# *Memorandum of Agreement* (MOA)

Between

The ***United States Coast Guard Auxiliary*** (USCGAUX) and

The ***United States Power Squadrons*** ® (USPS)

For

Participation of USPS

In the ***Vessel Safety Check Program*** (VSCP)

January 15, 2000

# The *Vessel Safety Check Program* (VSCP)

## Introduction

This *Memorandum of Agreement* (MOA) defines and describes the role and duties of the *United States Coast Guard Auxiliary* (USCGAUX) and the *United States Power Squadrons* ® (USPS) with respect to the USPS' participation in the *Vessel Safety Check Program* (VSCP).

## Background

The USCGAUX is the volunteer civilian component of the United States Coast Guard (USCG). It was authorized by Congress and operates as a non-profit organization dedicated to safety and preservation of the maritime environment.

The USCGAUX developed the Courtesy Motorboat Examination Program in 1947 to provide recreational boaters an advisory review of their vessel's legally required equipment and additional recommended equipment essential to safe boating. It also served to provide one-on-one education of recreational boaters regarding the use of safety equipment, legal requirements and regulations, etc. The program evolved with the addition of sailboats and the name was changed to *Courtesy Marine Examination* (CME). Recently, *personal watercraft* (PWC) were added to the population of eligible vessels and the name has been changed to the *Vessel Safety Check* (VSC). One of the key elements in this program is the administration of *Vessel Safety Check Program* (VSCP) for recreational boaters.

In concert with other outreach efforts in recreational boating safety education, the VSCP provides significant benefits to recreational boaters. Missing, damaged, and/or malfunctioning safety equipment for recreational vessels can be identified at the dock or on land and installed, replaced, or fixed to ensure ready availability in a potential emergency. Boaters are shown how to use this equipment properly and advised of the benefits of other safety equipment. A well-informed and mentally prepared boater is less likely to be involved in an accident and better able to cope with one should it occur. A successful VSC contributes to the peace of mind of the operator, family members, and guests. The decal attesting to successful completion of the VSC is the sign of a responsible boater.

The USCG and USCGAUX are interested in increasing the coverage of this program by increasing the number of persons trained to provide VSCs (*vessel examiners* (VEs)). Having originated this program and having acquired, since 1947, the requisite experience and administrative skills, the USCGAUX is in an excellent position to oversee its expansion and enhancement. In recognition of these facts, the USCG and USCGAUX signed a *Memorandum of Understanding* (MOU) in 1999 that established the USCGAUX as the National Director for the VSCP and as the Executive Agent for the USCG in the overall operation and administration of the program.

One the principal duties of the USCGAUX is the identification of other organizations that might participate directly in the VSCP as authorized providers and to develop and execute MOAs detailing policies to effectively integrate these new providers into the VSCP.

The USPS is a volunteer organization comprised of skilled, active, and safety-conscious boaters who are also dedicated to recreational boating safety. USPS members have developed and taught successful and well-regarded boating safety courses to their members and the recreational boating public. USPS members share many similarities with the members of the USCGAUX. All of its members are graduates of boating safety courses and most have undertaken specialized training in navigation, seamanship, and other relevant courses. Provided requisite training, USPS members will be able to augment the ranks of present USCGAUX VEs and contribute to the growth of this worthwhile program.

USPS leadership has expressed a keen interest in broadening the reach of their activities and in working with the USCGAUX and the USCG on the VSCP. USPS acknowledges the potential benefits of this program and the absolute need to ensure program integrity. In recognition of their qualifications, interests, and commitment to program integrity, the USCGAUX fully supports and endorses the participation of the USPS in the VSCP.

This MOA has been developed to establish a Joint VSCP Steering Council (provide authorization for the establishment of similar organizations at a regional level) and identify the duties and responsibilities of USCGAUX and USPS in this program.

## Establishment of a National VSCP Steering Council

USCGAUX and USPS agree to establish a National VSCP Steering Council composed of the USCGAUX National Director, VSCP, as Chair, representatives of the USPS, USCG (G-OPB), along with an organizational representative of other authorized providers. To ensure maximum uniformity and consistency of the VSCP and the vessel checks across the venues of all authorized providers, this council will be responsible to the USCG and USCGAUX for the overall administration and conduct of the VSCP, external marketing to the boating public, actions to procure necessary funding support, coordination of activities under the program, resolution of any issues that arise, and ensuring a smooth working relationship among all VSC providers. To facilitate expeditious resolution of issues, Auxiliary and USPS Districts, along with the comparable organization of any other authorized providers within the Auxiliary District/Region boundaries, will establish joint District/Region VSCP Steering Committee to accomplish day-to-day management of the VSCP in their District/Region in accordance with the policies and procedures defined by the National VSCP Steering Council. The Auxiliary District Commodore will be responsible for the designation of the Chair and the establishment of the District/Region VSCP Steering Committee. Subsidiary Auxiliary, USPS, and other authorized providers of organizational units below

the District/Region level will refer VSCP issues to their respective steering committee for resolution.

## Funding

USCGAUX has only very limited internal funds available to support this program. Under its MOU with USCG, USCGAUX has the responsibility (working with G-OPB [Office of Boating Safety] and G-OCX [Office of the Auxiliary]) to prepare estimates of the budget required to carry out the national VSCP, including the resources required to support the efforts of other authorized providers.

USCGAUX has received grant support for the development of initial training materials and decals and will provide these to USPS for distribution to its members. However, additional sources of funds will have to be found to support this program on an ongoing basis. USCGAUX looks to USPS for assistance in writing joint grant proposals for annual funding and in identifying additional funding sources (e.g., commercial firms, foundations, and other potential sources). USPS agrees to help to draft these proposals and to work jointly with the USCGAUX and all other providers, as appropriate, in obtaining funding support identified annually as necessary for the VSCP. However, the USPS accepts full financial responsibility for the cost incurred by USPS participation in the VSCP.

## USCGAUX Duties and Responsibilities

With respect to this MOA, the duties and responsibilities of the USCGAUX as the VSCP's National Director and Executive Agent for the USCG include:

- Establish and periodically revise the requirements of VSCs, the eligibility of various types of watercraft for these checks, and the criteria for the award of the VSC decal.

- Develop a standardized national training program, create necessary training materials, and provide assistance in necessary program training to the USPS.

- Establish and maintain oversight over authorized providers to ensure the integrity of the program meets the needs of the boating public and the USCG. Upon consultation, and with the concurrence of G-OPB, USCGAUX may revoke the authority of any authorized provider to conduct VSCs.

- Work with the USPS to develop adequate safeguards to ensure program integrity and to implement remedial measures necessary to correct identified program deficiencies. Issues regarding program integrity should be addressed by the Joint VSCP Steering Council or regional equivalent.

- Design and develop the necessary and appropriate materials (e.g., manuals, videotapes, brochures, and decals) to support the VSCP. Work with USPS as necessary to develop and approve specific materials for their program.

- Work with the USPS to develop and conduct customer surveys to obtain relevant data on the actual and perceived value of the VSC. Utilize surveys and data collected to identify the approaches most likely to increase customer awareness of boating safety and safe boating practices.

- Develop and implement an effective marketing outreach program to promote the interest of the boating public in the VSCP.

- In coordination with the USCG (G-OPB [Office of Boating Safety] and G-OCX [Office of Auxiliary]) and USPS develop a system of reporting program contributions of the USPS to USCGAUX.

- In coordination with USCG (G-OPB and G-OCX) and USPS, develop improved *Measures of Effectiveness* (MOEs) for the VSCP. Provide G-OPB annual and quarterly reports covering the relevant data on program achievements and benefits—including the contributions of USPS.

- Designate an Auxiliary member to serve as the Chair of the National VSCP Steering Council and as Chair of all District/Region VSCP Steering Committees and provide other support staff, as necessary.

- Perform other duties as necessary to ensure the efficient operation of the VSCP.

## USPS Duties and Responsibilities

Consistent with its role as an authorized provider of VSCs and participant in the VSCP, the USPS agrees to the following duties and responsibilities:

- Provide a representative to serve on the National VSCP Steering Council. Provide representatives that will serve as a regional point of contact (POC) with all District/Region VSCP Steering Committees.

- Support decisions and recommendations endorsed by the National VSCP Steering Council and/or VSCP National Director.

- Actively market participation in the VSCP to USPS members.

- Accept full responsibility for all liability issues that arise from VSCs conducted by members of the USPS. Neither the USCG nor the USCGAUX are liable for injury, death, property loss, or lawsuits incurred by USPS members.

- Provide suggestions and ideas to the VSCP National Director and/or National VSCP Steering Council with respect to the requirements of VSCs, the eligibility of various types of watercraft for these checks, and the criteria for the award of the VSC decal.

- Publish necessary USPS-specific training materials and establish internal procedures to report results and reward performance.

- Based upon training material and instruction furnished by the USCGAUX, establish an internal training program to qualify USPS members who wish to participate in this program and maintain internal records of member training and qualification.

- Maintain an internal program for the storage and distribution of decals and other program materials to various USPS units and vessel examiners.

- Establish and maintain oversight over authorized USPS participants in the program to ensure the integrity of the program. Working with the advice and counsel of the VSCP National Director and the National VSCP Steering Council and District/Region Steering Committees, as necessary, develop and implement necessary policies to detect and correct examination discrepancies—including, as an ultimate measure, revocation of the authorized provider status of any USPS member.

- With the advice and counsel of the VSCP National Director and/or National VSCP Steering Council, publish necessary and appropriate materials (e.g., manuals, videotapes, brochures, and decals) to support the VSCP.

- Work with the VSCP National Director and/or National VSCP Steering Council to develop and conduct customer surveys to obtain relevant data on the actual and perceived value of the VSC.

- Develop and implement a coordinated and effective marketing outreach program to promote the interest of the boating public in the VSCP.

- Permit the use of the USPS name and logo in all approved VSCP marketing programs.

- Provide timely reports of program activities to the VSCP National Director and to the appropriate District/Region VSCP Steering Committee in a jointly-agreed format.

- Work with the USCG and USCGAUX to provide suggestions for the development of improved program *Measures of Effectiveness* (MOEs).

- The USPS agrees to assist in the drafting of grant proposals and to work jointly with the USCGAUX and all other providers, as appropriate, in obtaining funding support identified annually as necessary for the VSCP.

- The USPS accepts full financial responsibility for any of the costs incurred by the USPS participation in the VSCP not otherwise covered by grants. (See discussion of funding above.)

- Perform other duties as necessary to ensure the efficient operation of the VSCP.

## Effective Date

Qualified USPS members are authorized to provide VSCs as of 1 May 2000. All other provisions of this agreement are effective as of the date signed.

## Agreement

The undersigned USCGAUX and USPS officials agree to the premises stated in this MOA and to the duties and responsibilities of each party as set forth above.

This MOA shall remain in effect until cancelled in writing by either party. In the event that either party elects to cancel this agreement, 30 days written notice is required.

**Signatures:**

APPROVED 1/15/00

COMO Everette L. Tucker, Jr. Date
National Commodore, USCGAUX

APPROVED 1/31/00

Arthur H. Farr, N. Date
Chief Commander, USPS

Noted on behalf of the United States Coast Guard:

APPROVED 1/24/00

Mark S. Kern Date
Captain, United States Coast Guard,
Chief Director of the Auxiliary