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All D11NR Vessel Examiners:

There is a considerable buzz about the Zebra/Quagga mussel inspection program, specifically about the inspections that are taking place at various locations throughout Northern California, Nevada, and Utah, whether we can participate as Auxiliarists and how the inspections affect the Vessel Safety Check program. The answer is... it depends. Whether during the VSC, PV, or during our Public Education classes, we have an obligation to educate the boater about the issue. However, as an Auxiliarist, you can **NOT** participate in mussel inspections while in uniform or wearing **ANY** Coast Guard or Coast Guard Auxiliary apparel. But, if you want to be trained as a private citizen or part of another organization not affiliated with the Coast Guard or Auxiliary, then no problem.

How does the mussel inspection program impact our VSC program? Simply, it does **NOT!** So that **ALL** D11NR vessel examiners are on the same page, no different than the CO decal, the mussel inspection is **NOT** part of the Vessel Safety Check program. There are no provisions on the 204/7012 form where pass or failure of a mussel inspection could be applied. It does **NOT** fit into item 14 "State and Local Requirements" or anywhere else on the form. In addition to the one-on-one education, the purpose of the Vessel Safety Check program is to examine specific equipment mandated by the federal, state and local governments relating to boating safety.

Many of the state mussel inspections are being handled by the state Fish and Game or Wildlife service at the port of entry to many states. In addition, it seems that each local government or water agency has its own unique program that differs from every other area. However, most inspections are required at the entry kiosk prior to entry to the local body of water and performed by local officials. The inspections range from filling out a form with a cursory inspection, to dog sniffing, to steam cleaning, to refusing entry to out of area vessels or actual impounding vessels! In addition, there are several reservoirs that are completely closed to boaters.

For more information about the zebra/quagga mussel issue, please refer to your D11NR Vessel Examiner website: <http://rbsafety.d11nuscgaux/ve/html> and scroll down to either "Boat Nevada", "Cal Boating", or to the "Utah State Park" links where you'll find "Zebra/Quagga Mussel" policies and links. Another valuable resource for information is: www.100thmeridian.org/.

If anyone has any question regarding the D11NR policy on mussel inspections, please don't hesitate to contact me. The above stated policy has been reviewed and approved locally by COMO Vic Connell and nationally by Pete Urgola DC-V, the National Department Chief for Vessel Examinations.

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