

**B. \* BOATING SAFETY \***

### U. S. COAST GUARD BOATING SAFETY INFORMATION

For information on free boating instruction, free safe boat checks and the Coast Guard Auxiliary, please contact:

COMMANDER (oax)  
FIRST COAST GUARD DISTRICT  
408 ATLANTIC AVENUE  
BOSTON MA 02110-3350  
(617) 223 - 8310

### BOATING SAFETY HOTLINE FACTS

What is the Boating Safety Hotline? The Boating Safety Hotline is a toll-free telephone service operated by the U.S. Coast Guard in Washington, D.C. Hotline operators provide callers with information on boating safety recalls and consumer complaints about possible safety defects. Other safety information and literature concerning recreational boating can also be obtained through the Hotline.

**Who can use the Hotline?** Anyone with access to a telephone in the United States, including Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, by dialing the toll-free number: **(800) 368-5647**.

**When can I call?** A Hotline operator will be on duty Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. eastern time. Calls received after normal working hours will reach a recorded message.

**Will the operator answer all my questions?** Hotline operators are trained to answer many questions on boating safety directly over the telephone. If the question is very technical, the operator can ask a Coast Guard specialist to call you back. Or, if the question is too complicated to answer directly over the telephone, the operator may send you written information that covers the subject. If the

question deals with a topic outside of the Coast Guard's Recreational Boating Safety program, the Hotline operator will try to refer you to an office or agency that can help.

**I have a safety problem with my boat, should I call the Hotline?** Yes. Consumers are an important source of information used by the Coast Guard to identify safety problems in recreational boats. When you call to report a safety problem, you will be sent an owner's report form, with a postage-paid return envelope, so you can document the details of the problem. When you mail it back, the information is evaluated to determine if the problem is safety-related. If the Coast Guard concludes that the problem represents a safety defect (a defect that poses a substantial risk of injury), then the manufacturer will be asked to conduct a safety recall.

**What are some of the issues addressed on the Hotline?** Trained operators are available to answer questions about:

- Boating Safety courses
- Marine toilets
- Coast Guard Boardings
- Licenses
- Courtesy Marine Exams
- Charts
- Boat documentation
- Guns aboard boats
- Rules of the Road
- EPIRBs
- Required equipment
- Hurricanes
- Safety Defect reports
- Recall information

**How do I use the Hotline to check Safety Recall information?** When a manufacturer conducts a safety recall, a written notice is sent to all owners informing them of the safety defect. But because it is difficult for a manufacturer to keep track of the whereabouts of every owner, it may not be possible to send the notice to everyone who owns the boat or engine named in a safety recall (particularly if the recall involves an older model).

So, if you're buying a used boat or engine, or even if you are the first owner of a relatively new boat or engine, and are wondering if the boat or engine has ever been involved in a safety recall, it is a simple matter to call the Hotline and find out. If the Hotline operator discovers your boat or engine has been named in a safety recall, the operator will send you information on how to go about getting the manufacturer to correct the safety defect.

**What consumer questions cannot be answered by the Hotline?** Sorry, the Hotline operator is not able to

recommend or endorse specific boats or product lines; nor can the Hotline help the consumer resolve disputes with boat dealers or manufacturers about service or problems that do not involve safety.

### HELPFUL HINTS FOR BOATERS

The operator is responsible for the boat and the persons on board. Remember safety is not a set of rules and regulations, safety is an attitude. Prudence and common sense will go a long way in making your outing on the water safer and more enjoyable.

**GOOD HOUSEKEEPING** – There are few places where good housekeeping is more important than on your boat. This includes properly stowing and securing all equipment and supplies, keeping decks and spaces clean and free from clutter and trash. Perform safety checks and maintenance on a regular schedule and ensure that all repairs are completed properly.

**TOOLS AND SPARE PARTS** – Carry a few tools and some spare parts and learn how to make minor repairs. A great many rescue cases are caused by minor breakdowns that the operator should have been able to repair.

**FUEL MANAGEMENT** – Use the “One-third” rule in fuel management. Use one-third fuel to go, one-third to get back and keep one-third in reserve.

**ALCOHOL AND DRUGS** – Alcohol and other drugs reduce judgement and the ability to react. Furthermore, sun, wind, vibration and noise are very fatiguing, increasing the debilitating effects of alcohol and drugs

#### Conversion Tables

|          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1.15 MPH | 1 Knot   |
| 6.90 MPH | 6 Knots  |
| 11.5 MPH | 10 Knots |
| 23.0 MPH | 20 Knots |
| 29.9 MPH | 26 Knots |
| 34.5 MPH | 30 Knots |
| 40.3 MPH | 25 Knots |

### BROCHURE FOR RECREATIONAL BOATERS

The U.S. Coast Guard recently published a new brochure entitled *Our Commitment to Recreational Boaters*" It lists and explains the many services performed by the Coast Guard in its commitment to providing a safe environment for recreational boaters. *Our Commitment to Recreational Boaters* is available by calling the Coast Guard Customer

Infoline, (800) 368-5647. The number for the hearing impaired is (800) 689-0816.



### REPORTING BOATING ACCIDENTS

All recreational boating accidents must be reported to the proper law enforcement authority for the state in which the accident occurred. A report must be made when the incident involves the vessel or its equipment and there is:

- Loss of life
- A person is injured and requires medical treatment beyond first aid.
- A person disappears from the vessel under circumstances that indicate death or injury
- Damage to the vessel and/or other property totals more than \$500\* or is a complete loss.

\* Note: Many states have set a limit less than \$500; contact the local boating authority to determine the amount.

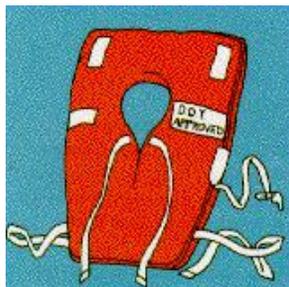
**IMMEDIATE NOTIFICATION IS REQUIRED FOR FATAL ACCIDENTS.** If a person dies or disappears from a vessel, the operator must, without delay, notify the nearest reporting authority. A formal report of a fatality or injury must be filed within 48 hours. The following information must be provided:

- Date, time, and exact location of the accident.
- Name of each person who died or disappeared.
- Number and name of the vessel.
- Names and addresses of the owner and operator.

Accidents resulting in more than \$500 damage must be reported within 10 days. If you need assistance in reporting an accident, contact the Coast Guard Boating Safety Hotline at (800) 368-5647.

## LIFE JACKETS and PERSONAL FLOATATION DEVICES

Most drowning occurs way out at sea, right? **WRONG!** Fact is 9 out of 10 drownings occur in inland water, most within a few feet of safety. Most victims owned PFD's, but they died without them. A wearable PFD can save your life, if you wear it. Today's PFDs fit better, look better, and are easy to move around in. Before you shove off, make sure all on board are wearing PFDs. To work best, PFDs must be worn with all straps, zippers, and ties fastened. Tuck in any loose strap ends to avoid getting tangled. When you DON'T wear your PFD, the odds are against you. You're taking a chance with your life.



Most adults need only an extra seven to twelve pounds of bouyancy to keep their heads above water. A PFD can give that "extra lift", and it's made to keep you floating until help comes.

But a PFD is a personal flotation device and it's important to get the right one for you.



Your weight isn't the only factor in finding out how much "extra lift" you need in water. Body fat, lung size, clothing, and whether the water is rough or calm all play a part. Read the label on your PFD to be sure it's made for people your weight and size. Then in an emergency, don't panic. Relax, put your head back and let your PFD help you come out on top.

Children panic when they fall into the water suddenly. This causes them to move their arms and legs violently, making it hard to float safely in a PFD. A PFD will keep a child afloat, but may not keep a struggling child face-up. That's why it's important for children to know how to put on a PFD and to help them get used to wearing one in the water. A PFD must fit snugly

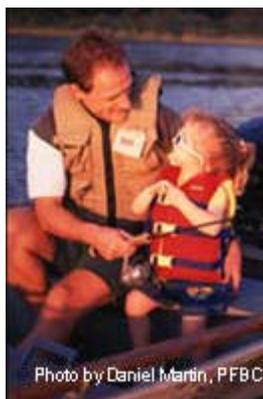


Photo by Daniel Martin, PFBC

on a child to work right. To check for a good fit, pick the child up by the shoulders of the PFD. If the PFD fits right, the child's chin and ears will not slip through. PFDs are not baby-sitters. Even though a child wears a PFD when on or near the water, an adult should always be there, too. Inflatable toys and rafts should not be used in place of PFDs.

Since May 1, 1995 persons on recreational vessels under sixteen feet in length are no longer allowed to count type IV **throwable** personal flotation devices as being in compliance with federal regulations that require a PFD for each person on board the vessel. The rules require that one wearable PFD be carried for each person on board. All recreational vessels fewer than sixteen feet, including canoes, are subject to the rule. Type IV PFDs are flotation devices that are not designed to be worn.

For further information on the new regulations covering PFDs, contact the Coast Guard Customer Infoline at (800) 368-5647.

## BOATING STATISTICS - 2000

### Recreational Boating Fatalities Are Decreasing!



\*The statistics are based on the average number of monthly fatalities for the period 1995 - 1999

\*\* 21 states and 0 territories reporting.

The statistical information on recreational boating accidents below was obtained from Coast Guard Commandant Publication P16754.10, - Boating Statistics - 1996 dated 12 March 1998. The publication is published by Commandant (G-OPB), U.S. Coast Guard, 2100 Second St. SW, Washington, DC 20593-0001.

- Eight out of 10 fatalities occurred on boats less than 26 feet in length. Over 73% of the victims drowned.
- While "Collision with Another Vessel" was one of the most frequently reported of boating accidents, it accounts for only one-tenth of all boating fatalities. In contrast, "Capsizing of a Vessel" is one of the least

- reported of accidents, but it accounts for nearly one-half of all fatalities.
- In 1996, drowning caused approximately 80% of all fatalities. More than one-half of all accidents resulting in fatalities involved open motorboats. Nearly all fatal accidents on rowboats, canoes/kayaks, and inflatable boats are drowning.
  - More fatalities involved boaters (operators and passengers) between the ages of 29-30 than any other age group.
  - Nearly 85% of all boating fatalities occur on boats where the operator had no formal boating instruction.
  - The majority of accidents are caused by the boat operator and not by mechanical or equipment failure or environmental causes. Carelessness and failure to maintain a proper lookout are the two primary causes of boating accidents.
- 65% of all U.S. Coast Guard Search and Rescue cases in 1996, e.g., approximately 26,000 cases, involved assistance provided to recreational vessels.

## RECREATIONAL BOAT MANUFACTURING STANDARDS

Under the authority of title 46 of the United States Code, the Coast Guard has established certain federal regulation that recreational boat builders must meet before selling their product. These regulations consist of both administrative requirements and Coast Guard Safety Standards.

The administrative requirements are intended to hold manufacturers responsible for their product. They cover defect notification, hull identification numbers, first purchaser lists and certification of compliance.

The safety standards are intended to eliminate unsafe construction practices and performance characteristics. These standards cover such areas as display of capacity information, safe loading, safe powering, basic flotation, level flotation, fuel systems, electrical systems ventilation, and start-in-gear protection for outboard motors. Commercial boats are not required to meet these safety standards. While a commercial boat operator may be able to substitute his experience for the increased safety provided by these standards, the recreational boater is often inexperienced and takes on an additional unnecessary risk in operating a vessel designed for commercial use. Accordingly, in order for a workboat to be exempt from these safety standards, the manufacturer must be able to verify to the Coast Guard that the boats are manufactured and sold truly for commercial use only.

- The boat must display a statement of the intended use. A placard or label plate with the phrase "commercial boat" or "for commercial use" is sufficient.
- All advertising and displays must prominently indicate that the boat was designed, constructed, and sold for commercial use only.
- On the bill of sale, the words "For Commercial Use Only" and the statement, "Commercial boats are not designed to comply with U. S. Coast Guard requirements for recreational boats" should be prominently displayed.

Anyone who knowingly sells a commercial boat to a person for their use as a pleasure boat violates federal regulations and is subject to civil penalties of up to \$2,000 for each violation.

## CAPACITY LABELS

**REQUIREMENTS FOR CAPACITY LABEL** – Monohull boats less than 20 feet, and built after October 31, 1972 must have a capacity label affixed. This is the responsibility of the manufacturer. Kayaks, sailboats, inflatables, and canoes are exempt from this requirement. While Federal Regulations do not prohibit the boat operator from exceeding these capacities, state law may prohibit it. Check with your state's boating authority.

**SAFE CARRIAGE FORMULA** – If your boat is not required to be equipped with a capacity plate, use this formula to determine the number of people that can be carried safely. NOTE: This formula is meant for good weather and is a general guideline that does not include equipment that is carried and will decrease the space available for people.  $PEOPLE = \frac{L \times W}{15}$

15

**MAXIMUM HORSEPOWER** – The maximum horsepower information listed on the capacity label is a guide for selecting an engine for a boat. It's not a violation of Federal Regulation to install or use a larger engine. Boaters should check state regulations for restrictions. They should also take a look at their insurance policy regarding horsepower.

**COMBINATION LABELS** – Manufacturers often combine the capacity requirements and horsepower information on the same label as the mandatory certification label. Boaters should also check state regulations.

## SPECIAL ANCHORAGES

An act of Congress of April 22, 1940 designated Special Anchorage areas throughout the United States. Vessels not more than 65 feet in length at anchor are not required to carry or exhibit anchorage lights. Special Anchorage's are marked on charts and designated as special anchorages. A list of all designated Special Anchorage's can be found in

33 Code of Federal Regulations Part 109-110 or the Coast Pilot for the area in question.

The cost of materials and textbooks is usually the only cost involved.

**U.S. COAST GUARD AUXILIARY**

The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary is a volunteer non-military organization established by congress in 1939 to promote safety in recreational boating in the United States. Its approximately 35,000 Members are experienced boaters, amateur radio operators, or licensed aircraft pilots. Auxiliarists' boats must be equipped and maintained to meet high standards of safety, which exceed the requirements of federal law for recreational vessels. Auxiliarists' take pride in the fact that they are known for the promotion of safe boating by setting a good example. To accomplish its goals the Auxiliary carries out three basic programs:



**OPERATIONS:** To assist the U.S. Coast Guard, members of the Auxiliary engage in rescue and assistance missions, patrol regattas and marine events, inspect private aids to navigation, and add a large measure of safety to the nation's waterways. Many of these operations are performed in conjunction with regular Coast Guard units.



**PUBLIC EDUCATION:** The Auxiliary offers a variety of boating safety courses, each tailored to a specific need. There are courses for sailors and for power boaters (both novice and expert). Courses are taught by experienced auxiliarists using slides, movies and demonstrations. The multi-lesson "Sailing and Seamanship" and the "Boating Skills and Seamanship" courses cover basic knowledge of Aids to Navigation, Rules of the Road, Boat Handling, Legal Requirements, Marine Engines, Marlinspike Seamanship, Weather, Communications, Locks and Dams, and more. Boaters are also offered a multi-lesson "Advanced Coastal Navigation" course. Youngsters can enjoy the "Water and Kids" safety presentation in their classrooms before summer vacation.



**VESSEL SAFETY CHECKS**



The Vessel Safety Check program helps to achieve voluntary compliance with federal and state recreational boating safety laws, particularly regarding the carriage of safety equipment. It also raises boaters' awareness of safety

issues through one-on-one contact by volunteer vessel examiners who educate boaters through direct, face-to-face boating-safety information exchanges. If your boat meets VSC requirements, a decal is awarded and is your assurance that your boat is properly equipped for safety and fun on the water. If your boat does not pass the examination, the owner is advised of the deficiencies for corrective action. No report is made to any law enforcement agency. See the end of this chapter (page 13) for a sample copy of the Vessel Safety Checklist.

Anyone interested in these programs is encouraged to apply for membership in the Auxiliary. For additional information please contact the nearest Coast Guard unit, Auxiliary unit, or write to:

Commandant (G-NAB-1)  
U.S. Coast Guard  
2100 Second St. SW  
Washington, DC 20593-0001  
Or call the Coast Guard Hotline at: **(800) 368-5647**

**Display of Numbers:** The boat's registration number must be permanently attached to each side of the forward half of the boat. They must be plain, vertical, block characters, 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 tax sticker according to State policy.

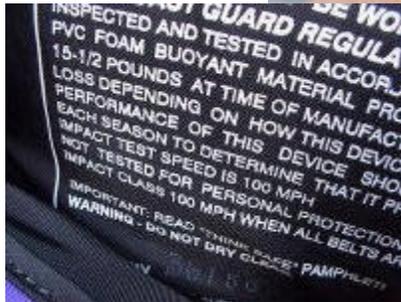


**Registration / Documentation:** Registration or



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. To be documented a boat must be 5 net tons or greater.

**Personal Flotation Devices (PFD):** Acceptable PFDs (also known as Life Jackets) must be U.S. Coast Guard approved, in good serviceable condition, and of suitable size for the each person on the boat. Children must have properly fitted PFDs designed for children. Wearable PFDs shall be "readily



accessible." Throwable devices shall be "immediately available." PFDs shall NOT be stored in unopened plastic packaging. For Personal

Watercraft riders, the PFD must be worn and indicate an impact rating. Boats 16 Feet or longer, must also have one Type IV.

**Visual Distress Signals (VDS):** All recreational boats used on coastal waters or the Great Lakes are required to carry a minimum of three Coast Guard approved (current dated) day and night visual distress signals. Some signals (e.g. red flares) can serve for both day and night.



Boats operating on inland waters must have some means of making a suitable day and night distress signal. The number and type of Visual Distress Signals is best judged by considering conditions under which the boat will be operating. Alternatives to pyrotechnic devices (flares) include:

**Night**

- Strobe light
- Flashlight
- Lantern

**Day**

- Signal mirror
- Red or orange flags
- Hand signals

**Fire Extinguishers:** Fire extinguishers are required if one of the following conditions exists: (1) Inboard engine(s); (2) Closed compartments that store portable fuel tanks; (3) Double bottom hulls not completely sealed or not completely filled with flotation materials (4) Closed living space (5) Closed stowage compartments that contain flammable materials or (6) Permanently installed fuel tanks NOTE: Fire extinguishers must be readily accessible and verified as serviceable.



**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 natural 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.

**Backfire Flame Control:** All gasoline powered inboard/outboard or inboard motorboats must be equipped with an approved backfire flame control device.



**Sound Producing Devices / Bell:** To comply with Navigation Rules and for distress signaling purposes boats must carry a sound producing



all

device (whistle, horn, siren, etc.) capable of a 4-second blast audible for 1/2 mile. Boats larger than 39.4 ft. are also required to have a bell (see Navigation Rules.)

**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 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.

**Pollution Placard:** Boats 26 feet and over with a machinery compartment must display an oily waste "pollution" placard. (See example at the end of section F Environmental Protection)

**MARPOL Trash Placard:**

Boats 26 feet and over in length must display a "MARPOL" trash placard. Boats 40 feet and over must also display a written trash disposal plan. (See example at the end of section F Environmental Protection)

**Marine Sanitation Devices:** Any installed toilet must be a Coast Guard approved device. Overboard discharge outlets must be capable of being sealed. (See example at the end of section F Environmental Protection)

**Navigation Rules:** Boats 39.4 feet and over must have on board a current copy of the Navigation Rules



**State and/ or 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. Contact your local marine law enforcement agency. State Boating Regulations and Requirements

To access up to date information on state requirements access one or both of the following sites. While we cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information presented, the data presented will answer many questions. For a definitive answer to individual state requirements boaters should check with the boating law agency in the state at issue.

The [BoatUS](http://BoatUS) site offers information about [State Boating Regulations](#) and [State Education Requirements](#) that offers an up to date summary of boating regulations in your state.

The U. S. Coast Guard Office of Boating Safety site can be reached at [www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org). On the home page click on "Regulations and Publications." There you will find a "[Reference Guide to State Boating Laws](#)" available as a PDF download. This guide is periodic publication supplied by NASBLA and as such may not be completely up to date. If in doubt as to a specific reference, contact the state boating law agency in question.

**Overall Vessel 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. Safe Electrical and Fuel Systems:** The electrical system - Must be protected by fuses or manual reset 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 terminals covered to prevent accidental arcing. If installed, self-circling or kill switch mechanism must be in proper working order. All PWCs require an operating self-circling or kill switch mechanism.



**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 ventilated.

**c. Safe Galley and Heating Systems:** System and fuel tanks must be properly secured with no flammable materials nearby.

### U.S. POWER SQUADRON



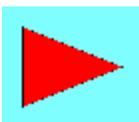
In 1914 the U.S. Power Squadron (USPS) was established as a private, non-profit, non-government and non-military organization to promote safe boating, education of members and participation in civic programs. The educational program available through the USPS cover subjects such as Seamanship, Piloting, Plotting and Position Finding, Celestial Navigation, Cruise Planning, Engine Maintenance and Marine Electronics. The courses are offered as a public service to adults and teenagers in over 500 local areas nationwide and there is a nominal fee to cover costs, including a student workbook, chart and other materials.

For more information on boating classes in your area, or about the U.S. Power Squadron, call (800) 336-BOAT.

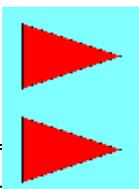
### EXPLANATION OF VISUAL DISPLAYS

While the National Weather Service no longer supports the visual display system, many private organizations, and some harbor masters may still display signals relating to the weather. With the advent of Marine Weather Radio and the comparative small cost for receivers, the visual display system is rapidly disappearing. Four Coast Guard Stations, Station Chatham on Cape Cod, Station Shinnecock, Station Jones Beach and Group Moriches on Long Island. The following explanation of visual signals is carried here to assist those mariners living in areas where signals are still displayed.

**SMALL CRAFT ADVISORY:** One RED pennant displayed by day and a RED light above WHITE light at night, to alert mariners to sustained (more than two hours) weather or sea conditions, either present or forecast that might be hazardous to small boats. Mariners learning of a Small Craft Advisory are urged to determine immediately the reason by tuning their radios to the latest marine broadcasts. Any decision as to the degree of hazard will be the boaters' responsibility, based on his experience and size and type of boat. The threshold conditions for the Small Craft Advisory are usually 18 knots of wind (less than 18 knots in some dangerous water) or hazardous wave conditions.

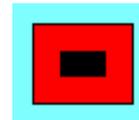


**GALE WARNINGS:** Two RED pennants displayed by day and a WHITE light above a RED light at night indicate that

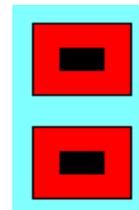


winds within the range of 34 to 47 knots are forecast for the area.

**STORM WARNING:** A single square RED flag with a BLACK center displayed during daytime and two RED lights at night to indicate that winds of 48 to 63 knots, are forecast for the area. However, if the winds are associated with a tropical cyclone (hurricane) the STORM WARNING display indicates that winds within the range of 48 to 63 knots are forecast.



**HURRICANE WARNING:** Displayed only in connection with a tropical cyclone (hurricane). Two square RED flags with BLACK centers are displayed by day and a WHITE light between two RED lights at night to indicate that winds of 64 knots and above are forecast for the area.



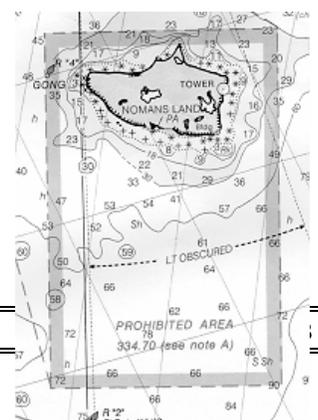
**NOTE: A HURRICANE WATCH** is an announcement issued by the National Weather Service via press and radio and television broadcast whenever a tropical storm or hurricane becomes a threat to a coastal area.

The **HURRICANE WATCH** announcement is not a warning, rather it indicates that the hurricane is near enough that everyone in the area covered by the WATCH should listen to their radios for subsequent advisories and be ready to take precautionary action in case hurricane warning are issued.

**NOTE: A SPECIAL MARINE WARNING** is issued whenever a severe local storm or strong wind of brief duration is imminent and is not covered by existing warnings or advisories. No visual displays will be used in connection with the **SPECIAL MARINE WARNING**; boaters will be able to receive these special warnings by keeping tuned to a NOAA VHF-FM station or to Coast Guard and commercial radio stations that transmit marine weather information.

### FIRING DANGER AREAS

Firing and bombing practice exercises take place occasionally or regularly in numerous areas established for those purposes along the coasts of practically all maritime countries. In view of the difficulty in keeping

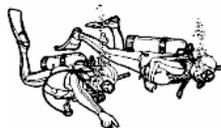


these areas up to date on the charts, and since the responsibility to avoid accidents rests with the authorities using the areas for firing and/or bombing practice, these areas will not as a rule be shown on NIMA charts. National Ocean Service Charts show firing and bombing practice areas defined by Code of Federal Regulations (Title 33, Part 204) in United States waters.

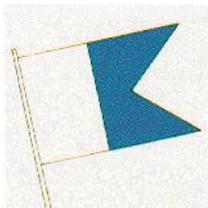
Any permanent aid to navigation that may be established to mark a danger area, any target, fixed or floating, that may constitute a danger to navigation, will be shown on the appropriate charts. Warning signals, usually consisting of red flags or red lights, are customarily displayed before and during the practice, but the absence of such warnings cannot be accepted as evidence that a practice area does not exist. Vessels should be on the lookout for local warnings and signals, and should whenever possible, avoid passing through an area in which practice is in progress, but if compelled to do so should endeavor to clear it at the earliest possible moment.

### DIVER FLAG RULE CLARIFICATION

There has been some confusion over the status of the traditional sports divers' flag because of a change to the U. S. Inland Navigation Rules concerning the use of one-meter high rigid replica of the International Code Flag Alpha (a blue and white flag).



The **Alpha flag** is to be flown on small vessels engaged in diving operations whenever these vessels are restricted in their ability to maneuver if divers are attached to the vessel. But in sports diving, where divers are usually free swimming, the alpha flag does not have to be shown and the Coast Guard encourages the continued use of the traditional sports diver flag.



The **Sport Diver flag** is an unofficial signal that, through custom, has come to be used to protect the diver in the water. It is the responsibility of the operator of a diving vessel to determine if his craft's movements are restricted. To be most effective, the sport diver flag should be exhibited on a float in the water to mark the approximate location of the diver.



### SPONSORS OF MARINE EVENTS

An application for approval of Marine Events is required in cases where the nature, circumstances, or location of the event will introduce extra or unusual hazards to the safety of life on the navigable waters of the United States. Examples of conditions which require Coast Guard approval include, but are not limited to: an inherently hazardous competition, the customary presence of commercial or pleasure craft in the area, any obstruction of navigable channels which may reasonably be expected to result, and the expected accumulation of spectator craft.

The Coast Guard, First District office, must receive the application at least thirty days prior to the event in order for necessary provisions to be made to serve the sponsor and the boating public. Even though regulations require only 30 days notice, early receipt of your request, especially during peak periods when many must be processed, will assure that your event can receive early attention with sufficient notice to mariners beforehand. Early notice also will provide adequate time to resolve any problems before timing becomes critical. Please pass this word to any interests whom you feel may be contemplating a special marine event. Your cooperation is appreciated.

An approval does not imply endorsement of the activity or guarantee that it will be accident free. By approving an event the Coast Guard does not assume responsibility for the safety of participants. The sponsoring organization is responsible for the safe conduct of the event.

This includes but is not limited to, adequate preparations such as Coast Guard approval, instructions to and qualifications of participants, safety equipment inspections, rescue and first aid facilities, control of activities, and removal of obstructions or hazards to navigation as applicable to the event. Measures to preclude interference with the normal flow of commercial and recreational traffic are also required unless the Coast Guard District Commander issues special local regulations for this purpose.

### DANGER FROM SUBMARINE CABLES AND PIPELINES

Submarine cables or pipelines pass beneath various navigable waterways throughout the world. Installation of new submarine cables and pipelines may be reported in the Notice to Mariners; their locations may or may not be charted. Where feasible, warning signs are often erected to warn the mariners of their existence.

In view of the serious consequences resulting from damage to submarine cables and pipelines, vessel operators should take special care when anchoring, fishing or engaging in

underwater operations near areas where these cables or pipelines may exist or have been reported to exist.

Certain cables carry high voltages; many pipelines carry natural gas under high pressure or petroleum products. Electrocutation, fire or explosion with injury or loss of life or a serious pollution incident could occur if they are penetrated.

Vessels fouling a submarine cable or pipeline should attempt to clear it without undue strain. Anchors or gear that cannot be cleared should be slipped; no attempt should be made to cut a cable or pipeline.

### **POSSIBLE DANGER FROM UNLABELED DRUMS**

With the many exotic chemicals being transported in drums as deck cargo, increasingly more reports are received of loss overboard of these potentially dangerous containers. Even empty drums may contain residues that are extremely hazardous to touch or smell and a few vapors may be explosive.

When coming upon derelict drums, whether afloat or from the sea bottom, this danger should be considered. Identifying labels will give adequate warning, but containers are more likely to be found with caution labels washed off. Avoid direct contact and notify U. S. Coast Guard of any sightings in U. S. coastal waters (24 HOUR TOLL FREE reporting number 1-800-424-8802), or government authorities of the nearest port state if sighting

### **KNOWLEDGE OF VESSEL HEIGHT**

All mariners (power and sail) are responsible for knowing the actual vertical clearance required for their vessels and for checking the clearance gauges at movable bridges before requesting an opening. A vessel's required vertical clearance is measured from the waterline to the highest structural members excluding appurtenances non-essential to navigation. The bridge clearance gauge is required to identify the available clearance from the water to the low steel of the bridge. This is usually at the fender line. Bridges with a haunch provide additional clearance.

### **LOWERING OF EQUIPMENT NONESSENTIAL TO NAVIGATION**

**MARINERS ARE ADVISED:** No vessel owner or operator shall signal a drawbridge to open for any non-structural vessel appurtenance which is not essential to navigation or which is easily lowered (e.g. appurtenance not essential to navigation include but not limited to radio, television and

loran antennas, collapsible bimini tops, booms and fishing outriggers). This regulation is contained in Title 33 of the Code of Federal Regulations, section 117.11. Whoever violates this rule shall be liable to civil penalty of not more than \$1000.00.

### **BRIDGE SIGNAL**

Except were otherwise provided, the sound signal to request a bridge opening is one prolonged blast (4-6 sec) followed by a short blast (1 sec), of a horn, whistle, megaphone hailer or other device capable of producing a sound loud enough to be heard by the bridge tender. The draw tender is required to acknowledge each request within 30 seconds. Bridges equipped with radiotelephones are required to post signs indicating both the calling and the working frequency. Generally, the calling frequency for most bridges is channel 16; channel 13 is the working frequency. However, if radio contact cannot be made or maintained, the sound signals should be used.

### **BRIDGE OUTAGES AND CLOSURES**

#### **Scheduled bridge closures**

Bridge owners are required to obtain approval from the Coast Guard Bridge Administration Office for all bridge closures for repair and maintenance. Approved closures are published in the weekly Local Notice to Mariners and when necessary by Safety Marine Information Broadcast. The Bridge Administration Office should be contacted regarding all closures at **(212) 668-7165**, Monday through Friday, 7am to 4pm, daily. Emergencies during off-hours should be reported to your local Coast Guard station.

#### **Emergency Bridge Closures**

When a bridge is rendered inoperable because of damage to the structure or vital unscheduled repairs, notice is given to the Captain of the Port and repairs are to be performed with all due speed in order to return the draw to operation as soon as possible. Closures of this nature are made by Broadcast Notice to Mariners.

### **GENERAL DUTIES OF BRIDGE OWNERS AND TENDERS**

Drawbridge owners and tenders are required to operate bridges in accordance with Drawbridge Operation Regulations listed under 33 CFR Part 117, Subpart A – General Requirements. Drawbridges are required to open promptly and fully for the passage of vessels after a request to open is given, except when the Coast Guard has

approved special operating regulations governing the bridge.

Special Operating Regulations for drawbridges are listed under 33 CFR Part 117, Subpart B – Special Requirements. Bridges authorized to operate under special operating Failure to comply with drawbridge operation regulations by bridge owners or bridge tenders may make them liable for civil penalties of up to \$1100.00 per violation for each day the violation exists. Mariners are requested to write to:

Commander (obr)  
First Coast Guard District  
Battery Park Building  
New York, NY 01004-5073

Or by calling (212) 668-7165, Monday through Friday 7am to 4pm, daily.

**Report the following information:**

- Name, address and telephone number of complainant.
- Name and description of vessel and vessel radio call sign.
- Waterway, name and location of the bridge (and mileage above the mouth, if known).
- Name, address and telephone number of vessel operator/owner.
- Describe the chronology of the delay.
- Your method and time of signal(s) to bridge for an opening.
- Type and time of bridge response.
- Other vessels waiting.
- Time bridge opened/delay or problems that resulted.

The Coast Guard will make appropriate contacts to identify the problem and then advise the delayed vessel of the situation including when he can expect a bridge opening if it can be obtained. The mariner should notify the Coast Guard if his vessel will be in any danger due to the delay, and what assistance, if any is needed.

regulations are required to post signs both up and down the waterway, plainly visible to the operators of vessels approaching the bridge summarizing the operating regulations. If an advance notice is required to open a drawbridge, the telephone number of the person to be notified must also be indicated.

is near any foreign shores.

## FLOAT PLAN

The Coast Guard does not provide float plan services but encourages you to leave a sailing plan with friends or relatives to whom you can report your safe arrival. Should your friends or relative fail to receive information on your arrival when due or within a reasonable time thereafter, they should notify the nearest Coast Guard activity.

A FLOAT PLAN should include the following information at a minimum (a **FLOAT PLAN** is supplied in the back of this section, section B page 12).

- The VESSEL NAME including registration numbers.
- A VESSEL DISCRIPTION, (type, color, length...)
- POINT of DEPARTURE (harbor/marina).
- ROUTE to be taken.
- DESTINATION.
- ESTIMATED TIME of ARRIVAL (ETA).
- NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD.
- SAFETY EQUIPMENT ABOARD.
- COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT, including radio frequencies to be monitored and a cellular number.

If any major part of your float plan changes, for example you change routes or stop along the way, you should contact your representatives ashore and update the float plan.

## FLOAT PLAN

Complete this before going boating and leave it with a reliable person who can be depended upon to notify the Coast guard or other rescue organization, should you not return as scheduled. Do not file this plan with the Coast Guard.

1. Name of the person operating the vessel and telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Description of the boat:

Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_ Trim: \_\_\_\_\_

Registration: \_\_\_\_\_ Length: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Vessel: \_\_\_\_\_

Make: \_\_\_\_\_

Other information about the Vessel: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Engine type: \_\_\_\_\_ Horsepower: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Number of Engines: \_\_\_\_\_ Fuel Capacity: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Survival Equipment: (circle as appropriate)

Life Jackets (number \_\_\_\_\_)

Flares

Signal Mirror

Smoke Signals

Flashlight

Extra Food

Paddles

Anchor

Drinking Water

Raft or Dingy

EPIRB

Sun Screen

Sun Glasses

Warm Clothes

Hand Compass

Survival Suit

6. Radio: YES/NO Type: VHF-FM / HF-AM / CB Freq: \_\_\_\_\_

Cellular Phone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

6. Automobile or Truck Information:

License Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Make: \_\_\_\_\_ Model: \_\_\_\_\_

Color: \_\_\_\_\_ Trailer License Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Where is it Parked: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Number of persons on board vessel: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Address & Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_

e. \_\_\_\_\_

9. Trip Information:

Leaving At: \_\_\_\_\_ From: \_\_\_\_\_

Going To: \_\_\_\_\_ By Route: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected Return or Arrival Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Call the Coast Guard if not by: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Numbers: ( ) - \_\_\_\_\_

Coast Guard (800) 848-3942 ext. 8555



### 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.



|  |   |
|--|---|
| Owner / Operator has attended a CGAUX, USPS, State or [ ] Boating Safety Class: Yes [ ] No [ ] | VSC Decal: Awarded [ ] not Awarded [ ]<br>Number: _____ |
| Replaced decal was: Last Year [ ] Outdated [ ] First time [ ]                                  | Date of VSC: [ ]  |
| Owner/Operator Name: _____   | Registration or Doc. No. _____                          |

**VESSEL INFORMATION:**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Location of VSC - County: _____ State: _____          | HIN: _____                                 |
| Length <16 [ ] 16-25 [ ] 26-39 [ ] 40-65 [ ] > 65 [ ] | Area of Operations: Inland [ ] Coastal [ ] |
| Powered by: Gas [ ] Diesel [ ] Sail [ ] Other [ ]     | Type: PWC [ ] Open [ ] Cabin [ ] Other [ ] |

**VESSEL SAFETY CHECK DECAL REQUIREMENTS**

**RECOMMENDED AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

| Item  | Yes | No | NA | Item  | Yes | No | NA |
|---|-----|----|----|---|-----|----|----|
| 1. Display of Numbers                           |     |    |    | <b>(While encouraged, items below are not VSC requirements)</b> |     |    |    |
| 2. Registration / Documentation                 |     |    |    | I. Marine Radio   |     |    |    |
| 3. Personal Flotation Devices (PFD)             |     |    |    | II. Dewatering Device & Backup                                  |     |    |    |
| 4. Visual Distress Signals (VDS)                |     |    |    | III. Mounted Fire Extinguishers                                 |     |    |    |
| 5. Fire Extinguishers                           |     |    |    | IV. Anchor & Line for Area                                      |     |    |    |
| 6. Ventilation                                  |     |    |    | V. First Aid and PIW Kits (**over)                              |     |    |    |
| 7. Backfire Flame Control                       |     |    |    | VI. Inland Visual Distress Signals                              |     |    |    |
| 8. Sound Producing Devices / Bell               |     |    |    | VII. Capacity / Cert. of Compliance                             |     |    |    |
| 9. Navigation Lights                            |     |    |    | VIII. Discussion Items: <b>as applies</b>                       |     |    |    |
| 10. Pollution Placard                           |     |    |    | a. Accident Reporting / Owner Responsibility                    |     |    |    |
| 11. MARPOL Trash Placard                        |     |    |    | b. Offshore Operations  |     |    |    |
| 12. Marine Sanitation Devices                   |     |    |    | c. Nautical Charts / Navigation Aids                            |     |    |    |
| 13. Navigation Rules                            |     |    |    | d. Survival Tips / First Aid                                    |     |    |    |
| 14. State and/ or Local Requirements            |     |    |    | e. Fueling / Fuel Management                                    |     |    |    |
| 15. Overall Vessel Condition: <b>as applies</b> |     |    |    | f. Float Plan / Weather & Sea Conditions                        |     |    |    |
| a. Deck free of hazards / clean Bilge           |     |    |    | g. Insurance Considerations                                     |     |    |    |
| b. Electrical / Fuel Systems                    |     |    |    | h. Boating Check List   |     |    |    |
| c. Galley / Heating Systems                     |     |    |    | i. Safe Boating Classes   |     |    |    |

I certify that I have personally examined this vessel and find it meets the above requirements at the time of this 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 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 these requirements.*

**SAFE BOATING.**

ANSC 7012 - U.S.C.G. AUX FORM 204 (7-2000) PREVIOUS EDITION (1-2000) MAY BE USED