



**Marine Safety Information Bulletin 11-009, October 6, 2011**

**PASSENGER ACCOUNTABILITY ON INSPECTED SMALL PASSENGER VESSELS  
CONDUCTING DIVE OPERATIONS**

This bulletin provides information regarding passenger accountability on small passenger vessels in the Miami Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection's (OCMI) Zone. The OCMI's intent is to ensure the highest standards of maritime safety for the public at large.

As per 46 CFR 185.504, the master of a vessel "shall keep a correct, written count of all passengers that embark on or disembark from the vessel." Before the vessel departs on its voyage, the passenger count has to be "communicated verbally or in writing and available ashore at the vessel's normal berthing location with a representative of the owner or a managing operator of the vessel."

The Miami OCMI expects that small passenger vessels that act as platforms for diving operations take all reasonable and prudent actions to ensure that every passenger is on board and accounted for before the vessel departs each dive area. It is the responsibility of each master, following the policies set forth by the owner, to ensure the safety of his or her passengers and crew. To avoid the potential for double counting passengers it is a good idea for the master to keep a passenger roster with last names and, if needed, first names to differentiate and better account for all personnel. The roster should be verbally checked with passengers to confirm head count upon initial boarding, upon all pickups, and upon return to the dock and it is strongly recommended this is verified by a second employee. The entire crew is responsible for the safety of their passengers, but it is the vessel master's ultimate responsibility to ensure that everyone is safely accounted for.

Should a diver or divers not resurface from a dive, the master shall immediately notify the Coast Guard and shall not depart the area until relieved by a Coast Guard asset on scene.

**If the vessel master does not immediately notify the Coast Guard of missing divers or does not adequately account for all personnel who were on a vessel—passenger or otherwise—he or she runs the risk of being found negligent in their actions. This may result in action being taken against the vessel master's Coast Guard issued license.**

Please address questions and or comments to the Sector Miami's Investigations Division at (305) 535-8750.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C.P. Scraba".

C/P. Scraba

Captain, U.S. Coast Guard  
Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection