

## Newspaper Article 6: Crew Resource Management

Years ago, after airlines had gone through a number of accidents involving improper crew coordination, a new system was developed. It's called many things but in Coast Guard Aviation it is Crew Resource Management. On our boats it's called Team Coordination Training.

It is a simple system that trains aircrews to use all of the available ability, both physical and mental, in carrying out the functions of flying an airplane. The system is used by all airlines and all air services. Indeed, it is used by individual airplane owners and pilots. It works!

So, what does that have to do with boating? Well, there is a great similarity between boating and flying, with the exception that boating is two dimensional and flying is three.

Boating has captains, crews and passengers, just like in flying. Team Coordination seeks to use all available assets to complete the cruise. There can be but one captain! But the smart captain uses everything and everyone available to come to the right decision and to execute the maneuver.

My wife, Jane, and I solved the crewing/captaining situation early in our boating experience. Recognizing that all tasks have several ways to complete them efficiently and effectively and, further, recognizing that we each ALWAYS differed in method, we arrived at our Captain-of-the-Day rule. On even-numbered days Jane is Captain and on odd days I am. Fitting, right?

On days that Jane is captain, she gets to make all the decisions. However, all the crew (that includes me) get to have their say. After all has been discussed, she makes her decision and everyone pitches in to help, with no objections! Another advantage of this is that we always have a Plan B (in this case my plan which, of course, is different than Jane's) if A doesn't work. (This system works best if you can leave your ego on the dock!).

For Team Coordination to really work well, all of the crew should know how to do all of the functions in operating a boat. In flying we have what is known as the "pinch hitter" course. It teaches the non-flying partner what to do if the pilot is incapacitated. In the Coast Guard it is called "Suddenly in Command."

For most of us, our crew consists of husband, wife and possibly some children. Starting from the premise that not everyone can do everything equally well but everyone can do everything if trained and coached.

For instance I do most of the anchoring because I have more upper body strength than Jane, but she can do it and does it enough to keep her skills active. She, on the other hand, does a better job with lines than I do, so she does most of that, with me doing it just enough to stay current.

We never know what situations on the water will turn drastic enough for one of us to have to do it all by our self or for the entire crew to pitch in to stabilize a dangerous situation. It always pays to be ready with a well-trained, all-purpose crew that can snap to when called upon.

Actually, it can also be a lot of fun. Let's face it, most of the time the captain is the man and the woman the crew-or just a passenger. There is a lot to be learned and practiced to operate a boat safely and efficiently.

You can start out by enrolling your entire crew in a boating safety class – husband, wife, and as many children as you want for one small tuition.

Come as a family to the next Army Corps of Engineers/Coast Guard Auxiliary course on Saturday, August 2nd at the Thurmond Dam Visitors Center.

