

# Waves

## Watercraft & Vessel Safety

The Newsletter from the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary  
RBS Outreach Department

### Coast Guard Auxiliary and Power Squadrons Boost Boating Safety Efforts

The U.S. Power Squadrons (USPS) and the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary will increase their coordinated safety efforts among America's recreational boating community under a new agreement that broadens cooperative efforts in vessel examinations, public affairs and education. The agreement was signed at the Auxiliary's national conference – NACON 2011 – in Charlotte.

Recreational boating is one of the most popular outdoors activities in the United States. In 2010 there were nearly 12.5 million registered boats, with many millions more that are not required to be registered by states or the U.S. Coast Guard. That same year, the Coast Guard recorded

more than 4,600 accidents involving 672 deaths, 3,153 injuries and approximately \$35.5 million in property damage. The majority of these accidents happened on boats operated by individuals who had received no boating education.

The U.S. Power Squadrons and the Coast Guard Auxiliary are committed to changing this reality through increased boater education, vessel examinations and public boater safety awareness events.

"With this cooperative effort we will reach out to the growing population of recreational boaters providing needed training and vessel exams to keep them safe on the water," said Jim Vass, Auxiliary National Commodore.

"The USPS is proud to continue our partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary as we continually strive to improve the boating experience for recreational boaters," noted Frank Dvorak, USPS Chief Commander.

The United States Power Squadrons is the nation's largest nonprofit recreational boating organization with a presence in all 50 states plus the territories of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands as well as Japan. There are more than 40,000 members in 400 squadrons and 33 districts worldwide. For more information about the U.S. Power Squadrons visit <http://www.usps.org>.



CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Frank Dvorak, USPS Chief Commander and Jim Vass, USCG Auxiliary National Commodore sign the Auxiliary-USPS Implementation Plan.(Photos by Mel Borofsky, PDCAPT)



## You can do it! Let us help.



A quote attributed to Albert Einstein goes something like, “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.” Why do I mention this? I’d like to ask you if you have as many students in your flotilla’s public education courses. Have you been doing as many vessel safety checks as you’d like to be doing? More basic... what does the boating accident statistics look like in your state this year? In mine (Maryland) we’ve had more boating fatalities than at any point in over a decade.<sup>1</sup> That’s a really troubling sign, particularly as the number of motor boaters seems to be dropping off.

I know – we’re all working really hard to make America’s waterways safe. Working harder isn’t going to make the difference ... working smarter and partnering with other groups who share our love of doing fun stuff on and in water. Who are those people? Well, I’m really glad you asked. Let’s talk about just a few.

As you may have heard, National Commodore James Vass signed an implementation plan with his U.S. Power Squadrons (USPS) counterpart at NACON in August. The plan calls on the Auxiliary and Power Squadrons to work together in six specific areas to promote recreational boating safety (RBS). Read the agreement on the Auxiliary website at <http://bdept.cgaux.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/USCGAux-USPS-MOU-MOA-Implementation-Plan-2011-08-27-SIGNED.pdf> . Lest you think that this is ‘someone else’s’ responsibility, think again. It calls on every district to reach out to their USPS opposite numbers. It can be as simple as holding a joint picnic with your local Power Squadron. I bet that most of us don’t know where and when the closest USPS group meets. Maybe it’s about time that we do something about that, right?

What have you done to build partnerships with other groups in your area to promote boating safety? The South Carolina State Liaison Officer (SLO) Barbara and Festus Burchfield have built a coalition with like minded boaters at Lake Murray after a spate of boating accidents got everyone wondering what they could do to change the equation. Read more about it at [http://auxbdeptwiki.cgaux.org/index.php/South\\_Carolina](http://auxbdeptwiki.cgaux.org/index.php/South_Carolina) . The Auxiliary through the Burchfields’ efforts has taken the lead in making local waters safe. Boating course attendance is up, as is flotilla membership. It works. Try it.

How about partnering with your state Boating Law Administrator (BLA)? Every state budget is tight and they need the Auxiliary’s help more than ever. Does your BLA know who the Auxiliary is and what we can be doing to be a force multiplier? Read an article from Navigator at <http://bdept.cgaux.org/pdf/NavigatorSummit2010.pdf> that shows just how we did it in Alabama.

The Auxiliary launched a terrific new course called Paddle Sports America a couple of years ago (see [www.cgaux.org/boat-inged/classes/2011/psam.php](http://www.cgaux.org/boat-inged/classes/2011/psam.php) ). Paddlesports is the fastest growing boating community in the United States, with hundreds of thousands of new paddlers on our waterways every year. So, just what is your flotilla doing about it? If Auxdata is any indicator, a lot of people think that someone else’s flotilla will address this market. Well, if not YOUR flotilla, whose will do it? I know this is a new area for most of us, but fear not, there’s lot of information that will help you get up to speed quickly. Go to the AuxBWiki at <http://auxbdeptwiki.cgaux.org/index.php/Paddlesports> and read up. Need to learn more about it? The Auxiliary has a signed partnership agreement with the American Canoe Association (ACA), and they’re anxious to help us get to know and succeed in working with kayakers and canoeists. They offer train-the-trainer courses that can be arranged locally. Need even more information? Email Paul Leuchner, BC-BLC our ACA Liaison, ( [frog2327@verizon.net](mailto:frog2327@verizon.net) ) who will be glad to help you get started.

Finally, don’t forget about the Sea Scouts, a program of the Boy Scouts of America. One of the easiest and most fun to help the Sea Scouts is to put on a “Safety at Sea” event to provide these young boaters with hands-on safety instruction in skills like fire fighting, damage control, de-watering, flare training, and other interesting and FUN activities. The boaters you train in Safety at Sea events will be life-long safe boaters, and just might decide that they want to be Auxiliarists like the really cool Auxiliarists who taught them to be safe. More information on AuxBWiki at [http://auxbdeptwiki.cgaux.org/index.php/Safety\\_at\\_Sea\\_Weekend](http://auxbdeptwiki.cgaux.org/index.php/Safety_at_Sea_Weekend).

So where can you get more information about promoting recreational boating safety with the Auxiliary’s partners? Have a look at these websites:

- The Coast Guard’s Boating Safety Resource Center, <http://www.uscgboating.org/>
- AuxBWiki, the Auxiliary’s Boating Safety Partnership Center, <http://auxbdeptwiki.cgaux.org>
- The Auxiliary’s Education Department, <http://cgauxed.org>
- The Auxiliary’s Vessel Examinations Department, <http://safetysal.net>
- North American Safe Boating Campaign, <http://www.safeboatingcampaign.com/>
- Resources for Instructors and Vessel Examiners, <http://bdept.cgaux.org/pevereresources.php>

Let us hear from you about your success stories and any problems you may have with promoting boating safety. The B Department is here to help. Write me at [dir-b@bdept.cgaux.org](mailto:dir-b@bdept.cgaux.org).

You can do it! Let us help.

- Bruce Johnson, DIR-B

<sup>1</sup>Baltimore Sun, August 21, 2011.

# West Marine Receives Recreational Boating Safety Partnership Award

By Dave Naumann, BC-BLW

West Marine received a Recreational Boating Safety Award on Saturday, September 27, 2011 at the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary National Convention in Charlotte, N.C. West Marine has been a valuable corporate partner to the Coast Guard Auxiliary since September 3, 2004. West Marine offers 10% discount coupons, available on their website, for any boater to purchase needed safety items resulting from a United States Power Squadron or US Coast Guard Auxiliary Vessel Safety Check. West Marine also supports the Coast Guard Auxiliary by publishing Recreational Boating Safety snippets provided by the Auxiliary in their yearly print catalogs.

The US Coast Guard Auxiliary appreciates the ongoing support and its partnership with West Marine. ■



CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Pictured from left to right are: Commodore Jack Gumb, Assistant National Commodore for Recreational Boating; Chris Beck, with Charlotte, NC West Marine Store; Jimmy Helms, with Charlotte, NC West Marine Store; Commodore James Vass, Jr., National Commodore; Bruce Johnson, Director for Recreational Boating Safety Outreach. (Photo by Mel Borofsky, PDCAPT)

## Automated Radio Check Service

Sea Tow® is pleased to announce a new public service for the safety of boaters. Boaters are now able to conduct 24/7, automated radio checks. The service does not require the response of other boaters or watch-standers in order to work, nor does it require special equipment. This free service is available through Sea Tow's ongoing partnership with MariTEL.

For more information visit:  
[www.seatow.com/arc/default.asp](http://www.seatow.com/arc/default.asp).

## EPIRB: Post Factory Serving Registration Concerns

In recent months Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRB's) registration cards have not been matched to the right beacon after being returned from the manufacturer to their owners after replacing the battery or having factory maintenance repairs made.

If you recently sent your EPIRB back to the manufacturer for repairs and/or to have the power supply (battery) replaced, we suggest you compare the Identification Hexadecimal Number on the registration form sticker with the number on the unit itself. Please verify that the 15 digit Hexadecimal Numbers match your registration certificate. These numbers must match exactly. If you receive your EPIRB back from the manufacturer and the Hexadecimal numbers do not match, you should immediately file an updated registration form with NOAA.

How do I register my beacon or submit an updated registration form? Preferably register online at: [www.beaconregistration.noaa.gov](http://www.beaconregistration.noaa.gov). However, you can also mail or fax the signed registration form to:

NOAA/SARSAT  
NSOF, E/SP3  
4231 Suitland Road  
Suitland, MD 20746

Fax: 301-817-4565

New beacons come with a registration form. While pre-owned beacons may not come with a registration form, the form can be downloaded from the website identified above or faxed to you on request by calling: 888-212-7283.

## BoatU.S. Partner To Sponsor VSC Decals

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – James Vass, National Commodore, and Chris Edmonston, President of the Boat Owners Association of the United States signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The four year partnership with BoatU.S.® will provide resources to support, promote and help grow the vessel safety check program. The new partnership between BoatU.S.® and the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary will continue to add value of vessel safety checks for the overall safety efforts of the boating community.





# The Coast Guard Auxiliary and the American Canoe Association

## FOCUS on Paddlesports

By Kelly L. Townsend, DVC-BL and Paul Leuchner, BC-BLC

On Saturday, January 29th, 2011, the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and the American Canoe Association (ACA) signed a Memorandum of Agreement at N-Train in St. Louis establishing a partnership focused on paddlesports safety and education. With the addition of hundreds of thousands of paddlecraft on our waterways each year, the need for paddlesports safety education is crucial. By the year 2021 the United States Coast Guard estimates that one third of the recreational boats on the water will be paddlecraft.

Paddlesports safety education is a challenge for the Coast Guard Auxiliary. The Auxiliary recognized the need for basic training in paddlesports to increase our own effectiveness teaching the Auxiliary Paddlesports America course; and to add value and dialogue during paddlecraft vessel safety checks. In April 2011, the American Canoe Association offered to aid the Auxiliary in this endeavor by providing our members Level I Kayak Instructor Training through a previously existing grant from the United States Coast Guard. This grant targeted the states of North Carolina, Florida, and Massachusetts primarily in an effort to stem the increasing rates of paddlecraft accidents and fatalities in those states. To facilitate this training opportunity, the National Recreational Boating Safety Outreach Department requested the Auxiliary chain of leadership to appoint coordinators within those states Districts and Divisions to recruit Auxiliarists who were interested in receiving this training.

In Western North Carolina, Division 26 in the 5th Southern Region enthusiastically embraced this training opportunity offered by ACA. This area of North Carolina is well known for its scenic rivers and streams that course through the Appalachian Mountains attracting thousands of paddlers each year. DCAPT Jeff Stewart and Division 26 DCDR Phil Bowman saw this as an opportunity to equip their Public Education Instructors with some advanced kayak safety training that would aid them when teaching the Auxiliary Paddlesports America Course. The Flotilla Commander of 5SR-26-03, Jim Stevens, volunteered to serve as the western North Carolina coordinator for the ACA paddlesports training. Jim set about canvassing the Auxiliary recruiting members for the ACA training. Kelly Townsend, Liaison Division Chief for Recreational Boating Safety Outreach, made arrangements with Robin Pope, President of the American



MOORESVILLE, N.C. – ACA President Robin Pope demonstrates proper kayak entry to class. Entry and exit was demonstrated using several types of kayaks. (Photo by Kelly L. Townsend, DVC-BL)



MOORESVILLE, N.C. – Robin Pope helps Tammy Johnson of 5SR-26-03 enter her kayak. (Photo by Kelly L. Townsend, DVC-BL)

Canoe Association, to conduct this training on September 17, 2011 at the 5SR-26-04 Auxiliary Station on Lake Norman in Mooresville, North Carolina.

After assessing the experience level of the group it was decided that the training would first proceed with the American Canoe Association *Quick Start Your Kayak* course. The program was split into two sessions beginning with classroom training in the morning and on-water skill and safety demonstrations in the afternoon. During the morning session the technical elements of paddlesports safety were covered. Presentations covered topics such as trip planning, assessment of the three W's, (wind, waves and weather); kayak design and performance characteristics; proper paddle selection, hand positioning and paddling techniques; and the selection and use of safety equipment including first aid kits, whistles, tow rigging, and the importance of First Aid and CPR.

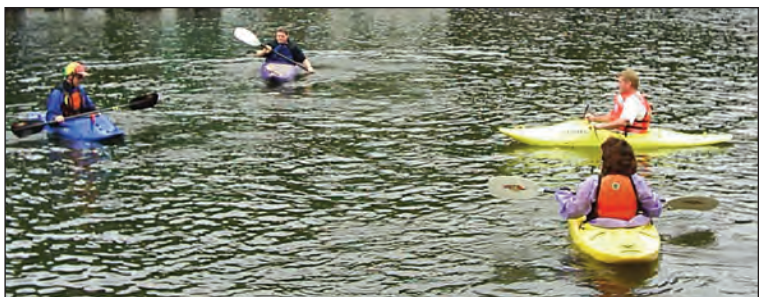
One of the challenges for Auxiliary members who provide paddle craft safety training to the public is that members may only provide on-the-water training on Operational Facilities (OPFACS) in accord with the Auxiliary OTW Manual. Paddle craft are not OPFACS and members, as Auxiliarists, may not use paddle craft on the water for public demonstrations or instruct others in the water using paddle craft. No orders may be issued for such activities which means there will be no assignment to duty or any governmental protection should an accident or injury occur. For this reason, any Auxiliary members who decide to attend ACA training which includes on-water aspects using paddle craft will need to understand that they do so as a civilian, not an Auxiliary member, and may not wear their uniform.

During the afternoon, members were introduced to the on-water aspects of kayaking. Robin demonstrated various techniques and then invited students to perform the same actions or maneuvers. The elements of the morning classroom session then merged with the on-water skills needed to safely operate a kayak. The instructor demonstrated paddlecraft launch and recovery procedures, paddling techniques including the forward stroke as well as the various methods used to maneuver or stop a paddlecraft that is underway. A critical part of this training included the opportunity for members to become proficient in various rescue techniques unique to kayaking. Students were taught how

to perform a wet exit from an overturned kayak as well as the various individual and team rescue techniques that are used to right and re-enter a capsized kayak. Robin worked tirelessly to provide individual member training to insure that concepts were not only learned but performed correctly and efficiently on water.

By the end of the day, all the Auxiliarists attending this course agreed that the training had been a great success. More importantly, the instruction gave them the confidence to convey the essential elements of paddlesports safety to the paddlesports community. At the conclusion of the course the students were challenged to recruit paddlers for the Auxiliary Paddlesports America Course from local outdoor retailers and canoe clubs.

Recently, the ACA received the United States Coast Guard Advanced Boating On-Water Paddlesports Safety Instruction grant that will allow them to continue paddlesports instructor certification in several additional states through the end of 2012. Auxiliary members working within the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, New York, Michigan and Oregon will be invited to attend these courses tuition free. This initiative will enhance the instructor corps of the Coast Guard Auxiliary allowing more units to offer the training that will help keep the burgeoning population of paddlers safe while on the water. It's up to us to get the word out to the paddling public. If you are able to attend one of these courses, please do so. Your efforts will continue our proud tradition of keeping the waters safe for everyone. ■



MOORESVILLE, N.C. – Robin gives instruction on-water to members John Mielke of 5SR-26-03, Scott Spillman, VFC 5SR-09-09 and Tammy Johnson of 5SR-26-03. (Photo by Kelly L. Townsend, DVC-BL)

The American Canoe Association *Quick Start Your Kayak* course can be found at:  
[www.americancanoe.org/resource/resmgr/sei-courses/l1\\_ksk\\_skills.pdf](http://www.americancanoe.org/resource/resmgr/sei-courses/l1_ksk_skills.pdf)

# How Long Can You Tread Water?

By GERALYN RYAN, Flotilla 070-15-08

Sometimes boaters do not wear their life jackets because they are strong swimmers. Their thought process seems to be, Nothing is going to happen and if it does, I'll swim to shore or tread water until I'm rescued. If you're one of those people, the next time you get into a boat you might want to think about how far you could swim. Could you swim 12 miles? Can you tread water for 18 hours?

When Arlen Gastineau set off on a fishing trip, he told his son-in-law he would be back by 6 p.m. When he finally returned, he was 22 hours late. He arrived on a Coast Guard Cutter; tired, cold, hungry and happy to be alive.

On Friday, November 12, 2010, Mr. Gastineau, an experienced boater from Central Florida, invited two friends visiting from out-of-town to join him for a day out on the Gulf of Mexico. Mr. Gastineau had filed a float plan with his family telling them where he planned to go and when he hoped to return. Gastineau had a favorite fishing spot approximately 20 miles off the coast of Clearwater, FL. On the way out they encountered rough seas, so the men dropped anchor closer to shore and began to fish. Despite the choppy conditions, they had a nice day, sharing stories, exchanging news and even catching a couple of grouper. In the late afternoon they decided to head home. That was when they noticed the boat was taking on water.

The three men put on their life jackets and began bailing out the boat. As the waves increased, Gastineau attempted to set off a flare but it did not ignite. He was trying to make a Mayday call when the boat capsized. One of the men tied a rope to the boat and then urged the others to tie themselves to the rope. As the sun began to set, the three men prepared for a long night.

When he did not return as planned, Gastineau's family became concerned and alerted the U.S. Coast Guard. Using the float plan provided by the family, the Coast Guard created a Search and Rescue Action plan. Coast Guard Sector St. Petersburg dispatched a C-130 airplane and MH-60 helicopters to look for the men. A Falcon jet (HU-25) was brought in from Mobile to aid in the search.



GULF OF MEXICO – Mr. Gastineau's boat after it had capsized. (Photo courtesy of Arlen Gastineau)



GULF OF MEXICO – Arlen Gastineau and companions recovering after being rescued. (Photo courtesy of Arlen Gastineau)

The Coast Guard looked for the men throughout the night but did not find them.

Arlen Gastineau and his two friends could hear the planes and see the lights from Clearwater. Gastineau says that he always believed that they would be rescued. He recalls looking at his watch, discovering it was midnight and telling his companions "we'll be out of here soon."

The next morning the search area was expanded and the Auxiliary was called in. Hernando Beach Coast Guard Auxiliary pilot David Lemon joined the mission at first light. Flying at approximately 500 feet, Lemon was assigned to one search action plan while a Coast Guard C-130 was working on a different one.

The skies were clear, but the Gulf was crowded. In addition to recreational boaters out on a Saturday, a fishing tournament was taking place in the area. Crisscrossing the Gulf in high density traffic, the Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary continued looking for the missing boaters. Just before noon, a Coast Guard pilot spotted the overturned boat and the three men tied to it.

They had been in the water for 18 hours. The Coast Guard, Coast Guard Auxiliary and the Florida Department of Fish and Wildlife worked together to bring the men safely to shore.

Arlen Gastineau was an educated boater who knew what to do. He had filed a float plan, had his life jacket on and stayed with his boat. He says he "never would have made it" if he had not been wearing his life jacket. As Auxiliary pilot David Lemon observes "No one ever plans to swamp their boat... If you end up in the water you're going to be in there with whatever you have on at the time." Eighteen hours is a long time to tread water.

Mr. Gastineau recounts his experience in a new video produced by the Hernando Beach Coast Guard Auxiliary. The video is available on the flotilla website:

<http://a0701508.uscgaux.info/>. ■

# Vessel Safety Checks at the Bassmaster Elite Series

By Charles E. Truthan, Flotilla 070-15-03

Big events can start from the most simple of encounters! This one started out on the last day of a PA event at the local Marine Dealer's annual spring boat show. They had several Bassmaster Pro Anglers in attendance. Two of them were approached and asked about their use of life jackets and if their boats had received a Vessel Safety Check (VSC). They stated they are required by tournament rules to meet all USCG regulations, but have not had VSC's. They conjectured that if they did have a current VSC displayed, they might not be as likely to be inspected by local Law Enforcement while on the water. They were told that it was not a guarantee, but, when faced with multiple boats to inspect, they do tend to go after the ones not displaying a current VSC decal. It sounded like a great idea to them and they gave their Tournament Director's phone number.

Three days later a presentation was made at the Bassmaster Elite Series business meeting. To prepare for the presentation, the mandatory items of our 7012 VSC sheet were printed and passed out to the Anglers. It generated several questions and some fun conversations. To everyone's great delight, over two thirds of the Anglers expressed strong interest in participating with the VSC!

The ground rules for the VSC's were simple. None were to be done during the tournament days. That gave us the three practice days preceding the tournament to perform VSC's. The next event was one week away which gave less than four days to organize and prepare.

The "Citrus Slam" was to be held in an adjacent Division, at flotilla 14-9, Palatka, on the St. John River. There are over sixty nautical miles of shore line with numerous ramps and fish camps. Fortunately Mr. Ted Schneider, FC 14-9, Mr. Wayne Beard, VFC 14-9 and Mr. Dan "Dusty" Cooper, FSO-VE 14-9 were all experienced with local Bass Tournaments. Even with their extensive efforts to locate where the Anglers would be staying and launching, there were just too many possibilities to cover them all.

A recruitment effort was launched for as many Vessel Examiners (VE's) as could be recruited from the adjacent Flotillas. That included 3 Divisions and 12 Flotillas. With the assistance of Tom Loughlin, DSO-PA D7, a list was formulated of all the positions in the Chain of Leadership and Management who should be advised, informed or participate in this effort. After a few hours on the Aux e-directory website, the needed phone and e-mail distribution list was created. The list grew as the event unfolded and it appeared this effort would continue into District 8.

By Sunday, we had commitments from 15 VE's from 7 Flotillas from all 3 Divisions including one from the US

Power Squadrons. An outstanding number considering it was a weekday event and some VE's would be driving 1.5 to 2 hours just to get there! We knew that the Anglers would launch in "waves" at first light but we still did not know from which of the dozens of ramps in the area. We decided to focus on the main Palatka City Dock (PCD). We all met there at 0630 hrs on Monday. By 0800 there had been only 3 Tournament boats appear for the 15 VE's present. Two teams formed to search the east and west sides of the area to seek out the Anglers. Both teams found very few boats at local motels, but did perform VSC's, one even being done at a gas station!

At 0930 hrs, we reassembled at the PCD. The VE's from distant flotillas had understandably left because of the poor turnout. Wayne, Dusty and I put our heads together and devised a plan to hold a VE station a few blocks away from the PCD on the days of the Tournament itself. This way we'd not interfere with the Tournament. The Tournament Director was informed how our first day had gone. Impressed with our plan and the number of VE's who'd travelled so far to participate, he stated that a remote VE

site just would not work. We'd somehow make it work right there at the PCD! Less than a week ago our presence during the tournament was not an option. Now it was a "done deal"!

On our way home, the surrounding ramps were explored and one was found with a campground. There were about 25 anglers camping there. We returned Tuesday morning at 0700 and caught 12 of them in two hours. One angler approached, declined to participate, exited the gate then made a "U-turn" and reentered. He waited to get

his VSC done and stated "If you guys can get up before 6:00 a.m. to be here, I can certainly wait 5 minutes to get the VSC done." This is just one of many examples of the extraordinary professionalism we all encountered over the course of this event.

That evening, after meeting with the Tournament Director and receiving his approval for VSC's during the retrieval of boats on Tournament days, the call again went out for massive VE support. The response on Thursday and Friday was heartwarming with many VE's returning from distant flotillas.

In the end, we performed 83 VSC's and awarded 55 decals by 21 VE's from 3 Divisions, 8 Flotillas and the USPS. On the [www.Bassmaster.com](http://www.Bassmaster.com) website, check out the photos "Behind the Scenes" and "On the Water" and you'll find many of the boats with a current VSC decal displayed on the port helm!

The goal is to see 100% of the Bassmaster Elite Series boats with current VSC decals on them by 2013 and by 2015 to see 50% in the Classic and Open Series. ■



GULF OF MEXICO – Auxiliarists George Hendricks and Tom Spangler of 070-15-03 award Jonathon VanDam the VSC decal for 2011. (Photo by Charles E. Truthan)

# Mariner's Safety Endangered

## When VHF Radio Distress Alerts By Digital Selective Calling (DSC) Lack Location and Identification Information

As the Coast Guard's new marine radio network Rescue 21 becomes operational throughout the U.S., rescue centers can now receive instant distress alerts from commonly used DSC-capable VHF marine radios. However, approximately 90% of VHF DSC distress alerts received by the Coast Guard do not contain position information, and approximately 60% do not contain a registered identity. The Coast Guard cannot effectively respond to a DSC distress alert sent from such a radio.

This means that search and rescue efforts may normally be suspended when:

- No communications with the distressed vessel can be established,
- No further information or means of contacting the vessel can be obtained from other sources, and
- No position information is known.

### Help Us Help You

FIRST Obtain a Maritime Mobile Installation Identity (MMSI) and enter it into your radio. MMSI numbers are issued by the Federal Communications Commission if your vessel otherwise requires a station license, or from *BOATUS*. Ensure any information originally provided is updated as changes occur. FCC regulations require that DSC-equipped radios "use MMSIs assigned by the Commission or its designees" (47 CFR 80.103(b)).

THEN Interconnect your radio to a GPS receiver using a two-wire NMEA 0183 interface on all DSC equipped marine radios and on most GPS receivers. Instructions should be provided in the radio and GPS operators manual. Further information is provided and will be routinely updated in:

<http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/?pageName=mtDsc>.

Developed by the Spectrum Management and Telecommunications Policy Division (CG-652), United States Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, DC. Questions should be directed to Mr. Russell Levin at (202) 475 3555 or [Russell.S.Levin@uscg.mil](mailto:Russell.S.Levin@uscg.mil).

## Winterizing Your Boat

Steps to get your boat ready for next spring should actually begin in the fall with thorough winterizing preparations. A helpful guide to winterizing has been prepared by *Seaworthy*, the *BoatU.S. Marine Insurance & Damage Avoidance Report* ([www.boatus.com/seaworthy/winter/default.asp](http://www.boatus.com/seaworthy/winter/default.asp)). After citing the surprising statistic that California has more winterizing claims than any other state, the article covers areas of concern for winterizing.

For example, is it better to store your boat ashore or in the water? Generally, it's safer to store it ashore, with the caveat that boats surrounded by air are more susceptible to sudden freezes, so winterizing must be done before there is any chance of a sustained freeze. If boats are stored in the water then it is essential to protect all the thru-hulls. A winterizing worksheet is available at the above site to help make sure that nothing is overlooked.

The article discusses the importance of having a detailed winterizing contract and lists the steps that should be taken to avoid engine damage during the winter. It also provides tips on what to do with electronics, gear, and biminis, and stresses the importance of shrink wrapping or a good boat cover. Winterizing can be expensive, but it's much cheaper than ending up with prematurely aged engines or cracked blocks.



## The RBS Outreach Department

### Mission Statement

The RBS Outreach Department, under the program guidance of the U.S. Coast Guard Office of Boating Safety and the direction of the Auxiliary Recreational Boating Safety Directorate, provides assistance to Coast Guard units, Auxiliary National Departments and Auxiliary District organizations in their efforts to promote and support recreational boating safety programs. RBS Outreach provides both informational and fiscal resource services to the Auxiliary membership. In addition, the RBS Outreach provides liaison with State Boating Law Administrators and other recreational boating safety organizations, i.e., state, federal and the public sector.

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