

Just Add Water

A recipe for border security.

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America's shared land borders with Canada and Mexico are approximately 25,000 miles long, and our maritime transnational border exceeds 95,000 miles.¹ These borders include some of the most intricate and complex coastlines in the world. For as long as we have been a nation, our expansive maritime border has remained an attraction for smuggling, trafficking, and illegal entry as well as an attractive point of entry for anyone seeking to do us or our economy harm.

On Sept. 11, 2001, our perspective of border security changed forever. Americans realized that day that technology was no longer the sole delivery system or the greatest threat. Vulnerability can be as simple as a single individual or group crossing our border with intent to harm our country, its infrastructure, or its citizens.

In response, the U.S. government developed numerous innovative border security approaches including:

- the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002,
- the Container Security Initiative,
- the U.S. Customs 24-hour Advance Cargo Manifest Declaration Rule,
- the REAL ID Act.²

These programs are admirable initiatives, but they are not good enough. Our government must integrate these and other programs into one cohesive, integrated overarching operations plan built upon metrics that can evaluate risk and measure success. Therefore, it is our challenge to create an integrated maritime border security strategy. Additionally, in the current budget-constrained, resource-restricted

environment, we must focus on implementing true force multipliers without adding overhead.

So one may ask, how do we push layered security farther away from the dock and harbor environment? Or, how do we do it in a time when budgets are constrained and when no single agency is equipped to handle the load?

Force Multipliers

The answer lies in marine law enforcement officers. On the nation's waterways—including along international borders and ports of entry—state, county, local and tribal marine law enforcement officers are on duty patrolling, observing,



Petty Officer Shane Wagner and Seaman Grant Jansen, both crew members at Coast Guard Station Sturgeon Bay, Wis., and members of Brown County Sheriff's department simulate rescuing victims during a mass rescue operations preparedness exercise. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer Crystallynn A. Kneen.

BOAT Program Continuing Improvement

The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators uses two methods to measure program effectiveness and to assess if training to a national standard can really impact what happens on the water:

- We review reported student interagency collaboration.
- We use the Kirkpatrick model of learning assessments to assess student behavioral changes.¹

The Four Levels of Kirkpatrick's Evaluation Model

1. **Reaction:** what participants thought and felt about the training.
2. **Learning:** demonstrated increase in knowledge and/or skills, and change in attitude.
3. **Behavior:** observed change in job behavior due to training program. Successfully transferring knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes from the classroom to the job.
4. **Results:** the outcome achieved (monetary, performance-based, etc.) due to training program participation.

After review, we are seeing positive behavioral change from not just our students, but also from their reported interagency collaboration in mission, response, and communication.

Endnote:

¹ The Kirkpatrick Model is the results of studies conducted by Donald L. Kirkpatrick, professor emeritus, University Of Wisconsin. His ideas were first published in 1959, in a series of articles in the Journal of American Society of Training Directors. The articles were subsequently included in Kirkpatrick's book *Evaluating Training Programs*, originally published in 1994, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 3rd Edition. Available at www.businessballs.com/kirkpatricklearningevaluationmodel.htm, and at the Kirkpatrick website www.kirkpatrickpartners.com.

and interacting with recreational boaters, commercial fishermen, vessel masters, and others. They typically patrol an assigned area for an entire career, so they are entrenched within their patrol area, community, and have built up social capital with local partners.

When our maritime threat level rises or when a manmade or natural disaster strikes, it immediately puts a strain on federal assets, and Coast Guard stations do not have the capability to autonomously sustain a heightened security posture for long. While a local officer may have his patrol boat tied to the pier of the very station that needs assistance,



Members of Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment 406, based out of Miami, turn over custody of more than 3,500 lbs. of illicit drugs to Drug Enforcement Agency officers. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer Bobby Nash.

can the station commander have any assurance that utilizing local officers and assets will help meet the port security mandate and border patrol requirement? Maybe, if they have worked together long enough to have developed a relationship.

However, even then, the confidence is short-lived. Station commanders transfer, and the incoming command cadre does not have the same relationship with the local responders. Also, even though many of them are skilled mariners, local officers do not possess a credential that is immediately recognizable to attest to their expertise.

The NASBLA Boat Operations and Training Program

Enter the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA), which has represented the recreational boating program in all 50 states and six territories for more than 50 years. The state's governor appoints each NASBLA member, who then manages vessel numbering and titling, enforces state boating laws and regulations, and provides boating education access to recreational boaters.

In 2010 NASBLA embarked on developing training and credentialing for marine law enforcement and emergency rescue personnel in full compliance with the Coast Guard's own training and qualification standards. Over the course of the next two years, approximately 1,500 state, county, and local marine patrol officers were trained under the NASBLA Boat Operations and Training (BOAT) program and qualified as "tactical coxswains." NASBLA then entered their training records into a national database, which is accessible to every Coast Guard sector in the country. Tactical coxswains received a certificate and were handed a mandate.

NASBLA requires that to maintain that credential, the officer must exercise those skills with area partners. The result: trained and certified force multipliers.

Not only that, all of NASBLA's course offerings are exportable—they allow officers to train in their own boats within their own port environment, and (as happens in almost every class) with their federal, state, and local partners in a blended class. This further emphasizes and strengthens maritime partnerships.

On May 11, 2012, the United States Coast Guard signed a first memorandum of understanding with the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, identifying the organization as the holder of national training standards for state, county, local, and tribal maritime law enforcement and emergency rescue personnel. That said, this does not give NASBLA the exclusive use of those standards. Others also meet the same standard of delivery, oversight, and credentialing, and NASBLA welcomes those partners.

In Conclusion

The recipe for a successful security strategy rests within each American but, most importantly, in the hands and tools already present and vigilant on our nation's waterways in the form of the local, county, state, and tribal maritime law enforcement officer. More than boats and equipment, our national assets and personnel must have the knowledge and training to collaborate effectively on the nation's waterways, securing our borders and ports.

That is the recipe for maritime security and success. The tools and resources are in place—all we really need to do is add water.



Coast Guard Marine Safety and Security Team Anchorage members demonstrate defending a stationary target against a water-based aggressor. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer Sara Francis.

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Endnotes:

- ¹ *America's Coast Guard: Safeguarding Maritime Security in the 21st Century*. Washington, DC: U.S. Coast Guard, 2000. Available at www.uscg.mil/history/docs/USCG/2000_USCGMaritimeSecurity.pdf.
- ² The Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002. Available at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-107publ295/pdf/PLAW-107publ295.pdf; The Container Security Initiative. Available at www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-109shrg21825/pdf/CHRG-109shrg21825.pdf; The U.S. Customs 24-hour Advance Cargo Manifest Declaration Rule. Effective December 2nd, 2002. Available at www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/admin/c1_archive/messages/archives/2000/jan132000.xml; The REAL ID Act. For more information, visit www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-109publ13/html/PLAW-109publ13.htm.