



For Safety's Sake

The Official V Department Newsletter
Serving Vessel Examiners and Program Visitors



Newsletter Editor Branch Chief - Edward L. Kinnard BC – VCP– Email: auxvcp@frontiernet.net

Volume II - 2008

Preventing Boating Accidents is our Mission

Visit our Web Site at - <http://safetyseal.net/>



Department Chief
Peter Urgola DC – V
Email: AUXDCV@aol.com



2007 Results

2007 showed continuous improvement for both Program Visits and Vessel Safety Checks. RBS Program Visitors recorded 82,033 visits. A 22.7% increase over year end 2006.

Vessel Examiners recorded 124,329 Vessel Safety Checks. An increase of 8.2% over year end 2006.

Current data indicates we are ahead of last years VSC pace by 5% and behind the number of Program Visits by 3%

Retention of currently certified members is still a major problem in both qualification areas.

Member Involvement is the key. Talk to your fellow Program Visitors and Vessel Examiners who may be falling behind. Let them know that we need their support. Help them to become successful and not a REYR statistic.

Communications

A reliable communications link is a key ingredient to maintaining a successful program. Today's CG Auxiliary relies heavily on electronic communications. The V-Dept uses multiple routes to communicate with the "deck plate".

- Cascading information via the staff chain of communications
- The voluntary V-Net which delivers information directly to the member
- The National and V-Dept web sites.

We sometimes have the opportunity to do a hard copy mailing.

But we still need help to insure that ALL our Program Visitors and Vessel Examiners are getting the key information.

Another important communications link is one between our primary customer, the recreational boater, and the local vessel examiner. The "I Want A VSC" has demonstrated its ability to connect a safety conscience boater with a local vessel examiner. This program has a voluntary sign up. Instructions for sign up are posted on the V-Dept web site. Unfortunately, only a small percentage

of our Vessel Examiners have signed on to this program. SO-VEs and FSO-VEs should check the "I Want A VSC" at www.safetyseal.net for their local zip codes to ensure the boating public has access to their local Vessel Examiners by encouraging local VE's to sign up as volunteer examiners.

Educational Thrusts

During N-Train 2008 CDR Erin MacDonald, Office of Search and Rescue asked for assistance in educating recreational boaters with regard to the proper use and maintenance of EPIRBs and PLBs. In addition to the consumer, the retailer that sells this equipment needs to understand the basic requirements so that they can speak to their customers regarding key points: registration, maintenance, testing and use.

A fact sheet, maintenance procedures and registration forms were provided via the staff chain. A hard copy mailing of this material along with DSC radio information was mailed to each Division Captain with packets for their PE, PV and VE staff officers. CDR MacDonald's N-Train presentation can be found at <http://safetyseal.net/downloads/N-Train-EPIRB-Issues-Jan08.ppt>.

TRAINING

Training is an integral part of CG Auxiliary life. This is especially true of qualified RBS Program Visitors and Vessel Examiners. As educators we need to be current with new educational efforts. Our understanding of these topics helps to maintain our credibility with the boating public, other RBS organizations and the US Coast Guard. The V-Dept web site offers workshop modules covering most of these topics.

It also contains modules to aid in the training of new Program Visitors and Vessel Examiners. Following are some thoughts on training from Herb Hanson, DSO-VE D7.

"By national training standards VE qualification requires 10 hours of course time with an option of taking the exam on line as many do. However, repeat failure rates give me considerable concern. I often find that in today's rushed pace society many simply do not take time to prepare and are falsely led into believing that a quick key stroke will earn them instant qualification...not so with the VE exam. Vessel examination is a unique qualification in that VEs are often the only visible contact between Coast Guard and the boating public. Vessel examiners provide a valuable and helpful service in promoting boating safety. As such, examiners must present and conduct themselves in a competent manner as to bring credit to the Auxiliary as well as the Coast Guard. In order to promote boating safety and gain confidence of the boating public each VE must thoroughly understand policies and procedures as presented in the VSC Manual.

Ideally, a member should review and become familiar with the VSC manual prior to spending time with a mentor or attending a class consisting of at least 8 hours of instruction. When ready, the test can be taken open book with a 3 hour time limit either on line or written. I generally recommend members who have failed the on line test 5 or more times consider taking a paper exam.

For members who elect to 'self study' it is extremely critical they have a mentor who is experienced in vessel examination."

Peter Urgola, DC-V

(The next two articles are in response to questions regarding Nav Rules and the need for a bell on vessels less than 20 meters. VSC form ANSC 7012 items 13 & 8 respectively. The editor)

Navigation Rules

The requirement for recreational vessels 12m and up is to have a copy of the Navigation Rules on board the vessel in inland waters. This can be the CG Nav Rules book, Chapman's, Knights, the Nautical Almanac, Reed's Nautical Almanac, or even a printed out copy of the rules as long as it is a word for word copy.

There is no law requiring the operator of the vessel to have an up to date edition but it should be recommended that any old edition be replaced.

BMC Russell Woodill, Office of Auxiliary, Surface Operations

The BELL Revisited

Collision Avoidance Regulations (COLREGS) (Navigation Rules - International version) were changed and no longer require a bell for vessels less than 20 meters in length. So the matrix looks like:

12 meters or more in length = Whistle only
20 meters or more in length = Whistle and Bell
100 meters or more in length = whistle, bell, and gong.

The Inland Navigation Rules differ slightly and require the following:

12 meters or more in length = Whistle and Bell
100 meters or more in length = whistle, bell, and gong.

Obviously there is a slight disconnect between the two rules.

The Coast Guard is in the process of changing the Inland Navigation Rules to match the International Rules (COLREGS). However, the expected "matching" date is unknown at this time.

Inland NAV RULE 1(b)(ii) states - "All vessels complying with the construction and equipment requirements of the International Regulations are considered in compliance with these Rules."

Because of Inland Rule 1(b)(ii) and our supposition that most small pleasure craft are being constructed to international standards, the Coast Guard is exercising its enforcement discretion not to enforce provisions of the Inland Rules Act (by issuing a penalty for violation) in respect of this provision. Thus, if a U.S. vessel that is in the 12-20 meter size category is not equipped with a bell because the manufacturer and/or owner/operator and/or State Boating Law Administrators, PS and USCG Aux, or any of them, have been under the impression that such vessels need not be so equipped, we can take the approach that we won't enforce.

That is why you have discovered on the vessel safety check website the explanation that vessels less than 20 meters in length are no longer required to carry a bell.

George Detweiler, LCDR USCG (Ret), Marine Transportation Specialist

WEAR IT CAMPAIGN

Convincing boaters to WEAR their LIFE JACKETS is the essence of the WEAR IT Campaign. The Auxiliary National Supply Center is in the process of distributing manually inflatable life jackets to each Auxiliary Division. The life jackets are to be worn during Vessel Safety Checks, public education classes, and any public event to demonstrate the ease of use and comfort of this type of life saving device. Along with ease of use and comfort comes the responsibility of properly maintaining the equipment. As educators we need to know the basic requirements of inflatable life jacket maintenance. Boaters who own inflatable life jackets must be encouraged to read and follow all manufacturer supplied maintenance and rearming procedures. Following is an article which point to the need for on going education.

Peter Urgola, DC-V



National Safe Boating Council Announces 2007

“Be A Survivor!” Essay Contest Winners

The National Safe Boating Council (NSBC) has announced the winners of its 2007 “Be a Survivor!” Essay contest. First introduced in the 2006 campaign, the contest was designed to engage boaters nationwide by inviting individuals to submit personal testimonials on how wearing a life jacket can be a life-saving experience.

Chosen from among 50 entries submitted by boaters from all regions in the United States, the winning entries are:

1st Place Winner: Jane Alexander of Surf City, North Carolina

2nd Place Winner: Carter Ullman of Lake Wales, Florida

3rd Place Winner: Tyson Hajek of Great Falls, Montana

Winners received prizes courtesy of West Marine®, including West Marine®’s best selling VHF hand held radio, “Comfort Series” Automatic Inflatable vest-style life jackets, a Torpedo Blaster towable, and a Runabout Adult Vest 4-Pack, including nylon storage case.

The NSBC congratulates the winners on their essays and especially on their commitment to wearing their life jackets. These stories, as well as other entries submitted through the contest, may be published in a future version of NSBC’s publication, *Saved By the Jacket*.



Reality Strikes Home

Although I have been promoting wearing life jackets for several years all over our country, this evening I had an opportunity to talk to the survivor of a fatality-related boating accident that occurred 5 hours earlier. It involved a small, flat bottom, outboard motor boat and two adult males, one of whom the Sheriff's Department was still searching for. The weather was clear and sunny with a light wind and about 80 degrees. The drowning occurred within ¼ mile of the boat ramp in Pine Bluff, AR Regional Park, within a few minutes of launching. This is a protected slack water area at the end of Pine Bluff Harbor, several miles from the Arkansas River entrance.

USCG approved life jackets were in the boat and accessible but not worn. The man who drowned could not swim and neither was wearing a life jacket. Alcohol was not a factor and neither had taken a boating safety class. The datum markers I observed could not have been more than fifty feet from shore.

They launched and traveled a short distance when the propeller shear pin sheared off. The still missing boater entered the water to repair the damage. He began to drift away from the boat and the other man jumped in to save him. However, the wind blew the empty boat away from the person in the water and he had difficulty holding onto the boat and trying to reach his companion. Moreover, the rescuer was not a strong swimmer and recently had lower abdominal-area surgery so he was weak. From what he demonstrated to me, his swimming ability was limited to a "dog paddle."

I asked why they were not wearing life jackets especially if one could not swim. After thinking he said they had just launched and didn't yet think about putting them on. He also commented the weather was not too hot so there was no reason not to.

I asked why he didn't put one on before jumping into the water. He was in a hurry to help his buddy and didn't think about it. Although he didn't say so, I suspect the person in the water was probably panicking about then. But the guy was still shook up so I didn't pursue asking more about events. I did describe the National Safe Boating Council bright yellow rectangle "wear it" signs to him. These are the ones being offered at a minimal cost as part of the 2008 National Safe Boating Campaign. I asked if they had seen these signs at the ramp while launching would they perhaps have jogged their memory to put on the life jackets. Without hesitation he said they would have. Earlier in the day I had made up my mind to work hard to have both versions of these signs posted at every boat ramp in the county regardless of jurisdiction by the end of safe boating week.

Stuart D. Soffer
National Marketing Group
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary



Inflatable Life Jackets

NOTE: During a VSC the vessel examiner should **NOT** perform any of the life jacket checks or maintenance procedures as described herein or in the owner's manual. This information is provided as background information only. At all times, the vessel examiner should encourage the owner to perform these tasks.

STEPS FOR CHECKING AN INFLATABLE PFD provided Courtesy of Stearns

AUTOMATIC

- 1 Check for GREEN pin to see that it is not broken or missing.
- 2 Check bobbin, remove CO2 cartage then unscrew cap and look to see if the bobbin is intact, if it is crumbly or missing reject the PFD if it is ok then screw cap back on and replace CO2 cartage.
- 3 Check to see if the bladder is showing. If it is you must reject and inform the boater to return it to the manufacture for repairs if possible.
- 4 Check for seams to make sure that they are intact and that there are no rips in the PFD material. If there are any rips or torn seams reject the PFD.

MANUAL

- 1 Have the boater inflate his/her inflatable and check for leaks.
- 2 Steps 3&4 above

To clean an inflatable you can advise the boater to use a MILD soap.

For maintenance details on Mustang inflatable life jackets you are directed to the following web site link: <http://safetyseal.net/md3031le/>

William Hill, BC-VET



PWC OPFAC Inspections

Two changes were recently made to the Required Facility Equipment listed in Appendix C of the PWC Operator Qualification Guide and listed again in task PWC-03-05-AUX (4.g and 4.r).

1. A throwable PFD is no longer required.
2. Spare spark plugs are only required for 2 stroke engines. They are no longer required for 4 stroke engines.



Sport and Utility Boat VSC Decal Placement

The rapid increase in SUBs and paddlers nation wide has been identified as a matter of concern. Nationwide canoe and kayak fatalities from capsizes and falls overboard from in the years 1998 through 2006 averaged 13% of total fatalities nationwide. Annual sales of canoes and kayaks during that period are estimated to have been over 400,000 a year, with 493,000 sold in 2006.

A question has arisen regarding decal placement on SUBs. The consensus from a survey of DSO-VEs and DSO-PVs follows.

Kayaks

Place the Decal close to the port side on the deck amid ship.

Canoes, Row Boats and Small Sailboats

Place the Decal on the port side amid ship just below the gunnel.

Vessel Safety Checks offer an opportunity to interact with boaters and further Recreational Boating Safety.

VSCs on SUBs are not demanding. Typically, only life jackets, a sound producing device, lights if used at night (a flashlight OK under 16'), and equipment mandated by Federal, State and Local regulation are required.

The real impact on boating safety is the opportunity to discuss safe practices on the water with the boater.

Go to <http://www.ratlines.com/SportsAndUtilityBoats.htm> for SUBs information.

Alex Cascione BC-VES



Did you Know!

Range lights - Two lights associated to form a range (a line formed by the extension of a line connecting two charted points) which often, but not necessarily, indicates the channel centerline. The front range light is the lower of the two, and nearer to the mariner using the range. The rear light is higher and further from the mariner.



NASBLA & Paddle Sports Boating Safety

The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators recognizes the need to address the increase in recent years in the numbers of paddle craft and paddlers, and the potential for accidents and fatalities.

Over four million canoes and kayaks have been purchased since 1998. Many of the new paddlers involved lack the skills and knowledge to safely pursue the sport. Capsizing and hypothermia in colder waters are serious concerns.

80 % of paddle craft drowning results from capsizing and/or immersion in cold water.

In 2006 NASBLA's Paddle sports Committee had nine charges primarily concerned with forming liaisons and cooperative efforts with other organizations concerned with paddle craft boating safety. In October of 2006

the writer joined NASBLA's Paddle sports Sub Committee which was responsible for the charge of producing a Paddle sports Accident Training Module.

The module produced will serve as a training aid for inspectors of paddle sport accidents. Among the twelve sections, terminology, types of boats and equipment, class of water and hazards, weather and environment, accident statistics, hypothermia, and human error are covered. It is currently in draft form and up for review. Investigations and analysis of the resulting data will identify opportunities to prevent boating casualties

For 2008 the Paddle sports Committee has taken on a new name and charges. It is now the Engineering, Reporting and Analysis Committee. The charges are:

1. Analyze high-risk vessel type accident and fatality rates in states.
Assess the possible correlations between those rates and safety campaigns. Identify and recommend best practices that states can implement to minimize risk to participants.
2. Analyze boating accident data to identify factors specific to injuries and fatalities among high-risk boater populations, with a special focus on children and youth ages 17 and under. Consider frequency and severity of injuries, accident scenarios, roles of participants, exposure hours and other variables. Develop an issue brief on findings.

Alex Cascione BC-VES





Batteries and Fuel Tanks Together – Don't Get Caught on a Technicality

A few months ago the V-Department received an inquiry about co-location of a fuel tank and battery in the same compartment. The vessel in question was an “open fisherman” style, 16-20 feet in length, with outboard power. The Vessel Examiner reported finding an installed metal fuel tank in an unventilated compartment which also contained a battery with open terminals. The fuel tank was properly vented to the atmosphere outside of the compartment. Is this an acceptable situation? Why or why not? And what advice would you give a vessel operator if you encountered this situation when conducting a VSC?

In answering such questions the Technical Division turns to a variety of reference sources, notably the Code of Federal Regulations and the American Boat and Yacht Council, in addition to the VSC manual. In developing answers to the questions posed above, the requirements for electrical systems, fuel systems and ventilation were researched.

To deal with this complex issue it needed to be sub-divided into more workable pieces. The obvious and immediate concern was the battery with uncovered terminals. The federal requirements that apply to batteries don't apply to vessels with outboard power unless the vessel is also equipped with a gasoline-powered generator". However, many states require specifically that batteries be protected from shorting across the terminals and our guidance in the VSC manual for “Overall Vessel Condition” requires that terminals be covered. As described above, the vessel would not qualify for award of the VSC decal.

What if the terminals had been covered? Would the answer be the same? What about having a battery and a fuel tank in the same space, a space that is unventilated?

The next step was to look at the ventilation requirements relative to fuel tanks, and to note that these ventilation requirements refer to all boats using gasoline as the fuel, rather than diesel or other fuels. For fuel tanks which are permanently installed in closed compartments, a natural ventilation system (non-powered) is required if:

1. the compartment contains the tank and an electrical component that is not ignition protected,
2. the fuel tank vents directly into the compartment, OR
3. the fuel tank is non-metallic and exceeds a specified permeability rate.

This fuel tank was metal and vented outside of the compartment. But what about the battery? Isn't it an electrical component capable of causing a spark under the wrong conditions? Based on the definitions and requirements, it was concluded that a battery is not considered an electrical component requiring ignition protection. Batteries are not specifically mentioned in these regulations, and would be an obvious inclusion if covered. That means that the "ignition-protection" requirement described above does not apply to batteries as such. In the regulations, some of the

examples provided for electrical components include solenoids, motors and electrical control devices. In a fuel tank compartment the device most often encountered is the sensor unit for the fuel gauge. Batteries are covered in a separate section of the regulations, and as already noted, that section does not apply to vessels with outboard power. In the case of the vessel in question, the fuel tank itself, and the battery, have been properly installed by the manufacturer.

The vessel described in the first part of this article is not acceptable for the award of a decal, but only because the battery terminals were not protected from shorting. Other aspects of the battery and fuel tank installation met the manufacturer's requirements for this vessel. Compliance with such requirements is certified by the manufacturer on the Certificate of Compliance, and such certification on a properly maintained vessel should serve as primary guidance for a VE that the vessel does comply. Under some circumstances, boat owners may add to the vessel's equipment, or change the manufacturer's installation, leading to an unsafe condition. If in the opinion of the VE, the vessel violates prudent safety standards such as those the manufacturers must follow, the decal should not be awarded. Such decisions call upon the knowledge, judgment and experience of the VE to determine if an unsafe condition exists.

Providing the proper information to the boat owner is key to the credibility of the VSC program and it may well save a life or prevent serious injury. If in doubt, fall back on your resources, including the V-Department's Technical Division. The Vessel Examination web site has a forum where members can post questions and seek answers for technical issues related to conducting VSCs. A compilation of previously-addressed questions remains posted on the Q & A site and members are encouraged to view these questions to avoid repeating a question that has already been answered. The address for questions from members is <http://www.safetyseal.net/QandA.asp> Most of the questions received are answered by the Branch Chief for Technical Research, with input as needed from the staff of the Technical Division and the Vessel Examination Division. The answers are posted to the site if of general interest, or answered in an email reply to the member who submitted the question.

Don't be afraid to seek the help you need to do your job well. We all need help at times "getting it right." Don't get caught on a technicality.

Jim Lubner, DVC-VT



Point to Ponder

For every man there comes that special moment when he is physically tapped on the shoulder and offered the chance to do a very special thing - unique to him and fitted to his talents.

Winston Churchill

