

## **Reminder of Depth Sounder Limitations on Boats**

*19 August 2019*

Ref: (a): *COMDT COGARD Washington DC 091927Z Feb 18 / AIG 4901/4912*  
*<https://cg.portal.uscg.mil/units/cg731/Messages/AIGR091927ZFEB15.pdf>*  
(b) *Boat Crew Handbook – Seamanship Fundamentals, BCH16114.4*

Based on input received from the field and C3CEN, the Office of Boat Forces is sending a reminder of depth sounder limitations on Coast Guard boats.

1. Coxswains and crew members of Coast Guard boats should be fully aware of the limitations of the electronic depth sounding equipment provided on Coast Guard boats.
2. While every effort is made to ensure depth sounders provide accurate readings, it must be recognized that this is not possible in all conditions with the currently available depth sounders and transducers. Some of the conditions that may prevent accurate readings are high speeds associated with planing boats, aggressive maneuvering, and aerated water due to surf and waterjet propulsion systems, particularly when reversing and station keeping.
3. If there is any doubt as to whether there is sufficient water depth for safe navigation, coxswains should slow down to allow for accurate readings and allow time to react to changing conditions.
4. A depth sounder that is otherwise fully functional but fails to provide accurate readings under conditions similar to those indicated in paragraph (2) is not considered inoperative and should not be considered a Restrictive Discrepancy in accordance to the boat's Operator Handbook.

The next update to reference (b) will incorporate the limitations of depth sounders and transducers. In the meantime, boat forces personnel should be familiar with the guidance provided above.

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