



# VESSEL SAFETY CHECK (VSC)

To be completed by a U.S. Coast Guard approved Vessel examiner.  
See the back of this form for a brief explanation of required items.  
A Federal Requirements pamphlet is also available.

Date of VSC: \_\_\_\_\_

Decal Awarded:  
Yes  No

Owner/Operator Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner/Operator has attended Safe Boating Class: Yes  No

Location of VSC – County: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Replaced decal was: Last Year  Outdated  First Time

### VESSEL INFORMATION:

Registration or

Documentation Number: \_\_\_\_\_

HIN: \_\_\_\_\_

Length: <16  16-25  26-39  40-65

Powered by: Gas  Diesel  Sail  Other

Area of Operations: Inland  Coastal

Type: PWC  Open  Cabin  Other

### RECOMMENDED AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

(While encouraged, items below are not VSC requirements)

### VESSEL SAFETY CHECK DECAL REQUIREMENTS

Item	Yes	No	N/A
1. Display of Numbers			
2. Registration/Documentation			
3. Personal Flotation Devices (PFD)			
4. Visual Distress Signals (VDS)			
5. Fire Extinguishers			
6. Ventilation			
7. Backfire Flame Control			
8. Sound Producing Devices			
9. Navigation Lights			
10. Pollution Placard			
11. MARPOL Trash Placard			
12. Marine Sanitation Devices			
13. Navigation Rules			
14. State and/or Local Requirements			
15. Overall Vessel Condition: as applies			
a. Deck Free of Hazards / Clean Bilge			
b. Electrical Systems			
c. Fuel Systems			
d. Galley / Heating Systems			
e. Engine Cutoff Switch (ECOS)			

Item	Yes	No
I. Marine Radio		
II. Dewatering Device & Backup		
III. Mounted Fire Extinguishers		
IV. Anchor & Line for Area		
V. First Aid and PIW Kits (** over)		
VI. Inland Visual Distress Signals		
VII. Capacity/Certificate of Compliance		
VIII. Discussion Items, as applies:		
a. Accident Reporting-Owner Responsibility		
b. Offshore Operations		
c. Carbon Monoxide-Dangers and Prevention		
d. Nautical Charts/Navigation Aids		
e. Fuel/Fuel management		
f. Float Plan/Weather & Sea Conditions		
g. Boating Check List		
h. Survival Tips & First Aid		
i. Safe Boating Classes		
j. Marine Domain Awareness		
k. Insurance Considerations		

Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that I have personally examined this vessel and find it meets the above requirements at the time of the Vessel Safety Check. I am a qualified Vessel Examiner of the: CGAUX , USPS , State of \_\_\_\_\_ , or \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name of the Examiner \_\_\_\_\_ Examiner Number \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone/Mobile Number \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Comments:** *This is not an official boarding for law enforcement purposes. It is recommended that you correct any deficiencies noted. This checklist is furnished for your information. There is no assumption of liability of any kind for advice given or opinions expressed in connection to this examination. By accepting the Vessel Safety Check decal, you are pledging to maintain your boat and equipment to the standard of safety exhibited during this examination. Please remove the Vessel Safety Check decal if the boat is sold or no longer meets the requirements.*

I am a consenting to this Vessel Safety Check of my watercraft with full knowledge that it is provided to me as a public service on a volunteer basis without coast, and I understand and agree that my receipt of a Vessel Safety Check shall not constitute or construed as a warranty or guarantee as to either the qualification, knowledge, or skills of the operator; the seaworthiness of the vessel; or the serviceability or adequacy of any equipment on board.

Owner/Operator Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Brief Explanation of VSC Required Items:**

- 1. NUMBERING:** The boat’s registration number must be permanently attached to each side of the forward half of the boat. Characters must be plain, vertical, block style, not less than three (3) inches high, and in a color contrasting with the background. A space or hyphen must separate the letters from the numbers. Place State validation sticker according to State policy. (e.g. **FL 1234 AH** or **FL-4234-AB**)
- 2. REGISTRATION/DOCUMENTATION:** Registration or Documentation papers must be on board and available. Documentation numbers must be permanently marked on a visible part of the interior structure. The documented boat’s name and Hailing Port must be displayed on the exterior hull in letters not less than 4 inches in height.
- 3. PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES (PFDs):** Acceptable PFDs (as known as Life Jackets) must be U.S. Coast Guard approved and in good, serviceable condition. A wearable PFD of suitable size is required for each person on the boat. Children must have properly fitted PFDs designed for children. Wearable PFDs shall be “readily accessible” Boats/rowboats 16 feet or longer, (except canoes and kayaks) must have one Type IV (throwable) device, which shall be “immediately available”. PFDs shall NOT be stored in unopened plastic packaging. For Personal Watercraft riders, the PFD must be worn. An impact rating is recommended, but not required.
- 4. VISUAL DISTRESS SIGNALS:** Recreational boats 16 feet and over used on coast waters of Great Lakes are required to carry a minimum of either 1) three day and three night pyrotechnic devices., 2) one day non-pyrotechnic device (flag) and one night non-pyrotechnic device (auto SOS light) or 3) a combination of 1) and 2). Recreational boats less than 16 feet on coastal waters or the Great Lakes need only carry night visual distress signals when operating from sunset to sunrise. It is recommended, but not required, that boats operating on inland waters should have some means of signaling a suitable day and night distress signal. The number and type of signals is best judged by considering conditions under which the boat will be operating.
- 5. FIRE EXTINGUISHERS:** Fire extinguishers are required if one of the following conditions exist: 1) Inboard engine(s); 2) Double bottom hulls not completely sealed or not completely filled with floatation materials; 3) Closed living space; 4) Closed stowage compartments that contain flammable materials; or 5) Permanently installed fuel tanks. Recreational boats less than 26 feet, and propelled by outboard motors are NOT required to have fire extinguishers unless one or more of the conditions (2-5) listed above applies. *NOTE: Fire extinguishers must be readily accessible and verified as serviceable.*

Fire Extinguisher Type	Vessel Model Year	
	Prior to 2018	2018 and later
5-B:C or larger *	Acceptable	Acceptable
B-I / B-II	Acceptable **	Not Acceptable

Notes:  
 \* Must be replaced if >12 years from date stamped on bottle  
 \*\* Can remain in service >12 years from date stamped on bottle if in “good and serviceable” condition

Boat model year of 2018 and newer. NOTE - may carry only 5-B or 20-B rated fire extinguishers with date stamp		
Length (feet)	Minimum number of 5-B rated portable fire extinguishers required <sup>1</sup>	
	If no fixed fire extinguishing system in machinery space	If fixed fire extinguishing system in machinery space
Under 16	1	0
16 but less than 26	1	0
26 but less than 40	2	1
40 up to 65	3	2

<sup>1</sup> One 20-B rated portable fire extinguisher may be substituted for two 5-B portable fire extinguishers

Note Vessels model year between 1953 and 2017 may carry either 5-B, 20-B rated extinguishers with date stamp or B-I/II rated fire extinguishers

- 6. VENTILATION:** Boats with gasoline engines in closed compartments, built after 1 August 1980 must have a powered ventilation system. Those built prior to that date must have neutral or powered ventilation. Boats with closed fuel tank compartments built after 1 August 1978 must meet requirements by displaying a “certificate of compliance.” Boats built before that date must have either natural or powered ventilation in the fuel tank compartment.
- 7. BACKFIRE FLAME ARRESTER:** All gasoline powered inboard/outboard or inboard motor boats must be equipped with an approved backfire flame control device.
- 8. SOUND PRODUCING DEVICES:** To comply with Navigation Rules and for distress signaling purposes all boats must carry a sound producing device (whistle, horn, siren, etc.) capable of a 4-second blast audible for ½ mile.
- 9. NAVIGATION LIGHTS:** All boats must be able to display navigation lights between sunset and sunrise and in conditions of reduced visibility. Boats 16 feet or more in length must have properly installed, working navigation lights and an all-around anchor light capable of being lit independently from the red/green/white “running lights.”
- 10. POLLUTION PLACARD:** Boats 26 feet and over with a machinery compartment must display an oily waste “pollution” placard.
- 11. MARPOL TRASH PLACARD:** Boats 26 feet and over in length, operating in U.S. navigable waters, must display a “MARPOL” trash placard. Ongoing boats 40 feet and over must also have a written trash disposal plan available.
- 12. MARINE SANITATION DEVICE:** Any installed toilet must be a Coast Guard approved device. Overboard discharge outlets must be capable of being sealed.
- 13. NAVIGATION RULES:** Boats 39.4 feet and over must have on board a current copy of Navigation Rules. An electronic version of the Navigation Rules is acceptable.
- 14. STATE AND LOCAL REQUIREMENTS:** These requirements must be met before the “Vessel Safety Check” decal can be awarded. A boat must meet the requirements of the state in which it is being examined.
- 15. OVERALL BOAT CONDITION: As it applies to this vessel. Including, but not limited to:**

**a. Deck free of hazards and clean bilge –** The boat must be free from fire hazards, in good overall condition, with bilges reasonably clean and visible hull structure generally sound. The use of automobile parts on boat engines is not acceptable. The engine horsepower must not exceed that shown on the capacity plate.

**b. Electrical Systems –** The electrical system must be protected by fuses or manual circuit breakers. Switches and fuse panels must be protected from rain or water spray. Wiring must be in good condition, properly installed and with no exposed areas or deteriorated insulation. Batteries must be secured and the positive terminal (some states require both) covered to prevent accidental arcing. Boats with outboard engine(s) are exempt from this requirement.

**c. Fuel Systems –** Portable fuel tanks (normally 7 gallon capacity or less) must be constructed of non-breakable material and free of corrosion and leaks. All vents must be capable of being closed. The tank must be secured and have a vapor-tight, leak-proof cap. Each permanent fuel tank must be properly vented.

**d. Galley and Heating Systems –** System and fuel tanks must be properly secured with no flammable materials nearby.

**e. Engine Cutoff Switch (ECOS) –** Required on all vessels <26 feet manufactured after 12/2019; must produce lanyard during VSC. All PWCS require self-circling or kill switch mechanisms. If installed, a self-circling or kill switch mechanism must be in proper working order.

**VIII. RECOMMENDED AND DISCUSSION ITEMS: (Not required for the award of the ‘Vessel Safety Check’ decal).** For the very best boaters, we recommend those additional items. Meeting these requirements reflects your concern for Boating Safety.

**\*\* Person in the Water (PIW) kit consists of one extra wearable PFD and a throwable Type IV PFD with line.**