



## United States Coast Guard Auxiliary

District 11 Northern Region  
Serving Northern California, Nevada, Utah



# Vessel Safety Check Review

Prepared by:

Mike Lauro DSO-VE 11NR

# **D11NR V-Department For 7+ years:**

**1-Is the ONLY District to offer a 2-day Vessel Examiner class TWICE a year.**

**2-Has a monthly VSC NEWSLETTER emailed to EVERY examiner with an email address.**

**3-Offers New Member and New Examiner WELCOME letters!**

**4-Offers 2 levels of recognition for VSC production!**

**And MORE!**

***The D11NR V-DEPT.-----WE DELIVER!***

# D11NR Vessel Examiner

## Website:

<http://rbsafety.d11nuscgaux.info/ve.html>

- Designed **exclusively** for Vessel Examiners
- Complete with **EVERY** form needed and **LOADED** with information!
- Updated several times a month
- This **ONLY** one of it's kind in the Nation!

# The Vessel Safety Check



# **Vessel Safety Check**

## **The History**

USCG AUX 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 for safe boating.

It also serves to provide one-on-one education of recreational boaters regarding the use of safety equipment, legal requirements and regulations, etc.

# **Vessel Safety Check**

## **The History continued**

The program evolved with the addition of sailboats and the name was changed to Courtesy Marine Examination, then in 2000 the to Vessel Safety Check (VSC). The VSC program now includes PWC and SUB's. 2007 was the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the program that now includes the U.S. Power Squadron.

# The Vessel Safety Check

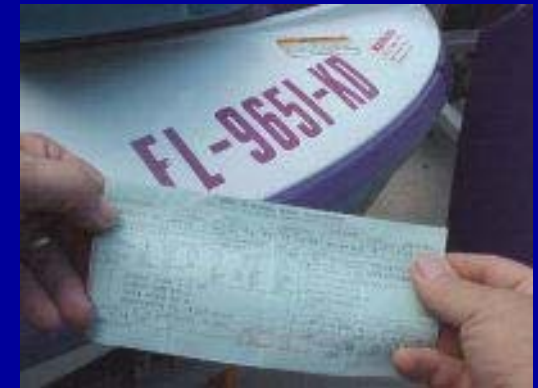
Vessel Examiners may inspect Powerboats, Sailboats, Personal Water Craft (PWC), and Sport Utility Boats (SUB).

Requests for VSCs on boats larger than 65ft in length should be referred to the DSO-VE.

## Item 1 - Display of Numbers:

The boat's registration numbers must be permanently attached to each side of the forward half of the boat. They must be plain, vertical, block characters, not less than three (3) inches high-the same height as the state decal, and in a color contrasting with the background.

A space or hyphen must separate the letters from the numbers. The state decal should be on stern of the numbers.





## **Item 2 - Registration and Documentation:**

Registration or Documentation papers must be on board and available. Documentation numbers must be permanently marked on a visible part of the interior structure.

The documented boat's name and hailing port must be displayed on the exterior hull in letters not less than 4 inches in height. To be documented a boat must be 5 net tons or greater.

# Item 3 Flotation Devices (PFD)

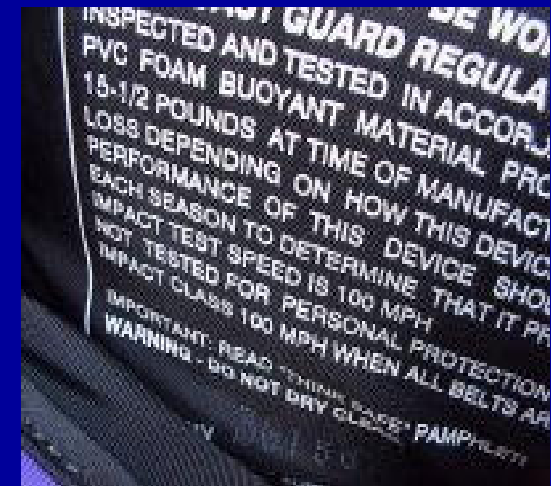


# Item 3 Flotation Devices (PFD):

Acceptable PFDs (Life Jackets)

Must be U.S. Coast Guard approved, in good serviceable condition, and of suitable size for the each person on the boat.

Children must have properly fitted PFDs designed for children.



## **Item 3 Flotation Devices (PFD):**

Wearable PFDs shall be "readily accessible."

Throwable devices for 16'+ vessels shall be "immediately available."

PFDs should NOT be stored in unopened plastic packaging.

# **Item 3 Flotation Devices (100 MPH PFD):**

## **WARNING:**

100 MPH rated Life-jackets do not protect wearers from traumatic injury in a high speed crash.

The impact rating means that the PFD still be buoyant following a 100 MPH impact.

# Item 3 Flotation Devices

## Non-Serviceable and Substandard Type I Unicellular Plastic Foam Life Preservers

The US Coast Guard **strongly recommends** that owners and operators carefully inspect all of their older Type I unicellular plastic foam PFDs.

Potential indications that a Type I unicellular plastic foam PFD may no longer be serviceable include:

## Item 3 Flotation Devices

1. Compression: The PFD may be compressed from many years of stowage.
2. Loss of resiliency: The PFD is excessively hard, stiff or its foam is brittle. Normally after compressing the PFD to about half its initial thickness, the foam should expand to its original dimension in a short period of time.

## **Item 3 continued**

# **Flotation Devices**

3. Shrinkage: A physical reduction in size may be indicated by “wrinkling” of the coating on vinyl dipped type or by a loose fitting shell on a fabric-covered PFD.



# **Item 3 Flotation Devices**

## **PFD INFLATION FAILURE DUE TO FALSE POSITIVE SERVICE INDICATORS AND INCORRECT CO2 CYLINDER INSTALLATION**

**There is a potential problem when installing CO2 cylinders that have bayonet tips on older inflatable PFDs.**

**If a cylinder is not properly installed, the PFD will not inflate with CO2. The problem may affect several thousand PFDs, but the Coast Guard is only aware of one incident to date.**

## **Item 3 Flotation Devices (PFD):**

For Personal Watercraft riders, California, Nevada, and Utah require that the PFD (type III) be worn and they also require an impact rating.

Boats 16 Feet or longer, must also have one Type IV.

## Item 4 - Visual Distress Signals (VDS):



Do NOT accept expired flares or demo them!

## **Item 4 - Visual Distress Signals (VDS):**

Recreational boats 16 feet and over used on coastal waters or the Great Lakes require a minimum of either:

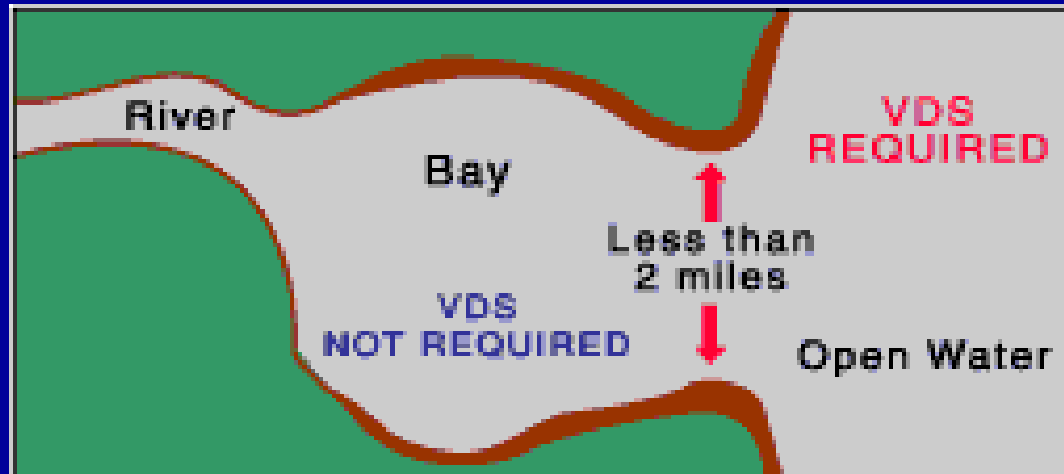
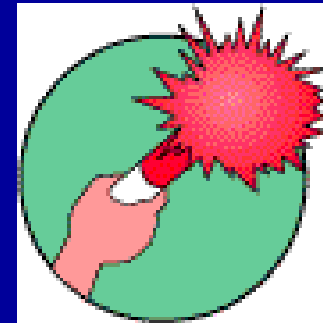
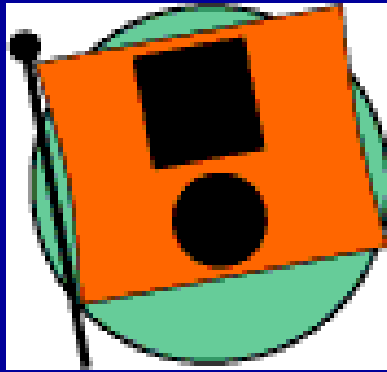
3 day (orange) and 3 (red) night pyrotechnic devices, or 3 (RED) Combination day/night devices.

- 1) Non-pyrotechnic devices day(flag) and one night (auto SOS light) or
- 2) A combination of 1) and 2). Recreational boats less than 16 feet on coastal waters or the Great Lakes need only carry night visual distress signals when operating from sunset to sunrise.

## **Item 4 - Visual Distress Signals Continued**

It is recommended, but not required, that boats operating on non-coastal inland waters should have some means of making a suitable day and night distress signal.

# Item 4 - Visual Distress Signals Continued



## Item 4 - Visual Distress Signals Continued

### Night

Strobe light

Flashlight

Lantern

### Day

Signal mirror

Red or orange flags

Hand signals

The number and type of signals is best judged by considering conditions under which the boat will be operating.

# Item 4 - Visual Distress Signals Flares 42 month expiration date





## Item 5 - Fire Extinguishers:



## Item 5 - Fire Extinguishers:

Fire extinguishers are required if one of the following conditions exists:

- (1) Inboard engine(s)
- (2) Closed compartments that store portable fuel tanks
- (3) Double bottom hulls not completely sealed or not completely filled with flotation material

## Item 5 - Fire Extinguishers: Continued

(4) Closed living space

(5) Closed stowage compartments that contain flammable materials or

(6) Permanently installed fuel tanks

**NOTE:** Portable fire extinguishers must be serviceable, should be less than 10 years old and should be stored or mounted to be easily accessible.

# Item 5 - Fire Extinguishers: Continued

## Minimum number of extinguishers required

<b>Boat Length</b>	<b>No Fixed System</b>	<b>With Fixed System</b>
<b>Less than 26'</b>	<b>One B-1</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>26' to less than 40'</b>	<b>Two B-1 or one B-2</b>	<b>One B-1</b>
<b>40' to 65'</b>	<b>Three B-1 or One B1 &amp; One B-2</b>	<b>Two B-1 or One B-2</b>

## **Item 6 - Ventilation:**

Boats with gasoline engines in closed compartments, built after 1 August 1980 must have a powered ventilation system.

Those built prior to that date must have natural or powered ventilation.

## **Item 6 - Ventilation:**

**Boats with closed fuel tank  
Compartments built after  
August 1, 1978 must meet  
requirements by displaying  
a "certificate of compliance."**

**Boats built before that date  
must have either natural or  
powered ventilation in the  
fuel tank compartment.**



# **Required warning Label for Blower Operation at Key:**

## **WARNING**

**Gas vapors can explode. Before starting, operate blower for four minutes and check engine compartment for gas vapors.**

## **Item 7 - Backfire Flame Control:**



**All gasoline powered inboard/outboard or inboard motor boats must be equipped with an approved backfire flame control device.**



## **Item 8 - Sound Producing Devices /**

### **Bell:**

To comply with Navigation Rules and for distress signaling purposes all boats must carry a sound producing device (whistle, horn, siren, etc.) capable of a 4-second blast audible for 1/2 mile.

# Item 8 - Sound Producing Devices / Bell:



## Item 8 - Sound Producing Devices

Recent changes in the Navigation Rules effectively have changed the requirements for the carriage of a bell on both International, and by default, Inland waters.



## Item 8 - Sound Producing Devices Bell:



Boats 20 meters and over are required to carry a bell of 300 mm minimum diameter.

# Item 9 - Navigation Lights:



## **Item 9 - Navigation Lights:**

If equipped with lights, all boats must be able to display navigation lights between sunset and sunrise and in conditions of reduced visibility.

Boats 16 feet or more in length must have properly installed, working navigation lights and an all-around anchor light capable of being lit independently from the red/green/white "running" lights.

## **Item 10 - Pollution Placard:**

Boats 26 feet and over must  
display an oily waste  
"pollution" placard.

# Item 10 - Pollution Placard:

## DISCHARGE OF OIL PROHIBITED

THE FEDERAL WATER POLLUTION CONTROL ACT PROHIBITS THE DISCHARGE OF OIL OR OILY WASTE INTO OR UPON THE NAVIGABLE WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES, OR THE WATERS OF THE CONTIGUOUS ZONE, OR WHICH MAY AFFECT NATURAL RESOURCES BELONGING TO, APPERTAINING TO, OR UNDER THE EXCLUSIVE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY OF THE UNITED STATES, IF SUCH DISCHARGE CAUSES A FILM OR DISCOLORATION OF THE SURFACE OF THE WATER OR CAUSES A SLUDGE OR EMULSION BENEATH THE SURFACE OF THE WATER. VIOLATORS ARE SUBJECT TO SUBSTANTIAL CIVIL PENALTIES AND/OR CRIMINAL SANCTIONS INCLUDING FINES AND IMPRISONMENT.



## **Item 11 - MARPOL Trash Placard:**

Boats 26 feet and over in length must display a "MARPOL" trash placard.

Boats 40 feet and over must also display a written trash disposal plan.

# Item 11 - MARPOL Trash Placard:

<p>THE DISCHARGE OF PLASTIC OR GARBAGE BAGS WITH PLASTIC INTO ANY WATERS IS PROHIBITED. THE DISCHARGE OF ALL GARBAGE IS PROHIBITED IN THE SAVGABLE WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES AND, IN ALL OTHER WATERS, WITHIN THREE NAUTICAL MILES OF THE NEAREST LAND.</p>		
<p>THE DISCHARGE OF DUNNAGE, LUMBER, AND PACKING MATERIALS THAT FLOAT IS PROHIBITED WITHIN 25 NAUTICAL MILES FROM THE NEAREST LAND.</p>	<p>OTHER LIVERBOARD GARBAGE MAY BE DISCHARGED BEYOND 12 NAUTICAL MILES FROM THE NEAREST LAND.</p>	<p>OTHER GARBAGE CRACKED TO LESS THAN ONE INCH MAY BE DISCHARGED BEYOND THREE NAUTICAL MILES OF THE NEAREST LAND.</p>
<p>A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THE ABOVE REQUIREMENTS IS LIABLE FOR A CIVIL PENALTY OF UP TO \$5,000, A FINE OF UP TO \$50,000, AND IMPRISONMENT FOR UP TO FIVE YEARS FOR EACH VIOLATION. REGIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL RESTRICTIONS ON GARBAGE DISCHARGE ALSO MAY APPLY.</p>		

## Item 12 - Marine Sanitation Devices:

Any installed toilet must be a Coast Guard approved device.

Overboard discharge outlets must be capable of being sealed.



# Item 13 - Navigation Rules:

Boats 39.4 feet and over, when operating on Navigable Inland Waters, must have on board a current copy of the Navigation Rules. It may also be an 8x11 copy from the internet. Sole state waters or Inland lakes are exempt.



# Item 14 - State and/ or Local Requirements:

These requirements must be met before the "Vessel Safety Check" decal can be awarded. A boat must meet the requirements of the state in which it is being examined.

*We do NOT participate in inspections for Quagga/Zebra mussels EXCEPT to provide information.*

# Item 15 - Overall Vessel Condition:

- Deck free of hazards and clean bilge:

The boat must be free from fire hazards, in good overall condition, with bilges reasonably clean and visible hull structure generally sound. The use of automobile parts on boat engines is not acceptable. For outboards, the engine horsepower must not exceed that shown on the capacity plate.

## **Item 15 - Overall Vessel Condition:**

- **Safe Electrical and Fuel Systems:**

The electrical system - Must be protected by fuses or manual reset circuit breakers.

Switches and fuse panels must be protected from rain or water spray.

Wiring must be in good condition, properly installed and with no exposed areas or deteriorated insulation.

## **Item 15 - Overall Vessel Condition:**

### **Safe Electrical and Fuel Systems continued:**

Batteries must be secured and terminals covered to prevent accidental arcing

All PWCs require an operating self circling or kill switch mechanism.



# Item 15 - Overall Vessel Condition:



## Item 15 - Overall Vessel Condition:

- **Fuel Systems** - Portable fuel tanks (normally 7 gallon capacity or less) must be constructed of non-breakable material and free of corrosion and leaks.

All vents must be capable of being closed. The tank must be secured and have a vapor-tight, leak-proof cap. Each permanent fuel tank must be properly ventilated.

## **Item 15 - Overall Vessel Condition:**

- **Safe Galley and Heating Systems:**

System and fuel tanks must be properly secured with no flammable materials nearby.

# **Additional Discussion Items:**

**we do not fail the boater for missing any of these items nor may each VSC have time to elaborate on each.**

Marine Radio

Dewatering Device and Back-up

Mounting Fire Extinguishers

Anchor and Line

Capacity/Certificate of Compliance

# Additional Discussion Items

## Accident Reports/Owner Responsibility

The boat owner is responsible for what occurs on their boat, even when they are not present.

## Offshore Operations

Boat operators are required by law to extend help to other boaters in distress. Failure to assist is a felony punishable by fines and/or prison.

# **Additional Discussion Items**

## **Fueling/Fuel Management**

- **Refuel portable tanks away from the vessel.**
- **Close all hatches and openings before fueling.**
- **Don't smoke while fueling.**
- **Turn off engines, electrical systems, and any spark producing items.**
- **Remove all passengers.**
- **Keep the fill nozzle in contact with the tank and clean up any spills.**

# **Additional Discussion Items**

## **Fueling/Fuel Management**

After Fueling:

Open all hatches and openings

Check bilges and “sniff test” boat for fuel vapor

Run blowers for at least 4 minutes before starting engine

## **Always use the One Third Rule**

One third of fuel going out

One third of fuel for coming back

One third of fuel as a reserve

# Additional Discussion Items

## Insurance Considerations

Most States require proof of Insurance before you can register your boat.

### **Coverage should include:**

Loss of, or damage to, boat

Loss of, or damage to, equipment

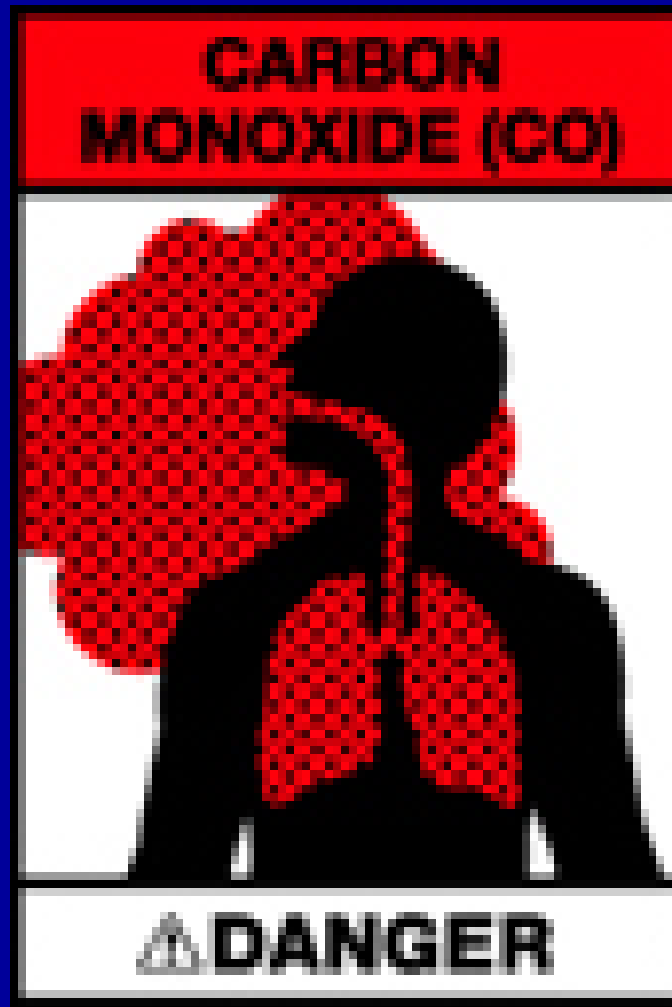
Liability Coverage; personal injury and property

Medical coverage

Towing; over both land and water



# Additional Discussion Items



# **Additional Discussion Items**

## **Carbon Monoxide**

- **CO symptoms are similar to seasickness or alcohol intoxication.**
- **CO can affect you whether you're underway, moored, or anchored.**
- **You cannot see, smell, or taste CO.**
- **CO can make you sick in seconds. In high enough concentrations, even a few breaths can be fatal.**

# **Additional Discussion Items**

## **Carbon Monoxide**

### **Each Time You Go On a Boat Trip**

- Make sure you know where CO exhaust outlets are located on your vessel.
- Educate all passengers about the symptoms of CO poisoning and where CO may accumulate.
- When docked, or rafted with another boat, be aware of exhaust emissions from the other boat.
- Confirm that water flows from the exhaust outlet when the engines and generator are started.
- Listen for any change in exhaust sound, which could indicate an exhaust component failure.
- Test the operation of each CO alarm by pressing the test button.

# **Additional Discussion Items**

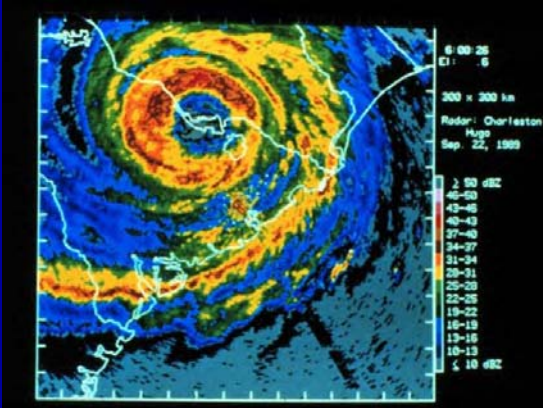
## **Carbon Monoxide Hazards caused by Generator Exhaust**

Remind Recreational Boaters about Carbon Monoxide Hazards caused by Generator Exhaust. The Coast Guard advises owners and operators of boats to turn off gasoline-powered generators with transom exhaust ports when the swim platform on the stern is in use. Swimmers should not enter the cavity of a boat designed with a generator emitting exhaust into the cavity between the swim platform and the transom of the vessel.

# **FILE A FLOAT PLAN**

- **A float plan contains information about the operator and the vehicle used to transport the vessel as well as the vessel itself.**
- **The plan also includes the expected route of travel along with a date and time of arrival and departure. Taking a few minutes to post a float plan with friends or loved ones is a great life insurance policy.**

# CHECK THE WEATHER



- Monitor and evaluate weather conditions.
- Purchase a waterproof and portable weather radio or use a VHF radio that has a weather channel.
- Check sky and sea conditions and never operate in an environment that exceeds personal capability.

# FIRST AID KIT

Pack a waterproof First Aid kit and insure that it is secured to your boat.

In addition to the kit consider completing basic first aid training and CPR



# VHF Radio, GPS, Compass

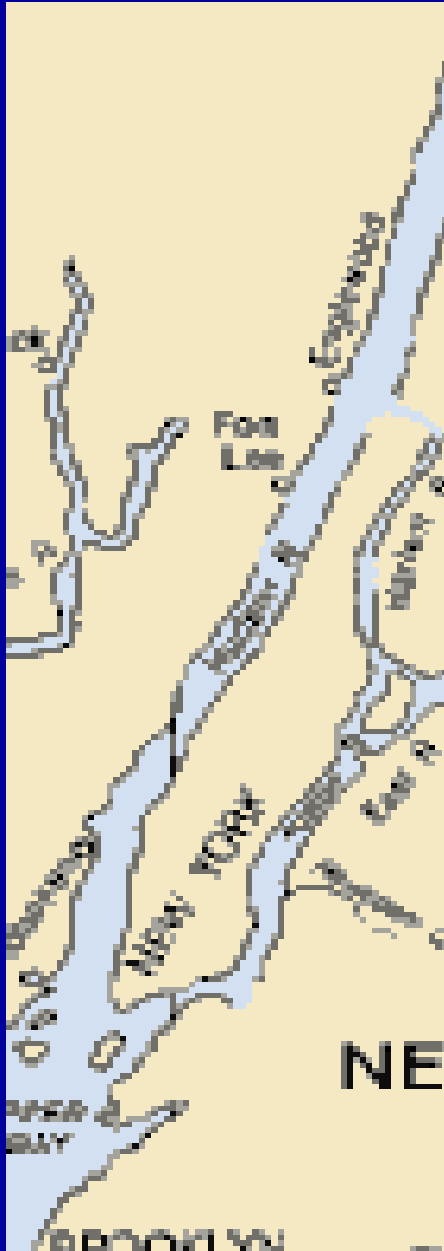


- Bring along electronic communication and navigation devices such as a VHF Radio, GPS, and Cellular Phone.
- Include a waterproof hand held compass as a back up in case





# CHARTS



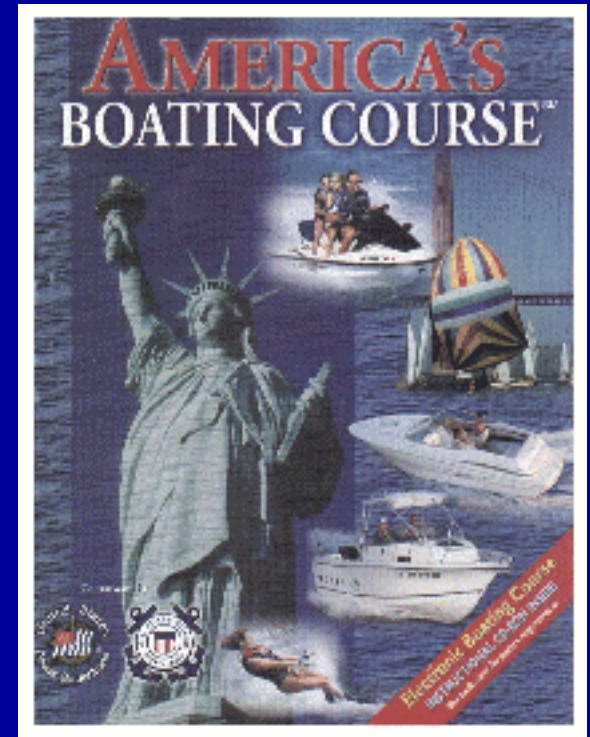
- **When operating in coastal waters or navigable rivers, carry a chart and try to obtain local knowledge of waterway conditions.**
- **Familiarize yourself with basic coastal navigation procedures.**

# OTHER ITEMS



# BOATING SAFETY COURSE

All boaters should be encouraged to take a Boating Safety Course such as “About Boating Safely” Course.



# CLEAN UP

- Pack a trash bag. Take all refuse away with you.
- Leave every stop or campsite cleaner than when you found it.

*“Recreational Boating Safety is the Auxiliary's core competency and core mission. The absolute strongest support to the Recreational Boating Safety mission is needed as never before.”*

*“Preventive Search and Rescue saves lives and also creates opportunities for our limited active Coast Guard resources to conduct missions other than Search and Rescue, which is extremely valuable within the current maritime security environment...”*

*Capt. David B. Hill, CHDIRAUX*

Get a Free

**Vessel  
Safety  
Check**





# VSC Review

D11NR Vessel Examination Department

*The V-DEPT. -----WE DELIVER!*

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