

OPERATION LIFE RING



In the wake of the suffering caused by Hurricane Katrina, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary is launching **Operation Life Ring**, a humanitarian effort to assist the citizens of the Gulf Coast region, and any others whose lives have been forever changed by this catastrophe.

Operation Life Ring has five components to help bring relief to the suffering in the Gulf States region:

- **Money:** The Coast Guard Auxiliary Association (“CGAuxA”) established a relief fund primarily for Auxiliary and Coast Guard victims of Hurricane Katrina. Upon meeting their needs, any remaining donation funds will go to assist others in the stricken region. Auxiliarists, members of the Coast Guard family, and others who would like to contribute funds to help the region recover, will be able to do so. Contributions to CGAuxA are deductible as charitable contributions. One hundred percent (100%) of the funds received will go directly to hurricane victims, and/or local agencies providing direct relief. Go to <http://www.cgauxa.org/> or contact the Association at 314-962-8828 or auxa@sbcglobal.net or send your donation to Coast Guard Auxiliary Association, Inc., Coast Guard Auxiliary Center, 9449 Watson Industrial Park, St. Louis, MO 63126 to make your charitable contribution.
- **Services for USCG D8 and/or FEMA:** All Auxiliarists who are ready, willing, and able to do so, are asked assist in disaster relief operations by volunteering to serve with the U.S. Coast Guard’s District 8, and/or the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), as specified in an ALL AUX message from the Chief Director’s Office (see items of interest at www.cgaux.info/g_ocx posted at 9:42:28 AM on 2 Sep 2005). It is essential that those volunteering work through your chain of leadership and management (which may vary by District).

FEMA is looking for people with the ability to keep a communications suite

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up and operational. This includes computers, a satellite link, and radios. Training will be provided, so specific knowledge is not required. They are looking for computer and local area network expertise, as well as CG Qualified Watchstanders, and radio and satellite communications expertise (see details on web link below).

If you meet the basic technical criteria, please complete your application by going to: http://www.projects.auxidept.org/hk_tech_support_form.htm .

- **Coast Guard Mutual Assistance Fund:** In response, Coast Guard Mutual Assistance (CGMA) has established an account to receive contributions designated for that specific purpose. Contributions marked "Katrina" will be earmarked and tracked to ensure they are used first and foremost to meet the needs of Coast Guard members and families associated with Hurricane Katrina in accordance with normal CGMA policies and procedures. In the event there are funds left over after meeting needs associated with Hurricane Katrina, they will be placed in CGMA's general account to assist members of the Coast Guard family in times of financial need.

Tax deductible contributions should be made out to "Coast Guard Mutual Assistance or CGMA" by check, money order or with a credit card marked in the memo area or noted for "Katrina." Contribution forms are available on the CGMA Web site: www.cgmahq.org

Click on "Contributing to CGMA."

Checks, payable to "CGMA" may be sent to the following address:

Coast Guard Mutual Assistance
4200 Wilson Blvd., Suite 610
Arlington, VA 22203-1804

Secure credit card contributions may be made online through the CGMA Web site. Click on "Contributing to CGMA," then on "Credit Card."

If you have any further questions, please contact Mr. Tom Omri at Coast Guard Mutual Assistance (202) 493-6622.

- **In-Kind Donations of Essential staples (food, water, clothing):** Local Auxiliary units are encouraged to work with local agencies in their AOR, such as the Red Cross (www.redcross.org or 1-800-HELP-NOW), The Salvation Army (www.salvationarmyusa.org or 1-800-SAL-ARMY), Convoy of Hope (<http://www.convoyofhope.org> or 1-417-823-8998), and any other local reputable charities, to gather essential staples – food, water, and supplies, that can be shipped to the hurricane victims.

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Please keep in mind, that at this point in time, many of the local chapters of these relief organizations are not accepting in-kind donations, due to the uncertainty of exactly what is needed, and the logistics problems of getting the items transported. That may change over the course of the next few weeks and months. You may wish to contact these organizations local chapters or visit their web sites, to see if/when they will be accepting such donations.

When asked to do so, we will encourage local USCGAUX units to sponsor an in-kind donation drive in their communities. Again, working through the chain of leadership and management, we will encourage local USCGAUX units to partner with their local USCG units (whenever possible) to accomplish this.

- **Blood:** All Auxiliarists who are medically able to do so are encouraged to donate blood and/or blood platelets. Even without the hurricane, many area blood banks are often at low points at this time of year, so rest assured, your donation will help save a life somewhere.

Local USCGAUX units are encouraged to host a blood drive, or partner with a local USCG unit to host a blood drive. If you or your organization is interested in becoming a blood drive sponsor, please visit www.givelife.org, or call 1-800-GIVE LIFE (1-800-448-3543) for details.

You can locate a blood bank in your area (usually by entering your zip code) by visiting www.bloodsaves.com, www.bloodsource.org/ (1-866-82-BLOOD (25663), or www.givelife.org . You can also call the Red Cross at 1-800-HELP-NOW, or visit them on the web at www.redcross.org.

As the premier volunteer agency in the Department of Homeland Security, we hope that all of our members take **Operation Life Ring** to heart, and help us mitigate the suffering of our fellow countrymen in the Gulf States region.