliarists remaining with the Coast Guard personnel at the level being assigned.
  - d. The director and the District Planning Group shall establish the appropriate goals and recognition for this program.
2. QUALIFICATION. Participation in the verification program is limited to those Auxiliarists who are qualified and certified as Aid Verifier. (AV).
  - a. The qualification process shall be determined by the director working with the district commander (oan).
  - b. Whether an Auxiliarist retains their qualification shall be determined by the director working with the district commander (oan).
3. TRAINING. The director shall be responsible for establishing an appropriate training program using the most convenient Coast Guard training available (ANT, buoy tender, group ATON officer, etc.).
  - a. Due to the nature and location of some aids, the director working through the district commander (oan) must ensure that any Auxiliarist assigned to verify an aid is properly trained and fully capable of performing the assigned task. Specific training requirements shall be left to the discretion of the cognizant director and the district commander (oan) since needs will vary depending on the specific area.

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- b. The director, in coordination with district commander (oan), must coordinate the development of Auxiliary specific training requirements and the providing of that training with the appropriate ATON unit. Once certification is complete, a letter of certification shall be sent to the Auxiliarist and to the director's office for appropriate record entry.
- c. Suggested training topics include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - (1) Use of Aids to Navigation Report form (CG- 5474(AUX)).
  - (2) Use of the Private Aids to Navigation Application (CG-2554).
  - (3) Use of the Light List applicable to the area of operations.
  - (4) Use of nautical chart(s) of the operational area.
  - (5) Use of Local Notice to Mariners for area of operations and how to apply data contained to appropriate nautical charts and publications.
  - (6) Demonstrate the ability to take a three point fix and accurately plot it.
  - (7) Demonstrate the ability to determine and time, using a stopwatch if available, light rhythms and characteristics.
  - (8) Demonstrate the ability to describe and determine light sectors.
  - (9) Demonstrate the ability to determine light colors.
  - (10) Describe purpose and use of any private aid to navigation within the area of operations, including how they operate and the various power sources.
  - (11) Instruction on retro-reflective materials and various symbols and markings on buoys, lights, and daybeacons.
  - (12) Demonstrate ability to hear and understand the characteristics of an aid to navigation sound signal (i.e., bell, gong, whistle, and horn).
  - (13) Describe procedures for gaining authority to access the property where private aids exist and to the aid itself.
  - (14) Recognize the different types of structures and their condition. Specifically check for:

- (a) Overgrown foliage and to be sure that the aid is visible from the waterway throughout its intended arc of visibility.
- (b) Rusting or rotting sections and inspect the connection hardware of the structure.
- (c) Guys and, if any, that they appear visually snug and are secured properly.
- (d) Where possible, the condition of foundations - is it satisfactory? Is it suffering from erosion damage or weather deterioration?

(15) Describe normal components of any private aid to navigation in the area of operations.

4. VERIFICATIONS. Auxiliarists are authorized to verify the following types of private aids.

- (a) Buoys - Verify the type, color, characteristics (if lighted), markings (i.e., retro-reflective material, numbers, letters, etc.)
- (b) Lights - Verify the characteristics, color, sectors (if any), and rhythm.
- (c) Daybeacons - Verify that the type, size, color(s), marking(s), retro-reflective material, and location are as authorized. Verify that the supporting structure appears to be sound and capable of supporting the aid.
- (d) Fog Signals - Verify that the type and characteristic are as authorized.
- (e) Shore-based Aids - Verify that the supporting structure appears to be sound and capable of supporting the aid and equipment installed. Check for overgrown foliage and that the aid is not obscured from the waterway in its intended arc of visibility.

**NOTE:::** Auxiliarists shall not verify any aid to navigation without the proper training and subsequent tasking by the Coast Guard.

5. Check List For Verification Missions.

a. Materials.

- (1) Copy of approved Private Aids to Navigation Application (CG-5254) as amended.
- (2) District provided private aids to navigation list.

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- (3) As necessary, current edition of Light List for the area.
  - (4) Current edition, corrected, largest scale chart of the area in which the private aids to be verified are located.
  - (5) Equipment to determine aid's position (i.e., compass, pelorus, hand-held compass, sextant, rangefinder, radar, LORAN-C, GPS, dGPS etc.).
  - (6) Stopwatch to determine light rhythm and characteristics.
  - (7) Aids to Navigation Report form (CG-5474(AUX)) or the locally generated form approved by the district commander (oan).
  - (8) Camera is optional but encouraged.
- b. Records.
- (1) CG-5474(AUX)) forms or district approved forms for each private aid on the assignment list.
  - (2) The CG-2554 form for each private aid on the assignment list (become thoroughly familiar with each record). Cross check each CG-2554 with assignment list, current edition chart, and the Light List for the area.
- c. Verification Procedure.
- (1) Board or climb an aid only with the approval of the district commander (oan).
  - (2) Enter private property to verify a private aid only after following the district procedures for gaining authority to access the property where the private aid exists.
  - (3) Compare the characteristics of each private aid with those listed on the approved CG-2554 as amended and with the parameters listed in paragraph 4.
  - (4) Note any discrepancies on the CG-2554 and a CG- 5474(AUX) or the district approved form.
  - (5) Repair, change, or the repositioning of a private aid is the responsibility of the owner of the aid.
  - (6) Submit forms and reports per paragraph 7.

6. ORDERS AND ASSIGNMENT TO DUTY. Issuing orders and assignment to duty shall be per the Auxiliary Operations Policy Manual, COMDTINST M16798.3 (Series).
  - a. A Coast Guard unit desiring to employ an Auxiliary operational facility to perform a mission must issue orders to an Auxiliarist, using the Auxiliary Patrol Order form.
  - b. Auxiliarists performing missions not requiring an Auxiliary operational facility should be issued orders using the standard Coast Guard order form or by being placed by name on the unit's work schedule.
  - c. Auxiliarists assigned to perform aids to navigation missions using privately-owned vehicles and/or operational support equipment (see the Auxiliary Operations Policy Manual, COMDTINST M16798.3 (Series), for definition) should be issued written orders specifically requiring and authorizing the use of the vehicle and/or that equipment.
  - d. A Coast Guard unit can authorize Auxiliarists to perform an aids to navigation mission from an Auxiliary surface facility, an Auxiliary aircraft facility, or the Auxiliarist's privately-owned vehicle. Which form of conveyance is authorized depends upon the type of aid and its location. Any Auxiliary facility employed to perform an aids to navigation mission must have prior operational designation and be crewed and equipped per the Auxiliary Operations Policy Manual, COMDTINST M16798.3 (Series).
  - e. Reimbursable or non-reimbursable orders shall be issued for aids to navigation verification missions in accordance with current district policy and procedures and the Auxiliary Operations Policy Manual, COMDTINST M16798.3 (Series).
7. REPORTS. Auxiliarists shall report discrepancies and verifications of private aids on the Aids to Navigation Report form (CG-5474(AUX)) or the locally generated form
8. approved by the district commander (oan).
  - a. All required reports and forms shall be submitted per current district instructions.
  - b. Auxiliarists under orders on an aid verification mission shall report hours as a chart patrol (03) or operational support (07), as appropriate, on the Auxiliary Mission Hour Card.
  - c. Auxiliarists must file any additional reports and maintain any additional records deemed necessary by the Auxiliary or the district commander (oan).



GUIDE FOR USING THE COAST GUARD AUXILIARY TO ASSIST OR SUPPORT ATON  
UNITS IN SERVICING FEDERAL AIDS TO NAVIGATION

1. ADMINISTRATION. To effectively employ the Auxiliary in this program, a clear understanding of the Auxiliary's capabilities and ATON unit's needs are required in order to promote the greatest efficiency in mission accomplishment. To make this program a success, the following must be done:
  - a. The Auxiliary and the Coast Guard (district commander (oan) and ATON units) must work together and define expectations, capabilities, operational procedures, and channels of communications.
  - b. District commander (oan) must coordinate with their ATON units to publish the necessary policy and procedures for training and qualification to facilitate the employment of the Auxiliary.
  - c. The existing organization for the Coast Guard's Aids to Navigation Program may be augmented or supported with Auxiliarists assisting at the different levels (unit, group, and district). An Auxiliarist's experience and capabilities must be used to decide where that Auxiliarist best meets the Coast Guard's needs. Supervision of the Auxiliarists will be accomplished by the Coast Guard personnel at the level being assisted.
2. TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION. District commander (oan) is responsible for the proper training, qualification, and certification of Auxiliarists. In order to authorize Auxiliarists to assist and support ATON units in servicing federal aids to navigation, district commander (oan) must ensure the following requirements are met:
  - a. Only "NE" qualified Auxiliarists (those properly trained and certified) are employed in the Federal Aids To Navigation Program. The "NE" qualification code is the current code given to Coast Guard personnel who are certified to service minor aids.
  - b. Auxiliarists (normally those already AV qualified under Enclosure (1)) are routinely provided the opportunity to gain the proper training and certification for the "NE" qualification code. Copies of the certification must be sent to the Auxiliarist's director of Auxiliary and flotilla. Auxiliarists will gain the "NE" qualification code primarily by being trained and, if qualified, certified by a district aids to navigation training team.
  - c. Auxiliarists, who are certified "NE" qualified, must understand that they are authorized to independently service only those minor aids as directed by an ATON unit. No Auxiliarist will be authorized to independently

service federal aids with complex signal/power systems such as lighthouses, complex range lights, RACONs, etc.

- d. ATON units may employ only "NE" qualified Auxiliarists to assist or support them in servicing federal aids to navigation in the following areas:
    - (1) Independent service of those minor federal aids to navigation as directed by ATON unit.
    - (2) Assist ATON unit personnel with routine servicing of any federal aid to navigation.
    - (3) Assist underway Coast Guard boats and cutters in servicing any federal aid to navigation.
    - (4) Augment and assist an ATON unit with communications, administration, and watchstanding.
  - e. District commander (oan) or any ATON unit may employ only Auxiliary operational facilities (surface or aircraft), or the Auxiliarist's privately-owned vehicle, to facilitate the servicing of federal aids to navigation. Which form of conveyance is authorized depends upon the type of aid and its location. "NE" certified Auxiliarists need not be on board the Auxiliary operational facility when "NE" qualified active duty Coast Guard personnel are on board. Any Auxiliary facility employed to perform an aids to navigation mission must have prior operational designation, be crewed, and be equipped per the Auxiliary Operations Policy Manual, COMDTINST M16798.3 (Series).
  - f. District commander (oan) or the appropriate ATON unit must ensure that only Auxiliary resources, properly trained and qualified under the guidelines of this instruction, are employed in servicing and supporting federal aide to navigation.
3. ORDERS AND ASSIGNMENT TO DUTY. Issuing orders and assignment to duty shall be per the Auxiliary Operations Policy Manual, COMDTINST M16798.3 (Series).
- a. A Coast Guard unit desiring to employ an Auxiliary operational facility to perform a mission must issue orders to an Auxiliarist, using the Auxiliary Patrol Order form.
  - b. Auxiliarists performing missions not requiring an Auxiliary operational facility should be issued orders using the standard Coast Guard order form or by being placed by name on the unit's work schedule.
  - c. Auxiliarists assigned to perform aids to navigation missions using privately-owned vehicles and/or

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operational support equipment (see the Auxiliary Operations Policy Manual, COMDTINST M16798.3 (Series), for definition) should be issued written orders specifically requiring and authorizing the employment of the vehicle and/or that equipment.

- d. Reimbursable or non-reimbursable orders shall be issued for aids to navigation missions in accordance with current district policy and procedures and the Auxiliary Operations Policy Manual, COMDTINST M16798.3 (Series).

4. REPORTS.

- a. Auxiliarists shall file all reports and maintain all records deemed necessary by the Auxiliary, district commander (oan), and the appropriate ATON unit. All required reports and forms shall be submitted per current district instructions.
- b. Auxiliarists under orders providing ATON support shall report hours as a chart patrol (03) or operational support (07), as appropriate, on the Auxiliary Mission Hour Card.