



SPECIAL PUBLICATION



February 2000

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# Lookout Training Handbook

NAVEDTRA 12968-A

**NOTICE**

**Pages 32, 45, 46, and 47 must be printed  
on a COLOR printer.**

Although the words “he,” “him,” and “his” are used sparingly in this course to enhance communication, they are not intended to be gender driven or to affront or discriminate against anyone.

## PREFACE

Special Publications (SPs) are manuals or catalogs that provide information of general benefit and career development. SPs have **no** associated assignments or tests.

*Lookout Training Handbook* provides a basic reference for naval lookouts. *Lookout Training Handbook* is available ONLY in electronic Portable Document Format from the following web site:

<http://www.advancement.cnet.navy.mil>

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Provided by  
NAVAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER

## **Sailor's Creed**

“I am a United States Sailor.

I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America and I will obey the orders of those appointed over me.

I represent the fighting spirit of the Navy and those who have gone before me to defend freedom and democracy around the world.

I proudly serve my country's Navy combat team with honor, courage and commitment.

I am committed to excellence and the fair treatment of all.”

# LOOKOUT TRAINING HANDBOOK

In this United States Navy with its nuclear-powered warships, computerized guidance systems, and the most accurate search radars in the world, you, the lookout, play a critical role in safe ship operations. Your trained human eye is far superior to the most sophisticated equipment. As a lookout, your eyes are the eyes of the ship, and on your alertness and skill rest the safety of the ship.

In the naval service there is probably no Rule of the Road more conscientiously observed than Rule 5 of the *Navigation Rules*, Commandant Instruction M16672.2, which states:

Every vessel shall at all times maintain a proper look-out by sight and hearing as well as by all available means appropriate in the prevailing circumstances and conditions so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and of the risk of collision.

In this manual, we will discuss visual search and contact reporting procedures; ship/aircraft recognition; Rules of the Road; buoy systems; special sea detail; restricted visibility steaming; and man-overboard procedures, along with other material which will assist you in your capacity as a lookout.

## **THE LOOKOUT**

A lookout is a person detailed to observe everything within an assigned sector and to report everything seen in or heard from that sector to the officer of the deck (OOD) and the combat information center (CIC) watch officer. The safety and efficiency of the ship depend to a great degree on the alertness and effectiveness of lookouts.

Lookouts on watch are under the direct supervision of the OOD. However, the OOD will usually delegate this authority to the boatswain's mate of the watch (BMOW). The BMOW assigns the lookouts to their stations, making sure they are properly instructed, clothed, equipped, and relieved. Lookouts are trained in their duties by the CIC officer.

The chances are great that the lookout will be the first to observe danger. A faint wisp of smoke on the horizon may be the first indication of an approaching enemy surface unit. A single flash of sunlight on a wingtip may be the only notice of approaching enemy aircraft that can attack at a speed of 500 yards per second. A split-second glimpse of a periscope may be the only warning of an impending submarine attack. Failure to see a mere pinpoint of light on the horizon may mean that a buoy has been missed and a ship grounded.

### **LOOKOUT STATIONS**

Lookouts man stations as assigned by the OOD and perform duties under the ship's lookout doctrine. The number of stations vary according to the type of ship and whether in peacetime or wartime. Large ships usually have more lookout stations than smaller ships. More lookouts are required in wartime than in

peacetime. When the required number of people is available in peacetime—and always in wartime—three basic types of lookout watches are established. They are (1) surface lookouts who search from the ship to the horizon, (2) low-sky lookouts who search from the horizon to  $5^{\circ}$  above it, and (3) high-sky lookouts who search from the horizon to the zenith (directly overhead). Additionally, several people may be assigned to each search, each person being responsible for a specified sector. Adjacent sectors have about a  $10^{\circ}$  overlap, so no area will go unsearched.

The normal peacetime lookout organization has three people in each watch section. Two persons are located on the bridge or atop the pilothouse; one searches to port, the other to starboard. Their sectors extend from just abaft the beam forward to dead ahead. The third person is stationed aft and is called the after lookout or life-buoy watch and is responsible for the sector extending from the starboard beam aft and around to the port beam (figure 1). In addition

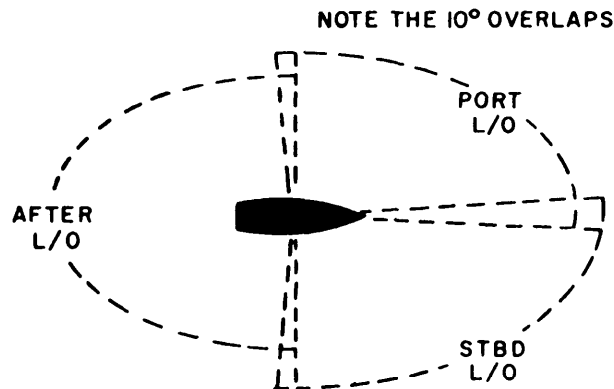


Figure 1.—Sectors assigned.