



THE FIELD SOBRIETY TESTS AND DOCUMENTATION

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Boating Under the Influence (BUI) is a serious threat to safety on our waterways. One of the critical pieces of information from any suspected BUI violation is the Field Sobriety Battery Test (FST) worksheet. As Hearing Officers we rely on this document to provide the necessary reflection of a mariner's performance and the boarding officer's observations. Recently we have been seeing an alarming number of discrepancies with FST worksheets that potentially could lead to a case file's dismissal or cause it to be returned for correction.

First and foremost, the copies need to be legible and complete. A bad photo copy does not get better with age. We have had numerous occasions where critical observation information was cut off, the signature block was cut off or the quality of the copy was so poor that we were unable to read the information. In addition some cases arrive with the front or back page missing.

Another disturbing trend is missing information from the worksheet. Remember all items are on the FST worksheet for a purpose. Initial observations are key factors in determining reasonable cause to complete the FSTs and the chemical test. Secondly, when completing the chemical test portion, the entire signature block must be filled out. The information must include machine serial number, calibration date, BWI qualification date for the boarding officer and the witness signature along with the actual BAC reading. In the case of a refusal, a witness signature is still necessary.

Attention to these critical details prior to submitting the case for adjudication` will assist us in the timely and successful processing of cases and ensure mariners' are provided accurate documentation upon which to exercise their opportunity to comment.