

Effective Date: 02 April 2008

DISTRICT COMMODORE NOTICE N-08001

SUBJ: Vessel Safety Checks; Out of Country Vessels

1. Purpose: To clarify Vessel Safety Check policy regarding Out of Country vessels moored in Washington State.

2. Background:

a. Large numbers of out of country vessels are found in many marinas in Northern Washington, especially Bellingham, Blaine and Point Roberts. These boats are moored in Washington most of the time and are used in Washington and British Columbia.

b. Auxiliarists wish to do Vessel Safety Checks on these vessels while they are in Washington waters and subject to Coast Guard and Washington boating laws and regulations.

3. Policies, Laws & Regulations:

a. The Vessel Safety Check Manual (Page 4) says, "*Vessels registered in countries other than the United States and its territories.*" are not eligible for Vessel Safety Checks.

b. Washington law (RCW 88.02.030(3)) sets up a system of identification documents for vessels registered or numbered under the laws of another country. "*On or before the sixty-first day of use in the state any vessel in the state.... shall obtain an identification document indicating when the vessel came into the state.*"

c. Washington Administrative Code (WAC 308-93-056) says

1. "*The current out of country vessel registration or a United States Customs Service Cruising License is valid for the first sixty days of operation when the vessel is remaining in this state for personal use or enjoyment.*"
2. "*On or before the sixty-first day of use, the out of country vessel owner must obtain a vessel out of country permanent identification document...*"

4. Action:

a. WAC 308-93-056 (2c. above) clearly considers out of country registration invalid when the vessel is in Washington more than sixty days. The permanent identification document becomes Washington's registration document after sixty days and for the purposes of the Vessel Safety Check Manual (2a. above); these vessels are not registered in countries other than the United States and vessel examiners may conduct a Vessel Safety Check.

b. Vessel examiners must ensure the permanent identification document display requirements are met. WAC 308-93-056 requires the vessel out of country permanent identification document:

1. Be kept aboard at all times when moored and during operation;
2. Be displayed in the windshield, side window, cockpit or operation area so that it is visible to law enforcement from either the dock or from the water;
and
3. Be protected from the weather.

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