



## VESSEL SAFETY CHECKS FOR RENTAL AGENCIES WITH PADDLECRAFT

For those Vessel Examiners who plan to conduct VSCs at locations which rent out small boats such as kayaks, canoes or paddlecraft, please take a few minutes to review Chapter 5 (Paddle Craft) in the Vessel Safety Check Manual (COMDTINST M16796.8) before heading out.

Obviously you will not be meeting with the individuals who will actually be renting the boats. You will need to rely on the agency to provide the necessary safety information. Take the time to emphasize the importance of their stressing **boater safety** and that everyone should always wear a life jacket and it should be equipped with a whistle. Ensuring the rental agency is providing their customers the necessary boater safety information is important, as you ensuring their equipment meets state and federal requirements.

Here are a few additional tips to keep in mind:

1- You are dealing with a business and you are representing the Coast Guard, please dress and act accordingly.

2- Please review ML-1, ML-1A, ML-2, ML-3, ML-4, and ML-5 for more information. These have recently been revised and can be found on the VE D11NR website: <http://rbsafety.d11nuscgaux.info/ve/ve.html>.

3- Look over each vessel closely. They get a lot of use by “non-boaters” and may not always be in the best condition. If you are not satisfied that the vessel is “safe”, it should be brought to the owners attention and possibly rejected. Take your time and examine each vessel. As you read in the manual, there are specific items to be aware of when examining different paddle craft.

4- Life jackets should be examined individually for wear, broken zippers, tears, missing hardware, etc. and brought to the owners attention. Are there enough life jackets, in different sizes, for the number of boats? It's recommended, but not required, that a whistle be attached to each life jacket.

5- If a whistle isn't attached to each life jacket, are sufficient whistles available for each customer? IT IS NOT YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO SUPPLY WHISTLES.

6- The vessels are generally rented for day time use. It is recommended, but again not required, that a flashlight be on board (a necessity when suddenly caught during a period of reduced visibility such as fog or a passing shower, or possibly getting lost as the sun lowers).

7- Look over their selection of paddles (oars) to ensure they meet the necessary standards.

8- Complete a 7012A for each paddlecraft you examine. After signing and dating each form, give a copy to the owner/manager for their records. As a side note, remember 7012A is not to be used when certifying or recertifying Vessel Examiner candidates.

8- Install or ask the owner/ manager to place a decal on each vessel (which passed the examination) as described in the VSC manual. It's important that you observe the decals being installed.

Boating rental agencies, by nature, attract the NOVICE and NON BOATERS. Ensuring every boater returns safely to the dock is one of the key reasons we consider these vessel safety checks to be critical in our campaign to reduce boating fatalities.

One final suggestion, within a day or two of completing the vessel safety checks, send a letter (preferably via the mail or email) thanking them for participating in our program. This formal THANK YOU will go a long way in you being invited back next year.

Mike Lauro DSO-VE

**THANK YOU for participating in the D11NR Vessel Safety Check Program**