

SECTION III - PRIVATE AIDS TO NAVIGATION (PATONs)

INTRODUCTION:

Another major responsibility of the Auxiliary ATON/CU Program is the VERIFICATION of the STATUS of PATONs. Again, the total number of PATONs is about the same as the total number of ATONs. As such, it is beyond the capability of the Coast Guard to inspect some 49,000 ATONs and 47,000 PATONs. It therefore falls to the members of the Auxiliary to assist the Coast Guard in the verification of the majority of PATONs.

OBJECTIVE:

1. To acquire a general knowledge of the types and characteristics of PATONs, and the responsibilities of the Auxiliary in the verification of PATONs.
2. To become familiar with the classes of PATONs.
3. To become familiar with the procedures used in the verification of PATONs.

INFORMATION:

PATON is the term that describes all marine aids to navigation established and operated in navigable waters of the U.S. other than those operated by the Federal Government or those operated in State waters as PATONs. PATONs like ATONs are Short Range Aids to Navigation. Examples of the types of PATONs are: markings for private channels such as marinas, residential development or industrial sites, structures and wrecks, e.g., Buoys, Lights, Daybeacons, Ranges, Fog Signals. PATONs have the same shape, color, numbering and light characteristics as ATONs, but do not have to be the same size. PATONs are divided into three classes as follows:

- CLASS I Aids to navigation on marine structures, to include bridges or other works which the owners are legally obligated to establish, maintain and operate as prescribed by the Coast Guard.
- CLASS II Aids to navigation exclusive of Class I, located in waters used by general navigation.
- CLASS III Aids to navigation exclusive of Class I and Class II, located in waters not ordinarily used by general navigation.

The Auxiliary periodically VERIFIES the status of Class II and Class III PATONs at the discretion of the District Commander (oan). In addition, when requested by the Coast Guard, the Auxiliary "CHECKS" (VERIFIES) Class I PATONs (refer to notes).

To assist the Coast Guard in this important AN operation, it is essential that participating

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Auxiliary members have appropriate training and sufficient practice in ATON/CU program activities. The respective Coast Guard Districts have an active PATON VERIFICATION PROGRAM which qualifies Auxiliary members as an "Aid Verifier" (AV). The "AV" qualification is entered into the AUXMIS database for each qualified Auxiliary member. Such qualified AVs may receive orders for PATON verification activities. AV qualification is not required for Auxiliary member participation in CU activities, or to report an AN (ATON/PATON) discrepancy.

The level of effort involved in PATON verification is determined by the type and charted position of the aid. The position of a fixed aid (beacon) seldom changes between periodic inspections. However, the position of a floating aid (buoy) could change significantly over time. Such circumstances regarding floating aids demand a more definitive position verification with more frequency than that required for fixed aids.

NOTE: Class I aids are normally INSPECTED by Coast Guard personnel. Notwithstanding, Class I PATONs can be CHECKED (VERIFIED) by AV certified Auxiliary members, when so designated and authorized by the District Commander (oan). Moreover, as with ATONs, as a matter of routine or otherwise activities, Auxiliary members should report any DISCREPANCIES that are observed on PATONs (Class I, Class II and Class III).

NOTE: The AV training programs vary among the Districts depending on the complexity of the PATONs, therein. For example, in certain geographical areas of the country buoys must be removed during winter months and replaced in the spring. Such situations require Auxiliary members to be proficient in the verification of the position of such PATONs.

NOTE: It is important to know that Auxiliary members do not tie to, climb aboard, repair or make adjustments to PATONs. Moreover, Auxiliary members are not authorized to contact or to offer suggestions or corrective action, or other instructions to the owners of PATONs. However, it is the responsibility of Auxiliary members to report the observation of non-standard conditions on PATONs to the representative Coast Guard unit.

The reporting of PATONs that have been "VERIFIED" and/or found with DISCREPANCIES is accomplished via the CG-5474 form. The VERIFICATION/DISCREPANCY block in the upper right hand corner of the form is marked accordingly. The specific procedures for filling out the CG-5474 and its distribution may vary among the Coast Guard Districts. A single CG-5474 will suffice for reporting "VERIFIED" PATONs that are found to be "**watching properly**." Individual CG-5474s are required for reporting PATONs that are found with DISCREPANCIES. (Refer to Section XII.)

Some Coast Guard Districts have adopted a system of individual printouts for each PATON from the District Commander (oan) "ATONIS" database which provides multi-copy printouts. (Refer to Section I.)

Auxiliary members and their units submitting CG-5474 reports are awarded points, refer to Section XII.