



VESSEL SAFETY CHECK – MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Each year, I receive questions about the Vessel Safety Check (VSC) program. What is the program, how long does the examination take and what happens if I’m missing required safety items. These are valid questions and part of the “one-on-one boater” educational exchange. When the VSC decal is awarded, it indicates all required safety equipment is aboard for the length and type of vessel, and is functional. Understanding why the program was started and the impact of the VSC program should be important to all Vessel Examiners. The program history and the number of examinations will surprise everyone!

HISTORY

In 1946, the Coast Guard Auxiliary 7th District, with the approval from Coast Guard, began offering complimentary exams to recreational motor vessels. The program was expanded the following year (1947) to include all the districts and was called “Courtesy Boat Inspection”. During the same year, the Vessel Examination program became one of the four cornerstones of the Auxiliary. The program evolved with the approval of sailboats and the name was changed to “Courtesy Marine Examination” in 1972. In 1997 the Auxiliary started issuing “safety checks” to personal water craft (PWC’s) and in 2000 the program name was changed to Vessel Safety Check and included the USPS/America’s Boating Club. With the addition of rentals, kayaks/canoes, and sailboards, the outreach efforts expanded in 2010.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Making a difference begins with the “one-on-one” educational exchange with the boater. Vessel Examiners (VEs) are the experts with all the federal, state, and local requirements.

Reviewing the Federal Requirements Booklet and state boating law booklets, bulletins and our D11NR Vessel Examiner website help examiners increase their expertise.

Since 1991, nationally the Auxiliary has conducted over 3,000,000 VSCs and in D11NR 150,000 VSC’s including 17,000 paddlecraft VSC’s were performed! Along with the United States Power Squadrons/America’s Boating Club and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP), another 528,000 and 18,000 VSCs have been conducted respectively. We should all be proud of the contribution that has been made towards promoting boating education and safe boating.

VESSEL SAFETY CHECK STATS THRU 2020:

The Auxiliary performed over 3,00,000 VSCs, including 45,000 Facility Inspections from 1991 through December 2020. D11NR performed over 150,000 VSC’s in the same period.

- Auxiliary currently has 3,200 examiners, D11NR 170 examiners.
- Auxiliary performed 216,000 paddle craft VSCs from 2011 - 2020.
- USPS performed 528,000 VSCs and 32,400 paddle craft from 2001 – 2020.
- USPS currently has 625 examiners.

CTDEEP performed 18,500 VSCs from 2012 – 2020 and currently has 13 certified VEs.

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