



Homeland Security

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary
District 11 Northern Region

Serving Northern California, Nevada, Utah



Vessel Safety Check Newsletter

May 2008

Volume 5 Number 3

Mike Lauro DSO-VE Joaquin Duran ADSO-VE

This newsletter is the publication of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, District 11NR - Vessel Safety Check program and published at no cost to either the Coast Guard or the Coast Guard Auxiliary. This newsletter will be distributed in PDF format electronically to each Vessel Examiner in D11NR with a CURRENT email. It can also be found on the D11NR website. It will be published on January 1st and each month starting with April and ending with October. Disclosure of the personal information contained in this publication is subject to the provisions contained in the Privacy Act of 1974. As a matter of policy, roster of names, addresses, email address and telephone numbers shall not be made available to the general public or any outside organizations. This newsletter is a team effort by the DSO-VE staff and is responsible for its content. If you have anything suitable you think should be included that others would benefit from, please send it to Mike Lauro. It may be discontinued at any time by the DSO-VE.

DSO Comments

By Mike Lauro



Recently there has been a considerable buzz about the Zebra/Quagga mussel program and specifically about the inspections that are

taking place at various locations throughout Northern California, whether we can participate as Auxiliarists and how the inspections effect the VSC program. The answer is...it depends. Whether during the VSC, PV, or during our Public Education classes, we do have an obligation to educate the boaters about the issue. However, you can NOT participate in 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 an organization not affiliated with the Coast Guard or Auxiliary, then no problem.

How does the mussel inspection impact our VSC's? 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 related to boating safety.

It seems that each local government has it's own unique program that differs from every other area. I'm not certain what Nevada or Utah are doing, but here in Northern California, the Clear Lake facility is requiring a special decal for boaters to launch.

Many East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) lakes are requiring inspections at the entry/ fee booth. EBMUD has even gone to the point of NOT allowing boaters from certain Zip codes and out of state boaters into their facilities. In addition, one of their reservoirs is completely closed to boaters.

For more information about the zebra/quagga mussel issue in your state, please refer to *your* D11NR VE website:

<http://rbsafety.d11nuscgaux.info/ve.html>

and scroll down to either the "Boat Nevada", "Cal Boating", or to the "Utah State Park" link where you'll find "Quagga Mussel" links. In addition, at each site you'll find

other links with additional information.

If anyone has any questions regarding the D11NR policy on mussel inspections, please don't hesitate to contact me. The 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. In the meantime, let's get out and educate the public and perform VSC's during National Safe Boating Week.

Finally, thanks to Rod Collins DCP 6 and his board and staff for inviting Joaquin and myself to visit Division 6 and speak at their recent Division meeting. As always, your comments are welcome.

ADS Comments

By Joaquin Duran

This month's comments are regarding



Visual Distress Signals.

Simply: "all vessels used on coastal waters, the Great Lakes, territorial seas, and those

waters connected directly to them, up to a point where a body of water is less than two miles wide must be equipped with U.S.C.G. Approved visual distress signals. Vessels owned in the United States operating on the high seas must be equipped with U.S.C.G. Approved visual distress signals."

The following vessels are NOT required to carry day signals but must carry night signals when operating

from sunset to sunrise: Recreational boats less than 16 feet in length, boats participating in organized events such as races, regattas, or marine parades, open sailboats less than 26 feet in length not equipped with propulsion machinery.

Pyrotechnic Visual Distress Signals must be Coast Guard Approved, in working condition, and readily accessible. They are marked with a date showing the service life, which must not have expired. For a signal to be considered current its date must be no more than 42 months from date of manufacture. Recently expired flares are acceptable on inland waters. Use your best judgment. If pyrotechnic devices are selected, a

minimum of three (3) is required. That is, three signals for day use AND three signals for night. Some pyrotechnic signals meet both **day and night** use requirements: such as Red Hand Held Flares; Red Parachute Flares; and a combination Smoke / Flare Signals. Some pyrotechnic signals meet **only day** use requirements, such as orange smoke, hand-held or floating flares. Ensure the packages are properly sealed. Pistol launched and hand-held parachute flares have many characteristics of a firearm and must be handled with caution. In some states they are considered a firearm and prohibited from use. When doing a VSC in a state that prohibits percussion type distress signals, advise the owner of possible restrictions, or alternate devices. At no time should a VDS be test fired as part of the examination. Non-Pyrotechnic Visual Distress Signals must be in serviceable condition, readily accessible, and certified by the manufacturer as complying with U.S.C.G. requirements. They include the Orange Distress

Signals and the Electric Distress Light. The orange distress / ski flag is a **day signal only**. It is most distinctive when attached and waved on a paddle, boat hook or flown from a mast. Another day use options might be a mirror or an old CD disc. The electric distress light is accepted for **night use only** and must **AUTOMATICALLY** flash the international SOS distress signal (... - - - ...). Pyrotechnic devices should be stored in a cool, dry location. A watertight container painted red or orange and prominently marked "DISTRESS SIGNALS" is recommended.

Finally, per Coast Guard policy, do NOT accept any expired pyros and do NOT offer to demonstrate any pyrotechnic device.

Information for above material was provided by: *The Federal Requirements Booklet* and *The 2008 California ABC's of Boating*. Your local requirements may differ.

As always, your comments are welcome.

 **VSC Questions** - Answers can be found in another location in the newsletter

1-Ventilation requirements for award of a VSC decal are applicable to all recreational boats using fuel having a flash point 100' or less, except:

- a. A sailboat with an auxiliary outboard engine using an enclosed fuel compartment containing a five-gallon portable fuel tank.
- b. A ten-year old cabin cruiser with an open engine compartment and an enclosed fuel compartment.
- c. A brand new outboard boat with a seven-gallon portable fuel tank in a closed compartment.
- d. A 20' outboard boat of open construction.

2-You are checking a 25' stern drive boat built in 1995. What are the requirements for issuance of the decal relative to ventilation?

- a. This boat needs a working powered ventilation system that is properly installed and that contains a warning label by the ignition switch.
- b. Since this vessel is not technically an inboard boat, it does not need anything more than a natural ventilation system.
- c. Since this vessel is built after 31 July 1980, you can look at the Compliance Plate to make sure that it meets the ventilation requirements. This means you don't have to do anything further to verify the ventilation on the boat.
- d. Since the requirements are too complicated for most civilians to understand, the Vessel Safety Check Manual has made it easy for the VE. All you need to do is lift the cover of the engine compartment and smell if there are any gas fumes. If there are no gas fumes, you can issue the decal.

 Congratulations!

Congratulations to ALL the following examiners who have performed 20 or more VSC's during 2008*:

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| Richard A. Saber | 01-02 | Curtis S. Han | 05-02 |
| Anthony D. Leonardi | 10-03 | | |

This brings our total to 9 examiners reaching this plateau! This is approximately 2% of the total District examiner base. 2007 had 3 examiners or 1% at this time. Where's your name?

PLEASE be certain that all stats are reported MONTHLY using the CURRENT Form 7038 to your FSO-IS so you and your unit(s) will receive proper credit.

*Statistics as shown in AUXINFO thru April 2008

 Sailing Lingo Question- Answer can be found in another location in the newsletter

Are you an expert sailor?

A sailboat which is pointed too far into the wind is called:

- a. S.O.L.
- b. In irons.
- c. Beskrunkled.

 Welcome Aboard and Welcome Back!

No New Examiners to list.

With the addition of these new examiners for 2008, our examiner base total is now 251 active examiners! This represents about 17% of our total District membership. This information is supplied by the Director's office, as examiners are qualified.

***Re-certification**

VSC Calendar

If you have a planned event and would like it list here, send an email at least 45 days prior with a brief description to: sumfun@juno.com

-National Safe Boating Week-May 17-23

-VSC Mega-Weeks-ENTIRE month of JUNE

-National Marina Day-August 8th

-Vessel examiner Class at the PCA Fair August 16th and 17th-Coast Guard Island

Division Spotlight-Division 3



Once a year West Marine holds an event called Spring Commissioning. It is actually just a sales promotion, but the idea is a good one. Helping boaters clean up their boats and keeping them clean is an honorable task. As in most years,



West Marine invited the Auxiliary to be in attendance at this event. This year Don Wyman, Flotilla 35's Commander and Jim Goff, Flotilla 35's Vice Commander attended this event. Both of these Auxiliary members are vessel examiners and Jim is the SO-VE for Division 3. The event was held at the Rancho Cordova store on April 19th. While there was not a large crowd at the event, both Don and Jim were busy. Only two people brought their boat to the event and Jim was able to do a VSC on one of them. But, two other shoppers signed up for BS&S classes, two others expressed an interest in joining the Auxiliary, and another signed up for a VSC at a later date.

The highlight of the event was the opportunity to talk to many boaters and answer many questions regarding such items as life preservers, radios, GPS units, and various other safety devices. The staff of West Marine was happy to have us assist some of their shoppers. In fact the owner of the boat on which Jim conducted the VSC did not have any visual distress signals on board so Jim and the owner went back into the store and the owner bought a hand held flare kit at a good sales price. Jim explained to him how to use the flares and the owner went away proud of his red decal.

The store manager asked Jim to come back once a month to hold VSC stations and answer questions of boaters. Jim gladly accepted the invitation (5/24, 6/14, 7/19, and 8/23). Also, Flotilla 35 and Division 3 VE's have been invited to Cope and McPhetres Boat sales on May 3d to hold a VSC station. It's a good start to this year's boating season.

National and District News

National News

"Inflatable life jackets that are to be used by qualified Auxiliary VE's and RBS-PV's are expected to arrive at ANSC per the following schedule: 3500 pfd's in June, and 3600 pfd's in July for a Total of 7100 PFD's.

ANSC will distribute them to DCP's based on AUXDATA's Division-level counts of qualified Auxiliary VE's and RBS-PV's, for further distribution to FC's for appropriate program use at field level.

These life jackets have been purchased with Coast Guard funds and therefore have to be treated and tracked like Coast Guard property that is provided to Auxiliary units. Further, there is an additional element of program accountability that requires annual reporting to the Program Operations Branch of the Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety (CG-54222) for three years.

As ANSC completes the distribution of each of these shipments, it will notify all regions of such on a Division-by-Division basis. Upon receipt at the Flotilla level, the

life jackets shall be tracked and reported in accordance with regional guidelines for the reporting of Coast Guard property in the custody of Auxiliary units. In December of 2008, 2009, and 2010, the DCP shall also be responsible for reporting the distribution status of the life jackets directly to CG-54222".

Source: LCDR Kathryn Dunbar USCG

Once again, West Marine is offering a 10% discount coupon on safety equipment to boaters who receive a VSC. Copies of the coupon can also be found on YOUR VE website: <http://rbsafety.d11nuscgaux.info/ve.html>. This is the corrected coupon. The original coupons were misprinted.

For years the Coast Guard had been operating the Boating Safety Hotline 800 number. That number was placed on our ANSC 7012 forms and many other pieces of literature that has been distributed to the boating public. About a year ago the Coast Guard decided to drop the service. The phone company has reassigned the number to another customer. Please ask the deck plate to strike out the hot line 800 number on ALL their forms and literature. ANSC is working to have the inventory corrected before additional literature is shipped out. We will also be changing the reference number in our manuals. This is a big job and thanks for your help.

Source: Pete Urgola DC-V

District News

Phil Grove DSO-PV has announced that he will have a $\frac{1}{2}$ day Program Visitor class at the August PCA Fair. For more information about the class and scheduling, you can contact Phil at: groventer@aol.com.

In the continuing evolution to provide information to assist both the new and experienced vessel examiners, there have several NEW additions and updates on YOUR Vessel Examiner website: <http://rbsafety.d11nuscgaux.info/ve.html>.

Gary Murray FSO-VE 5-5 is **ALWAYS** looking for vessel examiners to help perform VSC's at Lake Sonoma. Interested examiners can contact him at: dutcher@sonic.net

Division Staff Officers

SO-VE 1 Richard A. Saber captcrunch@mindspring.com

SO-VE 3 James Goff james.goff@att.net

SO-VE 4 Joaquin P. Duran duranjp@sbcglobal.net

SO-VE 5 Robert Smith nanapah@hotmail.com

SO-VE 6 Stanley Wolfberg s_wolfberg@yahoo.com

SO-VE 7 Riley Turpin

rnturpin@peoplepc.com

SO-VE 8 Doug Pohlson

dougs@pacific.net

SO-VE 10

SO-VE 11 Ray E. Wise

rayellen@sbcglobal.net

SO-VE 12 Rick Scheurman chevroids@comcast.net

Answer to Sailing Lingo Question: "b"

Answer to VSC questions:

Question 1-"d" See page 19 of the VSC Manual

Question 2-"a" See page 20 of the VSC Manual

