

Coast Guard Rescues 41 on July Fourth

Story by PAI Donnie Brzuska, PADET Jacksonville, Fla.

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. -- Coast Guard rescue crews and coordinators were at work over the July Fourth holiday facilitating or assisting in the rescue of 41 people, which included 11 children, in a 24-hour-period in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina.

Coast Guard rescue crews, with the help of local and state inter-agency partners across three states, conducted three emergency medical evacuations, towed three disabled vessels and its passengers to safety preventing more than \$238,000 worth of property loss, located 14 mariners in distress, and provided first aid to one burn victim. Rescue coordinators worked a total of 26 search and rescue cases during the holiday coordinating assets from numerous local, state and federal agencies.

"While many were celebrating this Independence Day, Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary crews from South Florida to South Carolina were on land, in the water and in the air ensuring people could enjoy a safe and secure maritime environment," said Capt. J. J. O'Connor, Chief of Search and Rescue for the Seventh Coast Guard District, which is a 1.8 million square-mile area of responsibility that encompasses the Southeastern United States and the Caribbean Basin.



Coast Guard rescue coordinators at Sector Key West, Fla., received the first mayday call of July Fourth when they received a report of an overdue 18-foot jet boat with four people aboard Tuesday at 11:30 p.m. A Coast Guard helicopter rescue crew from Air Station Miami located the vessel disabled near the most southern portion of the Everglades National Park, Fla., and hoisted the four people to safety Wednesday at 2:30 a.m.

The next call for help was received by Coast Guard rescue coordinators from Sector Miami when a 36-foot vessel with seven people aboard, including three children, was taking on water approximately 10-miles east of Key Biscayne, Fla., at 12:51 p.m. Coast Guard rescue coordinators rallied the support of Coast Guard Station Miami, the Miami Beach Police Department, Coral Gables Police Department, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue to assist the foundering vessel. The Miami Beach Police Department arrived and pulled the people from their sinking vessel. Commercial salvage was able to stop the flooding on board the 36-foot vessel.

Shortly after Coast Guard Station Miami rescue crews responded to the 36-foot vessel taking on water, they were called to conduct a medical evacuation for a woman who had severed her hand at the wrist in the propeller of a boat near the 79th Street Causeway in Miami at 12:55 p.m. The rescue crew arrived and took the woman to Mt. Sainai Hospital in Miami.

Meanwhile in Ft. Myers, Fla., a Coast Guard boat crew from Station Ft. Myers responded to a vessel fire at Moss Marina. A boater was fueling his vessel when his engines caught on fire. The fire was already out when the boat crew arrived, but the owner of the vessel had suffered significant burns to his hands. The Coast Guardsmen conducted first aid on the man until local EMS could arrive to transport him to the hospital.

Coast Guard rescue coordinators and crews in Charleston, S.C., were called into action when a father called 911 at 4:30 p.m. to report his 20-year-old son had left on his kayak at 2:30 p.m. and hadn't returned. The 911 dispatcher contacted rescue coordinators at Coast Guard Sector Charleston, who launched a rescue boat crew from Coast Guard Station Charleston and a rescue helicopter from Coast Guard Air Facility Charleston. The Coast Guard also enlisted the help of crews from Charleston County Sheriff's Office, Charleston County Rescue, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. The Coast Guard helicopter crew located the missing kayaker one-mile east of Seabrook Island,



JACKSONVILLE, Fla. -- A boarding team member from Coast Guard Station Mayport, Fla., conducts a recreation boating safety boarding on the Intra-Coastal Waterway here. Coast Guard photograph by PA1 Donnie Brzuska.

S.C., at 6:30 p.m. The aircrew vectored a South Carolina DNR vessel to the kayaker's position to pick him up and take him to safety.

"Our partnerships with our local, state and federal law enforcement and emergency response entities are a huge part of the equation for mission success," said Capt. O'Connor. "These strong partnerships make all the difference when it comes to being successful."

At 5:30 p.m., Coast Guard rescue coordinators at Sector Jacksonville received a call from the waterside security personnel at Naval Station Mayport, Fla., stating they had picked up two people that had ran their pontoon sailing vessel into the jetties at the mouth of the St. Johns River, Fla. A rescue crew from Coast Guard Station Mayport arrived and transferred the two people to their rescue boat. The Coast Guard crew took them to Sector Jacksonville where they were picked up by loved ones without injury.

Coast Guard rescue coordinators from Sector Key West coordinated an emergency medical evacuation of a man suffering from heart attack symptoms aboard the

merchant vessel *Moseigneur* approximately seven- to-eight miles off Key West Wednesday at 8 p.m. A Coast Guard Station Key West boat crew picked up the man and transferred him to awaiting EMS.

Coast Guard rescue coordinators from Sector Charleston received a call from the crew of the fishing vessel *Joe Green* approximately 50-miles east of Charleston reporting one of their crew members was suffering from a seizure at 9:30 p.m. A Coast Guard aircrew from Air Facility Charleston hoisted the man to safety and transferred him to Medical University South Carolina in Charleston.

The Coast Guard Auxiliary boat crews towed two vessels to safety following the fireworks in Jacksonville. The 28-foot *Trick Ricky* became disabled in the navigational channel on the St. Johns River near Clapboard Creek Marina with nine people aboard, including one child. The volunteer life savers from the Coast Guard Auxiliary towed the vessel to Clapboard Creek Marina. The Coast Guard Auxiliary towed a 32-foot vessel with two people aboard to Metro Park in Downtown Jacksonville. These two cases occurred nearly simultaneously at 10 p.m.

In Charleston, a Coast Guard boat crew from Station Charleston was on patrol and noticed a vessel 25-foot dead in the water in Chutes Folly, S.C., with six people aboard at 10 p.m. The Coast Guard crew towed the vessel to a safe area to prevent it from drifting into the navigational channel and turned the boat over to commercial salvage.

The last rescue of July Fourth was conducted by a Coast Guard helicopter crew from Air Station Clearwater, Fla. The aircrew was searching for a possible flare sighting when they spotted a pontoon boat taking on water with nine people aboard, including seven children, in Tampa Bay, Fla., at 11 p.m. The helicopter crew vectored in a nearby Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation boat to the sinking pontoon boat's position to rescue the nine recreational boaters in distress.

All the Coast Guard rescue crews and coordinators involved in these rescues report to the Seventh Coast Guard District Command in Miami. In all, 51 cutters, 162 small boats and 39 aircraft operate out of bases or ports in the Seventh District. The District's 5,317 Auxiliarists provide another 705 boats and 49 aircraft to draw upon. More than 4,600 active duty and reserve members along with 182 civilians serve in the Seventh District.

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