PREVENTION DIRECTORATE - NAVIGATION SYSTEMS DIVISION
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR:

ATON (Aids to Navigation), PATON (Private Aids to Navigation) VERIFICATION, BRIDGE INSPECTION AND CHART-UPDATING PROGRAMS

A. <u>Private Aids Verifier (AV) Program:</u> On federal navigable waters, PATON (Private Aids to Navigation) Verification and Bridge Inspections are the responsibility of the Coast Guard Auxiliary. In order to participate in the Aid Verification and Bridge Inspection Programs a member must be a qualified Aids Verifier (AV).

   <u>Note:</u> This qualification is not required for participation in reporting discrepancies for any Federal or Private ATON's or Bridges ("come upon's") nor is it required for reporting discrepancies for the Chart-Updating Program.

   1. <u>Initial Qualification:</u> To qualify as an AV, a member should have participated in a D13 AV Workshop (about 8 hours) covering the Verification and Inspection Programs and must have passed the exam with a passing grade of 80% or better. Only the DSO-NS or an authorized SO-NS officer (who has been designated by the DSO) can administer the workshop and exam. Any other procedures must be approved by the DSO-NS-13.

      Another AV requirement is to complete an AV PQS (Personnel Qualification Standard). Attendees should endeavor to sign-off ~33% **before** the Workshop and ~15% at the AV Workshop.

      As depicted on page 5 of the PQS, each AV must also show proof of having passed the following to take the AV workshop and to be properly certified in AuxData:

      i. BQ (or AX). A national *recommendation* is also that an AV should be at least crew qualified unless he/she wants to do PATON verifications and Bridge inspections by land only.
         1. All members must have completed the Core Training classes, plus two FEMA/EMI online classes: ICS-100 (#IS-100.c) and ICS-700 (#IS-700.b)
         2. Newer members must complete BQC-II (Basic Qualification Course).

   i. All members seeking this qualification must complete the online "Introduction to Risk Management, available on the Auxiliary training Moodle website ("R", enrollment key: *obtain online*); plus a (2-)4-hour TCT Refresher (completed initially by within 15 months of their Intro to Risk Management, thence within 15 months).

      After completing the D13 AV Workshop presentations and Exam, the Instructor reviews the AV PQS with the attendees. Particular attention will be paid to Item #s 3.6.a-c, 4.4 5.1-5.3, 6.5, 6.6, (which are the Practical Question portion of the Exam). Remaining Tasks need to be signed-off by local AVs who feel confident in the Task element questions.

      After completing the AV PQS, the AV-applicant forwards it to the DSO-NS who reviews, then submits the following to DirAux:

      (i) A copy of the completed PQS pages 4 and 5 (Record of Completions). Note: Task B is the D13 AV Workshop and Exam.
      (ii) Include from their FSO-IS, sign-off's which reflect their successfully completing the two ICS classes and TCT/RM classes, and verifies the member having a BQ (or AX) qualification, all the Core Training classes, and BQC-II (if applicable).
      (iii) A recommendation for AV certification, written by the DSO-NS, is included.

   2. Maintaining AV Certification: Per the 2024 NS Program Handbook, each qualified AV should process at least one assignment (PATON Verification, Bridge Inspection, or "come-upon" discrepancy report) or AV Training every year to stay qualified.
      -Since April, 2019, members holding an AV-PQS qualification must complete (2-)4-hour TCT Refresher (within 15 months of the preceding TCT).

3. Regaining AV Certification. A previously qualified member who fails to meet currency maintenance requirements may regain certification by complying with Chapter 2, Section C.4 of the NS Program Handbook.

4. Process of Assignments: Assignments are given by the Prevention Department Waterways (dpw) in Seattle via a forwarded email notification of availability on a website (https://www.pacificarea.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/District-13/District-Staff/-dpw/) to all SO-NS officers usually between mid-March and the end of April each year. These assignments are then distributed to the respective FSO-NS officers for further distribution to qualified AV members. Note: In D13, we are annually assigned All Class I PATONs and almost all Bridges. We are not assigned Class II or III PATONs at this time.

Although members should attempt to complete assignments by August 31st of each year, D13-dpw just asks that every effort be made to complete all of the listed bridges and PATON within the calendar year annually. The Prevention Department Waterways Branch has all of the forms available on-line year 'round. The DSO-NS-13 is responsible for a smooth workflow and timely process of all assignments and support to all SO-NS officers.

B. PATON Verification or Bridge Inspection Patrols: Verifications or Inspections can be done by boat or car (some – where justified). A qualified AV member can request a patrol by boat or be part of one such patrol in order to do the AV work, or can conduct their NS activity by land or other means - in specific circumstances (ensuring that they comply with "Assignment to Duty" parameters in the Auxiliary Manual Ch2.B.4-5, 2.B.18; Ch4.F.11, Ch4.G.4, Ch5.J.3-7 and Operations Policy Manual Ch2.A.7). PATON and Bridge forms (documents) are furnished to the SO-NS officers, who then forward them to FSO-NS, who then make copies of their "AOR" assignments and distribute them (email preferred) to qualified AV members. The Study Guides for PATON Verifications and Bridge Inspections refer to and itemizes the equipment required for AV work.

Positions should be taken on all Floating PATON assignments, while not putting the Facility at risk. Positions shall be taken on Fixed PATON assignments when there is some reason to suspect the current Light List position. Position Tolerances are as follows:

1: Fixed Lateral PATONs: 50 feet (or 15 meters)
2: Floating Lateral PATONs: 100 feet (or 35 meters)
3: Non-Lateral/Special Purpose/Regulatory: 165 feet (or 50 meters)

If the position exceeds the prescribed tolerance, it shall be considered a Routine Discrepancy unless it poses a navigational safety issue.

1: AVs will not board, replace, adjust or climb on any aid for any reason.
2: AVs do not have the authority to direct a PATON owner to make changes to their navigation aid. And no private property accessed unless get permission.

C. After-Action Requirements: All processed forms must be returned to D13 dpw via email or regular mail (overnighting highly discouraged) within **48 hours** of verifications (or surveys), to show that they are watching properly or are discrepant. Electronic submittals are to: D13-SMB-D13-PATON@uscg.mil for PATONs and D13-SMB-D13-Bridges@uscg.mil for Bridges. Unauthorized PATON's or discrepant ATON's should also be reported to Prevention Department Waterways Branch, Seattle (dpw). Additionally, Urgent and Critical discrepancies are to be reported immediately (during or at the end of Patrol) to the nearest CG Sector by radio or phone, 24 hours/day. Sector Puget Sound (206-217-6002,3,4); Sector Columbia River (503-247-4038).

D. Application for PATON: A qualified AV can assist a private party or entity in the application process for installing a new PATON. He/she should refer the potential PATON

owner to contact D13 Waterways Branch-ATON (dpw) at (571) 607-1523) to request a PATON Application (CG-2554) questionnaire. An application questionnaire may also be found at https://www.pacificarea.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/District-13/District-Staff/-dpw/-paton/ or by e-mailing D13-SMB-D13-PATON@uscg.mil to request one. All further correspondence is resolved between the applicant and the USCG, Waterways Branch, Seattle, WA (dpw) directly. Additionally, a PATON owner's request for having an AIS (Automatic Identification System) on their PATON would be initiated by their submitting a CG-2554a - PATON AIS Addendum to the USCG per the instructions on that form.

E. Discrepancy Reporting. Any member may report ATON, PATON or Bridge discrepancies ("come upon's"). This consists of reporting any problem (discrepancy) with an Aid to Navigation that prevents it from serving its intended function. Discrepancy Reporting also includes bridge fender condition and bridge lighting. Urgent and Critical Discrepancies shall be immediately reported to the nearest CG Sector by radio or phone, 24 hours/day (see above for numbers), with a Form a7054.pdf (P/ATON) or that year's Bridge form also being submitted to D13 Waterways Branch-ATON (dpw). (See Section C for email addresses.)
Routine Discrepancies: shall be noted on the PATON Report form with any needed recommendation/s; i.e. "updating the LL position", "notifying the owner of some damage'. Note: Proper discrepancy report processing includes ascertaining that the discrepancy has not yet been reported - via review of the most recent Local Notice to Mariners and contact with the relevant NS Staff Officer. Any requested Post Storm Survey patrols (which summarize all Federal ATON's found to be watching properly) shall be reported on a Form a7054.pdf.

F. Chart Updating. Any member may report chart discrepancies as part of the Chart Updating Program. New chart objects like landmarks, waterfront facilities, or topography changes should be conducted by qualified AVs. Chart objects that have been removed or changed, and any discovered shoaling depths and waterfront changes are valuable input. This permits charts to be updated by NOAA's National Ocean Service (NOS).
   1. Chart Updating Procedures: It is strongly suggested that any member wanting to submit chart-updating information to NOAA, first review the CU reporting materials on the national "NS Forms & Manuals", (https://wow.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=P-DEPT&category=ns-forms-and-manuals) under "Other Documents". This includes providing updates to Charts and to the Coast Pilot of their area.
   Note: All chart-updating reports are submitted through NOAA's new ASSIST link: https://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/customer-service/assist/   Further information about this reporting system can be obtained from the DSO-NS (pamck.cgaux@ gmail.com), who should also be copied on submittals so she can track our participation.

G. NE Program. If a CG ATON Unit solicits it, a member may participate in the maintenance, troubleshooting and repair of Federal ATON's by working with an Aids to Navigation Team (ANT) or buoytender. To qualify in this program, the Auxiliarist must comply with the new NS Program Handbook Chapter 3 (Servicing Federal Aids to Navigation). This requires a long-time commitment by an auxiliary member and must be approved by the USCG.

H. Mission Hour Reporting. All members engaged in any ATON, PATON, or Bridge inspection activity (and complying with "assignment to duty" parameters) report their hours either by completing an Activity Log in AD2 or submitting a Mission Activity Report (form 7030/ Individual), separate from the coxswain's Mission Activity Report (in AuxData2) for the OPFAC. This form is completed and forwarded to their FSO-IS. (or do yourself in AuxData2 'Activity Logs'). Failure to submit this form will result in the member not being credited for their NS Program hours or activities. Plus, the AV needs to

enter some number for PATONs and/or Bridges verified on their 7030/Individual for AuxData to reflect their NS activity. Failure to enter <u>any</u> NS Activity in a year will result in going 'in arrears'.

Only one AV may take credit on any one 7030/Individual for a P/ATON/ Bridge. (I.e., use multiple 7030/Individual forms for multiple AVs.) Also, the number of P/ATONs or bridges completed is the number of assignments (i.e., the number of Verification Sheets or Bridge Inspection Packets) – **<u>not</u>** the number of lights. Plus, the AV needs to enter some number for PATONs and/or Bridges verified on their 7030/Individual for AuxData to reflect their NS activity. Failure to enter <u>any</u> NS Activity in a year will result in going 'in arrears'.

(For any questions or suggestions about this SOP, please call/email the DSO-NS-D13).