



# COAST GUARD AUXILIARY OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

**Handbook 16794.4**

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## HANDBOOK 16794.4

Subj: COAST GUARD AUXILIARY OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

Ref: (a) Auxiliary Manual, COMDTINST M16790.1 (*series*)  
(b) Auxiliary Training Handbook – Boat Crew, ATH 16794.51 (*series*)  
(c) Auxiliary Operations Process Guide: Volume I, AOPG 16798.31 (*series*)  
(d) Coast Guard Auxiliary Operational Excellence Program, COMDTINST 16794.4

1. PURPOSE. Pursuant to references (a)-(c), this Handbook establishes policies and procedures allowing Auxiliarists currently certified in the Boat Crew Program to earn an Award of Operational Excellence.
2. ACTION. All Coast Guard unit commanders, commanding officers, officers-in-charge, deputy/assistant commanders, and chiefs of headquarters staff elements must comply with the provisions in this Handbook.
3. AUTHORIZED RELEASE. Internet release is authorized.
4. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. Reference (d) is hereby cancelled.
5. DISCUSSION. This Handbook provides Coast Guard Auxiliary boat crews with a challenging opportunity to highlight their proficiency and skills through the completion of a series of evaluated scenarios. This operational recognition program is not mandatory and does not replace qualification or certification. It is intended to give Auxiliarists certified in the Boat Crew Program an incentive to train and increase proficiency by working together as a highly trained and coordinated crew and to encourage Auxiliarists to offer their boats as Operational Facilities.
6. DISCLAIMER. This Handbook is not a substitute for applicable legal requirements, nor is it itself a rule. It is intended to provide administrative guidance for Coast Guard and Auxiliary personnel and is not intended nor does it impose legally binding requirements on any party outside the Coast Guard.
7. MAJOR CHANGES.
  - a. Converted from Manual to Handbook.
  - b. Updated Program Task criteria requirements.
  - c. Replaced scoring criteria with SAT/UNSAT.

- d. Updated the Auxiliary Operational Excellence “E” decal and requirements.
  - e. Added the Auxiliary Operational Excellence performance stripe and requirements.
  - f. Updated Certificate and added Certificate to the Auxiliary Certificate Database.
  - g. Updated Auxiliary Operational Excellence Program Letter of Completion
8. SCOPE AND AUTHORITIES. It is recommended the reader become familiar with the directives and publications noted throughout this Handbook.
  9. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS. The Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety (CG-BSX) reviewed this Handbook and the general policies contained within and determined that this policy falls under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) categorical exclusion A3. This Handbook will not result in any substantial change to existing environmental conditions or violation of any applicable federal, state, or local laws relating to the protection of the environment. It is the responsibility of the action proponent to evaluate all future specific actions resulting from this policy for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), other applicable environmental requirements, and the U.S. Coast Guard Environmental Planning Policy, COMDTINST 5090.1 (series).
  10. DISTRIBUTION. No paper distribution will be made of this Handbook. An electronic version will be posted on the Chief Director of Auxiliary and Coast Guard Auxiliary web sites: <http://agroup-bx.wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=BX-GROUP> and <http://www.cgaux.org/>, respectively. All web sites in this Handbook are the most current available. If the cited web site link does not work, then access should be attempted by copying and pasting or typing the web site address into the user’s internet browser.
  11. RECORDS MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS. Records created as a result of this Handbook, regardless of format or media, must be managed in accordance with records retention guidance in reference (a).
  12. FORMS. None.
  13. REQUESTS FOR CHANGES. Questions or proposed changes to this Handbook should be directed to the Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety, Auxiliary Division, Operations Branch (CG-BSX-12) at [CGAUX@uscg.mil](mailto:CGAUX@uscg.mil). Coast Guard units and individuals may recommend changes via their chain of command to the same address. Auxiliary units and individuals may similarly recommend changes via the cognizant Auxiliary chain of leadership and management.

/T. P. Glendye/  
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard  
Chief, Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety



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## CHAPTER 1 Introduction

### **Introduction**

The Auxiliary Operational Excellence Program provides Coast Guard Auxiliary boat crews with a challenging opportunity to highlight their proficiency and skills through the completion of a series of evaluated scenarios. This operational recognition program is not mandatory and does not replace qualification or certification. It is intended to give Auxiliarists certified in the Boat Crew Program an incentive to train and increase proficiency by working together as a highly trained and coordinated crew and to encourage Auxiliarists to offer their boats as Operational Facilities.

### **In this Chapter**

This chapter contains the following sections:

Section	Title	Page
A	<a href="#">Purpose of this Instruction</a>	1-2
B	<a href="#">How to Use this Instruction</a>	1-3



## Section A. Purpose of this Handbook

---

### Introduction

The handbook prescribes requirements for Auxiliarists who are currently certified in the Boat Crew Program and wish to earn the Auxiliary Operational Excellence Award.

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### In this Section

This section contains the following information:

Title	Page
<a href="#">Procedures</a>	1-2
<a href="#">Updates and Changes to this Handbook</a>	1-2

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### A.1. Procedures

Auxiliarists who are currently certified in the Boat Crew Program and wish to earn the Auxiliary Operational Excellence Award are required to make all arrangements necessary to acquire a qualified evaluator (see Chapter 2, Section B, paragraph [A.10.](#)). The team may compete for the award an unlimited number of times but may only receive the award once per calendar year. If a boat crew completes ALL tasks satisfactorily, the following actions will take place:

- a. The evaluator shall send the Operational Excellence Program Letter of Completion ([Enclosure 1](#)) to the Director of Auxiliary (DIRAUX).
  - b. The DIRAUX shall follow Chapter 2, Section A., paragraph [A.5.](#) for award recognition requirements.
  - c. The primary manager for the Operational Excellence Program is the Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety, Auxiliary Division, Operations Branch (CG-BSX-12) with assistance from the Auxiliary Response Directorate, Division Chief – Surface Operations (DVC-RS).
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### A.2. Updates and Changes to this Handbook

Proposed changes to this Handbook shall be submitted to CG-BSX-12, via the Response Directorate, thru the requesting member’s Chain of Leadership and Management (COLM). Please submit a formal request email through COLM to: [CGAUX@uscg.mil](mailto:CGAUX@uscg.mil), Attn: CG-BSX-12. CG-BSX has ultimate approval authority.

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## Section B. How to Use this Handbook

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### Introduction

Each chapter that follows in this handbook includes its own table of contents, which is divided into sections.

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### In this Section

This section contains the following information:

Title	Page
<a href="#">Chapter Layout</a>	1-3

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### B.1. Chapter Layout

- (01) The first page of each chapter includes an *Introduction* and an *In this Chapter*.
  - (02) The first page of each section includes an *Introduction*, and an *In this Section*, as applicable.
  - (03) In the left column of each page are block titles, which provide a descriptive word or phrase for the corresponding block of text to the right.
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## CHAPTER 2 AUXILIARY OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

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**Introduction**

This chapter provides criteria and guidelines for the Auxiliary Operational Excellence Program.

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**In this Chapter**

This chapter contains the following information:

<b>Section</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
A	<a href="#">Program Guidelines</a>	2-2
B	<a href="#">Program Tasks</a>	2-7



## Section A. Program Guidelines

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### Introduction

The purpose of the Auxiliary Operational Excellence Program is to provide Auxiliary boat crews with a challenging opportunity to highlight their proficiency and skills, foster teamwork and encourage fellowship among operational members.

The Auxiliary Operational Excellence Program is a non-compulsory method of demonstrating the level of operational excellence that may be achieved by a coxswain/crew team. The requisite series of evaluated scenarios shall be completed aboard an Auxiliary operational facility. The achievement of the award does not replace qualification or certification as prescribed in reference (b).

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### In this Section

This section contains the following information:

Title	Page
<a href="#">Program Guidelines</a>	2-2
<a href="#">Team Size</a>	2-3
<a href="#">Facility</a>	2-3
<a href="#">Award Recognition</a>	2-3
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<a href="#">Auxiliary Operational Excellence Performance Stripe</a>	2-4
<a href="#">Lost or damaged “E” Decals</a>	2-4
<a href="#">Evaluator</a>	2-5

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### A.1. Program Guidelines

- 1) The Auxiliary Operational Excellence Program award will be awarded to a team (coxswain and crewmember(s)) after that team has successfully passed all the evaluation requirements in [Section B](#).
  - 2) All certified Auxiliary boat crew members (coxswain and crewmember) are eligible to compete for this award. It must, however, be the same team throughout the entire evaluation process.
  - 3) The team may compete for the Auxiliary Operational Excellence Program award an unlimited number of times; however, the team may only receive the award once per calendar year.
  - 4) The evaluation process does not need to be completed in a single session.
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- 5) The evaluation process cannot be combined with any other missions (with the exception of diversion for SAR).
  - 6) Auxiliary boat crew members (coxswain and crewmember) can only win the award once per calendar year and cannot be part of another team competing for the award during the same calendar year.
  - 7) There is no limit on how many teams may earn the award in each district/region.
  - 8) The Auxiliary Operational Excellence Program shall not be used as or for any underway checkrides as required in reference (b).
  - 9) There will be no waivers for underway required tasks.
  - 10) Members can receive credit for completion of any task required for annual currency maintenance in accordance with reference (b).
- 

#### **A.2. Team Size**

- 1) A team shall consist only of currently certified Auxiliary coxswain and crewmember(s).
  - 2) The team shall meet the minimum crew requirement as designated for the operational facility (boat) in accordance with reference (c) and may not exceed one over the minimum crew requirement.
  - 3) A currently certified coxswain may participate as a crewmember on the team.
  - 4) The evaluator for the evaluation cannot participate as a member of the team.
- 

#### **A.3. Facility**

The facility utilized for the program shall be a currently approved Auxiliary operational facility (boat) capable of operating in the expected conditions for the underway portion of the required tasks. To promote training throughout the range of varied Auxiliary facilities, a facility may only achieve the "E" decal once per calendar year and shall not be used again for the purpose of this program until the following calendar year. Risk management shall be utilized prior to underway and throughout the event to consider operational and environmental limitations.

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#### **A.4. Award Recognition**

The evaluator shall:

- Complete the Auxiliary Operational Excellence Program letter of completion ([Enclosure 1](#)).
- Forward the letter of completion to the DIRAUX.

DIRAUX (or designee) shall:

- Review and endorse the letter of completion.
  - Enter the award into AUXDATA II.
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- Enter copies of the letter of completion and Auxiliary Operational Excellence certificate into each team member's record.

The DIRAUX shall provide the following to each team member's Flotilla Commander (FC). A courtesy copy of the letter of completion should be provided to the members' DCO, DCDR, and DSO-OP.

- Letter of completion (Original)
- Auxiliary Operational Excellence certificate (Original)
- "E" ribbon
- "E" decal or performance stripe (Coxswain only)

The FC shall present the award to the team member(s) during an Auxiliary meeting to promote recognition of the accomplishment.

**NOTE:** The Auxiliary Operational Excellence certificate can be found in <https://certs.cgaux.org/>.

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#### **A.5. "E" Ribbon**

The order of precedence for the Auxiliary "E" ribbon will be in accordance with reference (a).

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#### **A.6. "E" Decal**

The Auxiliary Operational Excellence Program "E" decal will be issued only to the coxswain. It may be displayed on the coxswain's surface facility (if the coxswain has a facility) at all times, whether or not the facility is under orders. The "E" decal may be permanently displayed on the port side forward window, just aft of the Operational decal and wreath if possible. For vessels with no port side window the "E" decal may be permanently displayed on the port side of the operating console above the viewing line of the vessel's gunwale.

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#### **A.7. Auxiliary Operational Excellence Performance Stripe**

The Auxiliary Operational Excellence performance stripe signifies subsequent awards for facilities achieving the Operational Excellence Program in a separate calendar year.

- The facility will be awarded the Operational Excellence performance stripe.
  - The performance stripe shall be placed immediately under the current "E" decal or prior performance stripe.
- 

#### **A.8. Lost or damaged "E" Decals**

Replacement "E" decals or performance stripes can be requested through the COLM to the Operations Training Officer (OTO).

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### **A.9. Evaluator**

Evaluators for the required tasks in Chapter 2, [Section B](#), must be one of the following:

1. A currently certified Auxiliary Qualification Examiner (QE-Boat).
2. Any active duty with the rank of E-6 or above who is a certified coxswain on a Coast Guard asset and authorized to evaluate the program by the unit Commanding Officer/ Officer in Charge.
3. The District OTO.

The member requesting an evaluator shall use Appendix B (QE Request form) in reference (b).

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## Section B. Program Tasks

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### Introduction

This section will detail the required tasks for the evaluator to use and evaluate those members competing for the Auxiliary Operational Excellence Program.

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### In this Section

This section contains the following information:

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<a href="#">Safety Violations</a>	2-7
<a href="#">Scoring</a>	2-7
<a href="#">PPE</a>	2-8
<a href="#">Search Planning</a>	2-8
<a href="#">Navigation</a>	2-9
<a href="#">Search Execution</a>	2-9
<a href="#">MOB</a>	2-9
<a href="#">Onboard Fire</a>	2-10
<a href="#">Grounding</a>	2-10
<a href="#">Towing</a>	2-10

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### B.1. Drill Sheets

All Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drills can be found at <https://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=R-DEPT&category=standardized-drill-sheets>

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### B.2. Safety Violations

Any safety violation will void the entire testing evolution, and the team must re-test.

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### B.3. Scoring

The team must successfully pass all program task as required below for awarding of the Auxiliary Operational Excellence Program "E" decal.

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#### **B.4. PPE**

The evaluator shall ensure that each team member's PPE and survival gear are properly issued, maintained, and worn.

Each team member must provide documentation (AUXDATA II printout) to the evaluator showing issuance and maintenance of PPE and survival gear are up to date. Each team member must also provide to the evaluator their Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) Monthly Tracking Record showing that the PLB monthly test is up to date.

UNSAT= If proper issuance and maintenance of PPE and survival gear are incorrect, out-of-date, or not provided, the evaluation shall not take place until the issue is corrected.

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#### **B.5. Search Planning**

The evaluator will provide the team the last known position (LKP), time (+30 minutes), and a physical description of the search object.

- The team will have 30 minutes to plan a search.
- The plan must include an area description, chosen search pattern description, commence search point (CSP), estimated time to CSP, track spacing, major axis (if applicable), and search speed.
- The facility should have an Electronic Charting System (ECS) with up to date charts or GPS onboard.
- The team shall provide local nautical chart(s) or local knowledge (if no nautical chart(s) available). If no nautical chart(s) are available for the area, this information will be described / "plotted" on a blank piece of paper or other available local area map/chart that can most accurately depict the entire operation.
- The Coxswain will select one of the (Precision) search patterns OR one of the (Drifting) search patterns based on the facility's navigational equipment onboard and appropriate for the area of operation (AOR)
- If using an ECS or GPS or nautical chart, the trackline to CSP of the chosen search pattern will be plotted (electronic or manual) with time/distance markings at all turn points.
- Set and drift information may be included for tidal areas.

*Scoring:* Given a scenario of a search object designated by the evaluator, the team must: (1) Correctly choose the right search pattern for the facility and operating area. (2) Demonstrate the ability to accurately calculate and determine datum. (3) Correctly plot the initial search pattern within a 30-minute time period. (4) Correctly plot a trackline to CSP.

SAT= The team met all four of the scoring requirements.

UNSAT= The team failed to meet one or more of the scoring requirements.

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## **B.6. Navigation**

The team must navigate (electronic or manual) to the CSP, using the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Navigation.

*Scoring:* The team must meet all the standards (**S**) in the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Navigation.

SAT= The team met all standards (**S**) in the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Navigation.

UNSAT= The team failed to meet one or more of the standards (**S**) in the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Navigation.

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## **B.7. Search Execution**

Once the facility is at the CSP, the coxswain will have 15 minutes to switch to the selected Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Search Pattern (Precision) or (Drifting) and start the search pattern.

*Scoring:* The team must start the search pattern within 15 minutes. The team must meet all the standards (**S**) in the applicable Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Search Pattern (Precision) or (Drifting).

SAT= The team started the search pattern in 15:00 minutes or less, and the team met all standards (**S**) in the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Search Pattern (Precision) or (Drifting).

UNSAT= The team failed to start the search pattern in 15:00 minutes or less, and/or the team failed to meet one or more of the standards (**S**) in the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Search Pattern (Precision) or (Drifting).

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## **B.8. MOB**

The team must successfully respond to a Man Overboard (MOB) drill, and safely recovered a simulated PIW (Oscar preferred) in accordance with the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, (MOB).

*Scoring:* The team must meet all the standards (**S**) in the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, (MOB).

SAT= The team met all standards (**S**) in the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, (MOB).

UNSAT= The team failed to meet one or more of the standards (**S**) in the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, (MOB).

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### **B.9. Onboard Fire**

The team must successfully respond to an onboard fire in accordance with the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Onboard Fire.

*Scoring:* Use of the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Onboard Fire, shall not be used as assistance by the team until after ALL Initial actions have been met. The team must meet all the standards (S) in the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Onboard Fire.

SAT= The team met all standards (S) in the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Onboard Fire and did not utilize the Drill Sheet until after ALL Initial actions had been met.

UNSAT= The team failed to meet one or more of the standards (S) in the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Onboard Fire and/or the team utilized the Drill Sheet prior to ALL Initial actions having been met.

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### **B.10. Grounding**

The team must successfully respond to a grounding in accordance with the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Grounding.

*Scoring:* Use of the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Grounding, shall not be used as assistance by the team until after ALL Initial actions have been met. The team must meet all the standards (S) in the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Grounding.

SAT= The team met all standards (S) in the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Grounding and did not utilize the Drill Sheet until after ALL Initial actions had been met.

UNSAT= The team failed to meet one or more of the standards (S) in the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Grounding and/or the team utilized the Drill Sheet prior to ALL Initial actions having been met.

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### **B.11. Towing**

The team must successfully tow a disabled vessel and safely moor the vessel in accordance with the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Towing.

*Scoring:* The team must meet all the standards (S) in the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Towing.

SAT= The team met all standards (S) in the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Towing.

UNSAT= The team failed to meet one or more of the standards (S) in the Auxiliary Standardization Evaluation Drill, Towing.

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## Enclosure 1 Auxiliary Operational Excellence Program Letter of Completion

From: \_\_\_\_\_, Member No. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Evaluator) \* (See below if Active Duty evaluator)

To: Director of Auxiliary, \_\_\_\_\_ Coast Guard District/Region

Subj: AUXILIARY OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE PROGRAM LETTER OF COMPLETION

Ref: (a) Coast Guard Auxiliary Operational Excellence Program Handbook, 16794.4 (series)

1. This is to notify that I have examined the following Auxiliary team in their attempt to earn the Auxiliary Operational Excellence Award. The team members below were successful/unsuccessful in achieving the Auxiliary Operational Excellence Award on \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Month / Day) (Year)

Member Name:	Number:	Boat Crew Position:

Task Requirements	Date	SAT/UNSAT	Initial
<b>PPE:</b>			
	Date	SAT/UNSAT	Initial
<b>Search Execution:</b>			
	Date	SAT/UNSAT	Initial
<b>Navigation:</b>			
	Date	SAT/UNSAT	Initial
<b>Search Execution:</b>			
	Date	SAT/UNSAT	Initial
<b>Man Overboard (MOB)</b>			
	Date	SAT/UNSAT	Initial
<b>Onboard Fire:</b>			
	Date	SAT/UNSAT	Initial
<b>Grounding:</b>			
	Date	SAT/UNSAT	Initial
<b>Towing:</b>			

<small>(Printed Name (Rank) of Evaluator)</small>	<small>(Signature of Evaluator)</small>	<small>(Date)</small>

\* If active duty evaluator, Commanding Officer or Officer in Charge signature required:

<small>(CO/ OIC signature)</small>	<small>( Unit name)</small>	<small>(Date)</small>