



**Homeland  
Security**

**U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary**  
**District 11 Northern Region**  
*Serving Northern California, Nevada, Utah*



# **VESSEL EXAMINER (VE) TIPS**

## **Certification/Recertification and Best Practices**

### **Performing Vessel Safety Check (VSC) "Under Supervision"**

It is recommended that the Lead Vessel Examiner perform the first two or three VSCs with the trainee closely observing. This way the trainee has an opportunity to observe how to approach, ask the boat owner, properly conduct themselves, and what to look for during an examination. The art of being a good VE is practice, consistency, and professionalism. The VSC forms are signed by the lead VE until the trainee completes **AT LEAS** five (5) satisfactory VSC's under the supervision of the Lead VE and receives final certification from DIRAUX.

### **Initial Year Qualification Requirements**

1. Complete at least five (5) supervised examinations. The supervising VE will receive credit for the five completed VSCs.
2. Once the completed supervised examinations are entered/verified in AUXDATA, the FSO-VE or FSO- IS completes the MT-2 Form and forwards to the Flotilla Commander for endorsement.
3. The completed "Qualification" form will then be sent to DIRAUX for final approval and certification.
4. In the first year that the VE becomes qualified they will not be required to perform five (5) additional VSCs for that year. However, they should be encouraged to do as many as possible. Remember, the art of being a good VE is practice, consistency, and professionalism.

### **Recertification**

If any qualified examiner fails to perform the annual certification procedures, the following must take place:

1. Complete two satisfactory VSC's under the supervision of a certified Vessel Examiner. The certifying Vessel Examiner receives the credit for the two recertification VSC's.
2. Once the two supervised examinations are completed and entered/verified in AUXDATA, the FSO-VE or FSO-IS completes the MT-2 Form and forwards to the Flotilla Commander for endorsement.
3. The completed "Qualification" form will then be sent to DIRAUX for final approval and recertification.
4. The candidate **MUST** then meet the annual requirements (five VSCs) to retain their certification.

### **Record Retention**

While there is no specific document retention requirement for the 7012/7012A or 7038 Activity Summary form, and in the event of an audit, it is recommended that these forms be maintained for a period of one year. For example, the 2021 VSC forms should be retained through 12/31/2021. After that, they may be destroyed. This means that all forms prior to 2021 may now be destroyed.

### **-Pre-Examination**

The focus should be on educating the boater and doing all we can to have the boater bring their boat into compliance for safe and enjoyable operation. Working with the boat owner in advance of actually conducting a VSC is a great concept, providing more exposure to the boater, more opportunity to discuss boating safety, and more opportunity to solicit their interest in the Auxiliary. The bottom line is to do what it takes to create safe boats and safe boaters.

### **-FC/VFC/FSO-VE Notification**

When you are performing VSC's, you are considered "assigned to duty". This is important because Auxiliarist may then be covered under the Coast Guard umbrella in the event of an accident. Being "assigned to duty" does not necessarily require orders; having orders only helps to lessen the doubt. Whether you are covered legally will always be a matter of the facts involved in the case, which is true even if you were under orders. The best thing is to always do your best to establish a strong basis for the facts. Meaning, the VSC is fully sanctioned by the Flotilla, is on the schedule, or elected/staff officer have been notified of your intention to conduct VSCs including location, time, and any other relevant information.

### **-Uniforms**

An approved and properly serviced Personal Flotation Device (preferably one with USCG AUX markings) should be worn when a Vessel Examiner is conducting a VSC near or on the water. Whenever possible make every attempt to wear a proper uniform! While at a group VSC event, ALL examiners need to dress the same. Boat shoes or soft soles may be worn, however if boots are worn while climbing aboard vessels, the soles should be covered with booties.

### **-VSC Courtesy**

Ask permission to come aboard before boarding. Be courteous, and cautious that nothing you are carrying can cause damage to the vessel you are inspecting. If you make an appointment be sure to be on time!

Mike Lauro DSO-VE

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