



**Homeland
Security**

**U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary
District 11 Northern Region**

Serving Northern California, Nevada, Utah



DEPARTMENT of VESSEL EXAMINATION

How does one perform a VSC on a SUB (sport and utility boat)? I'd like to offer the following tips. These follow the ANSC 7012 (204) form. California, Nevada, and Utah all have slightly different requirements and there may be additional requirements for local areas. Please review the requirements in the geographical location where the VSC is to be performed. Coastal waters, white water and river requirements will be different than bays or inland protected waters. The VSC should take NO longer than 15 minutes to perform.

1-NUMBERING: California, Nevada, and Utah do not require registration numbers on non-motorized boats. There is no federal requirement.

2-REGISTRATION: Federal Requirements, California, Nevada, and Utah do not require registration numbers on non-motorized boats, but you should be able to verify ownership. Now is the time to locate the HIN (hull identification number). You may have to look for it.

3-PERSONAL FLOATATION DEVICE: There **MUST** be an approved type I, II, III, or type V PFD (life jacket) for each person on board. Federal, California, Utah, and Nevada law doesn't specify, but the PFD should be a type III or type V designed specifically for canoeing or kayaking with "D" rings and pockets that allows for safety equipment and for a wide range of arm movement. Suggest that the PFD is impact rated. A type I and type II are acceptable, but bulky. Impress the importance of wearing the PFD while underway. A type IV is **NOT** required.

4-FIRE EXTINGUISHERS: None required.

5-VENTILATION: None required.

6-VISUAL DISTRESS SIGNALS: These are the same as powered vessels. Note however that if the SUB is operating on inland waters, there technically is no requirement unless they operate at night, and then that least a signaling mirror designed should be attached to a PFD with a small strobe light. Off shore, unless with an organized group, three (3) orange day or three (3) red day and night flares are required.

7-BACKFIRE FLAME ARRESTER: None required.

8-SOUND PRODUCING DEVICE: The Federal Requirements, Utah, Nevada, and California are all the same-all vessels **MUST** have a means of producing a sound audible for at least ½ mile. A regular marine whistle with a lanyard to be attached to the operators PFD is acceptable. Discourage a coach's whistle as if the whistle gets wet the ball may stick.

9-NAVIGATION LIGHTS: When operating at night, the Federal Requirements, Nevada, Utah, and California laws require at least a flashlight or a lighted lantern on manually propelled vessels less than 22ft. that can show a white light in sufficient time to prevent a collision. Suggest spare batteries. A strobe light is a distress device and should only be used in the event of an emergency, not as navigation lights.

10-POLLUTION PLACARD: Not Applicable.

11-MARPOL PLACARD: Not Applicable.

12-MARINE SANITATION DEVICE: Not Applicable.

13-NAVIGATION RULES: Not required.

14-STATE and LOCAL REQUIREMENTS: SUB's like all vessels must comply with all state and local requirements. This may include: bailing devices (required in Utah and recommended in California and Nevada), hours of operation and restrictions at riding locations.

15-OVERALL VESSEL CONDITION: The SUB must be well maintained and extra gear must be secured.

Please remember NOT to limit the VSC to the left side-the mandatory VSC DECAL REQUIREMENTS of the examination form. Don't forget the right side-RECOMMENDED and DISCUSSION ITEMS. This side of the form is the most important when examining a SUB. Suggest: spare paddle, float plan, a spray skirt, watertight first aid kit, hi energy snacks, drinking water, sunscreen, a flashlight, and additional clothing in a tethered waterproof container. Depending on local conditions, a wide brimmed hat or a helmet, wetsuit, or dry suit should be considered. Other considerations are: a handheld waterproof VHF radio, compass and a trash bag. **Kayakers and canoeists should ALWAYS travel with at least one additional partner.** In addition, they should have a waterproof map/chart of their intended route. A good idea is also to remind them about the rules of the road and safety and exclusion zones around dams, ships, airports, etc. You should also remind them to avoid the use of drugs and alcohol. Additionally river, white water and coastal kayaking are all different sports and the kayaker should be aware of their own limitations to avoid potential life-threatening situations. Ask if they are aware of the canoe/kayak re-entry techniques, because at some point they will get wet! Remember, the VSC is a one-on-one education with the boater/kayaker, don't lecture or hold them up unnecessarily. For more information suggest contacting the American Canoe Association at : www.americancanoe.org .

Believe it or not, SUB owners are very receptive to a VSC! If there is ever any question about performing a VSC on a SUB, please don't hesitate to contact me at : sumfun@juno.com or (209) 368-0122. Special thanks to the American Canoe Association for information and Robert Daraio BC-VES for reviewing this material.

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