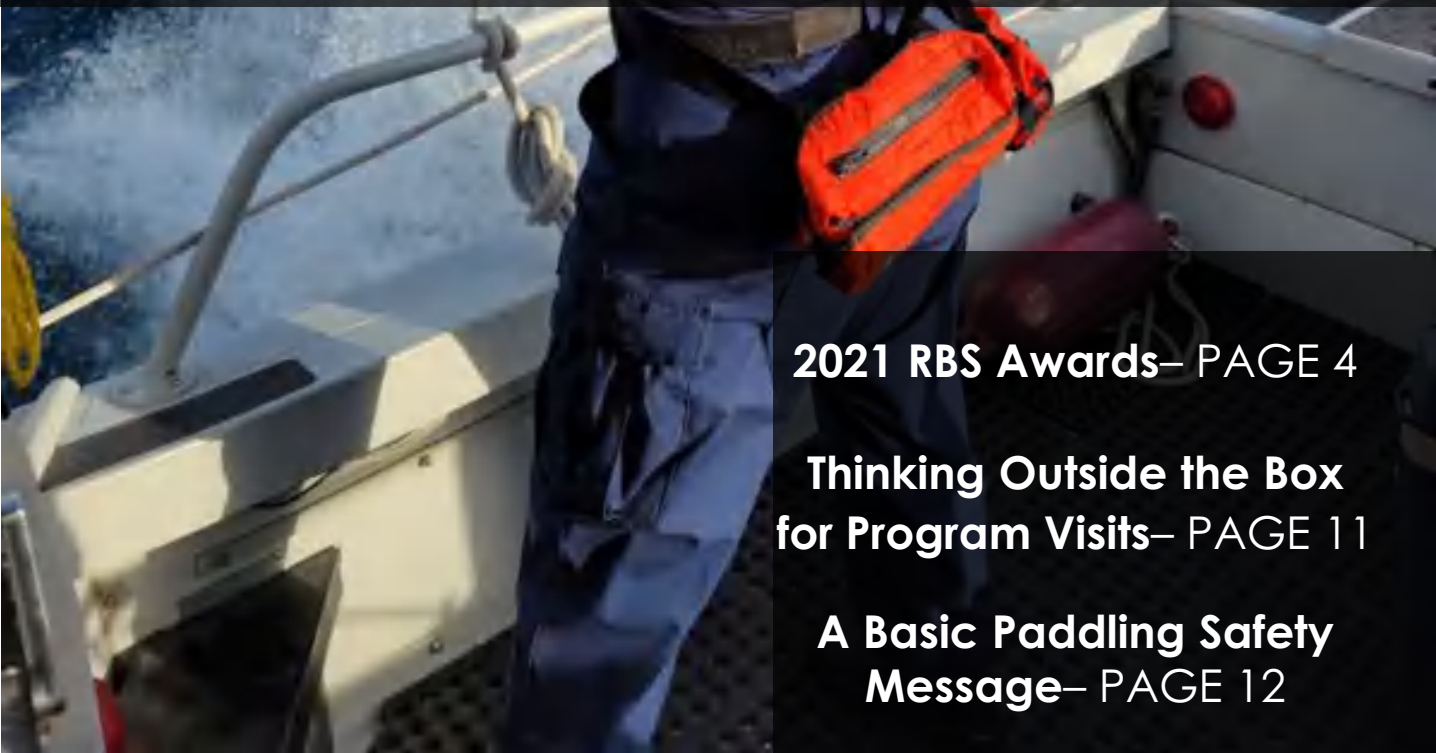




RBS Job One

Publication of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Recreational Boating Safety Directorates



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Spring 2022

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Cover Photo: BEAR LAKE, UT - Auxiliarist Katelynn Selby on starboard watch on Auxiliary Facility *Mama Bear* on a maritime observation patrol on Bear Lake. Coast Guard Auxiliary photo by Anthony King.

RBS Job One

Spring 2022

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Director's Message

Jim Cortes, Director - Vessel Examination & Partner Visitation Directorate

We, like most organizations, are challenged by the environment. Since COVID, restrictions and mandates have become prevalent, and nobody likes to be told what to do in a society of free will. It is our challenge as leaders to accept the situation and remain positive as we focus on the bigger picture.

We as a volunteer force are no different as nobody likes to be told: "they must." We typically do not like words like *mandatory* or *required* because they carry negative implications. However, as leaders in the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, we should address training and reinforce our roles because the public's trust in the U.S. Coast Guard depends on us. Currency is a function of training and practice. Unfortunately, restrictions in the environment have been a disruption to the practice portion.

Therefore, to address the gap, I encourage our teams to accept training willingly. Things are changing! Simply, knowing our "why" can get us through and past the current condition which will ultimately make us stronger as an organization.

We have training requirements that keep us proficient, relevant, and responsible safety influencers acting on behalf of the U.S. Coast Guard. We must remain flexible.

We do take direction from the National Executive Committee (NEXCOM) and the Coast Guard Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety (CG-BSX). This guidance, at times, takes precedence, especially when the situation is fluid. We will update manuals over time, but safety is always the most important aspect of everything we do. Please keep in mind that BSX and NEXCOM guide activity for the greater good.

Retaining our trained and dedicated Vessel

Examiners during the turmoil is critical. We may need to reinforce our relationship with the stakeholders.

At the same time, the recreational boater community is growing exponentially which requires us to do more with less.

Where you make a difference is by helping our teams recognize the value of training and continue moving forward to fulfill the missions of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. Complete the training and execute the mission safely. Remain flexible in the execution of safety programs yet steadfast in the safety protocol that we can influence.

Together we will accomplish great things. Thank you for all that you do!

Let's focus on the mission. Stay the course!



What's New

From the RBS Directorates (B, E, and V)



The B Directorate has a newly designed webpage with simplicity and ease of navigation in mind. Whether you're on your phone, tablet, or computer, this is a great resource for all. Check it out at <https://bdept.cgaux.org>.



Have you thought about earning this device? The Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) Device Award recognizes extraordinary effort of Auxiliarists who consistently provide strong support to RBS programs. It requires significant activity in boating safety programs over a minimum period of two years. Check out the full requirements at <https://bit.ly/RBSDeviceFlyer>.



I Want a VSC is back! For a time, the request form was offline due to malicious outside activity disruption which is now resolved. Check it out at <https://bit.ly/I-Want-A-VSC>.



Vessel Safety Check Decals are distributed to Division and Flotilla Commanders via U.S. Postal Service. They are sent from the Auxiliary National Supply Center (ANSC) during the month of January each year to accommodate the leadership changes and for efficiency; to minimize loss/waste/transfer, the decals go to the current officer as listed in the January AUXDATA II.

2021 RBS Awards



On January 25, 2022, Captain Troy Glendye, Chief of the Coast Guard Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety and National Coordinator for the National Recreational Boating Safety Program, recognized several Auxiliarists via a Zoom Meeting. The individuals are:

Mr. Donald Rimel

Mr. Rimel is cited for outstanding achievement in Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) production from January 2019 to December 2020. Demonstrating superior professionalism and expertise, Mr. Rimel completed 1,194 Program Visits over this two-year period, overcoming the challenges of a worldwide pandemic to serve the boating public. His sustained performance in this area significantly contributed to boating safety by ensuring boaters and the merchants they frequent were aware of the federal and state requirements for safety equipment on board their vessels. He also ensured that information on choosing the right life jacket was available to the public to encourage life jacket wear. Mr. Rimel's dedication, judgment, and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are keeping in with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard and the United States

Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Mr. Thomas Murphy

Mr. Murphy is cited for outstanding achievement in Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) production from January 2019 to December 2020. Demonstrating superior professionalism and expertise, Mr. Murphy completed 1,636 Program Visits over this two-year period, overcoming the challenges of a worldwide pandemic to serve the boating public. His sustained performance in this area significantly contributed to boating safety by ensuring boaters and the merchants they frequent were aware of the federal and state requirements for safety equipment on board their vessels. He also ensured that information on choosing the right life jacket was available to the public to encourage life jacket wear. Mr. Murphy further served the objectives of the RBS program by serving simultaneously in two leadership positions in the Auxiliary within the RBS area, including as Assistant District Staff Officer for Public Education for District 13. Mr. Murphy's dedication, judgment, and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are keeping in with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard and the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Mr. Carl Mosbaugh

Mr. Mosbaugh is cited for outstanding achievement in Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) production from January 2019 to December 2020. Demonstrating superior professionalism and expertise, Mr. Mosbaugh completed 1,594 Vessel Safety Checks over this two-year period, overcoming the challenges of a worldwide pandemic to serve the boating public. His sustained performance in this area significantly contributed to boating safety by ensuring that the boating public had the right safety equipment on board. Mr. Mosbaugh further served the objectives of the RBS program by serving simultaneously in four leadership positions within the Auxiliary within the Vessel Exam area, including as District Staff Officer, Vessel Examination for District 8. Mr. Mosbaugh's dedication, judgment, and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard and the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Mr. Christopher Hoffman, Jr

Mr. Hoffman is cited for outstanding achievement in Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) production from January 2019 to December 2020. Demonstrating superior professionalism and expertise, Mr. Hoffman completed 1,011 Paddlecraft Safety Checks over this two-year period, overcoming the challenges of a worldwide pandemic to serve the boating public. His sustained performance in this area significantly contributed to boating safety by ensuring that this rapidly growing area of recreational boating was well educated on areas such as wearing of life jackets and the federal and state requirements for safety equipment on their paddlecraft. Mr. Hoffman further served the objectives of the RBS program by serving in a leadership position within the Auxiliary focused on RBS as Division Staff Officer for Program Visitation for Division 15 in District 1 Northern. Mr. Hoffman's dedication, judgment, and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard and the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary.

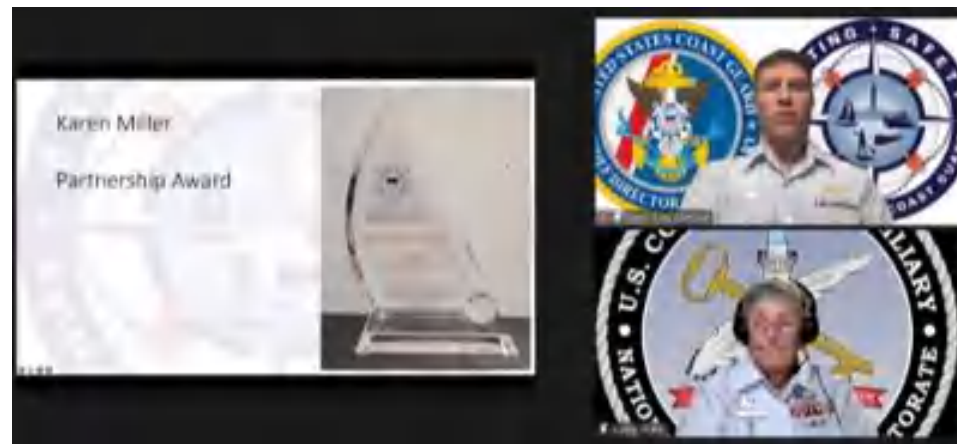
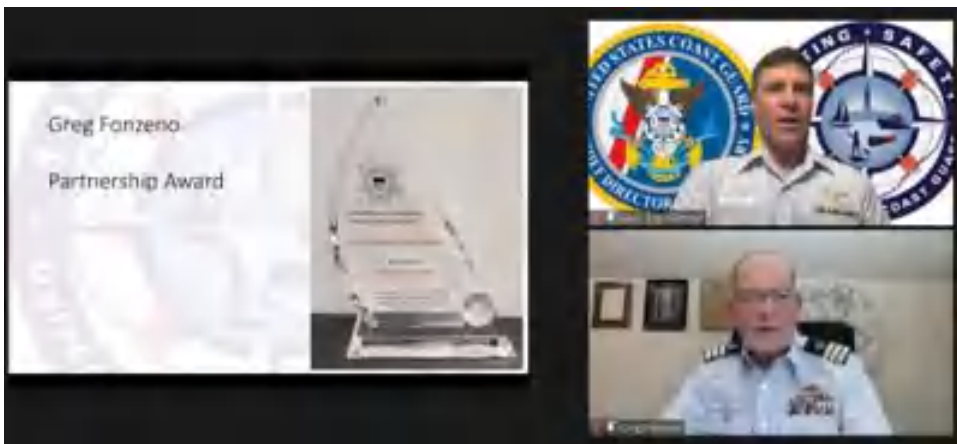
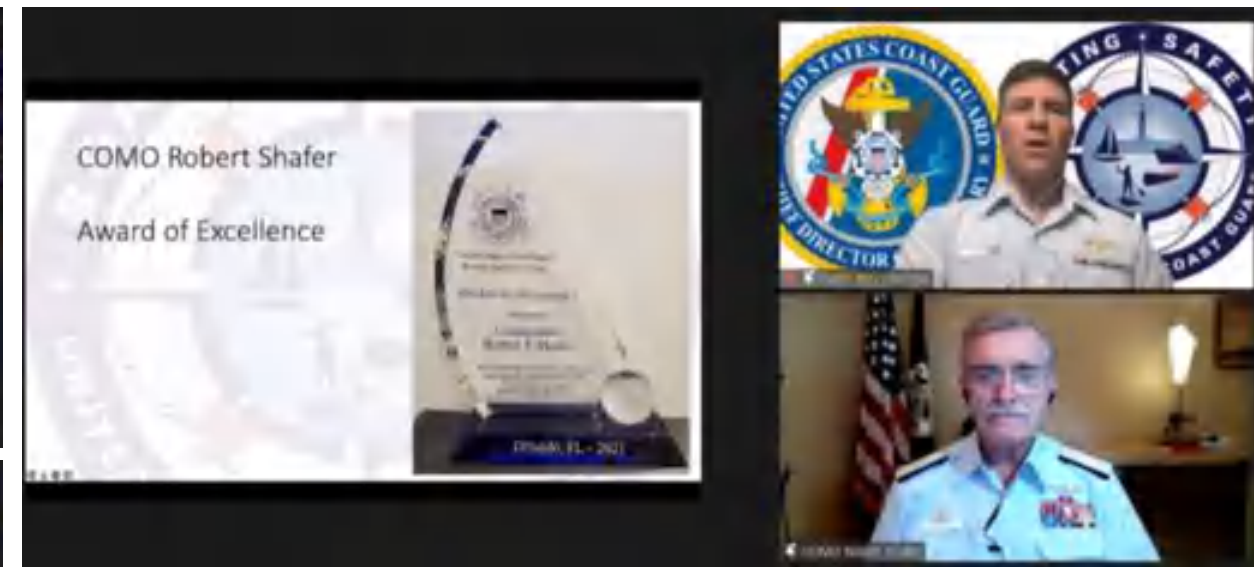
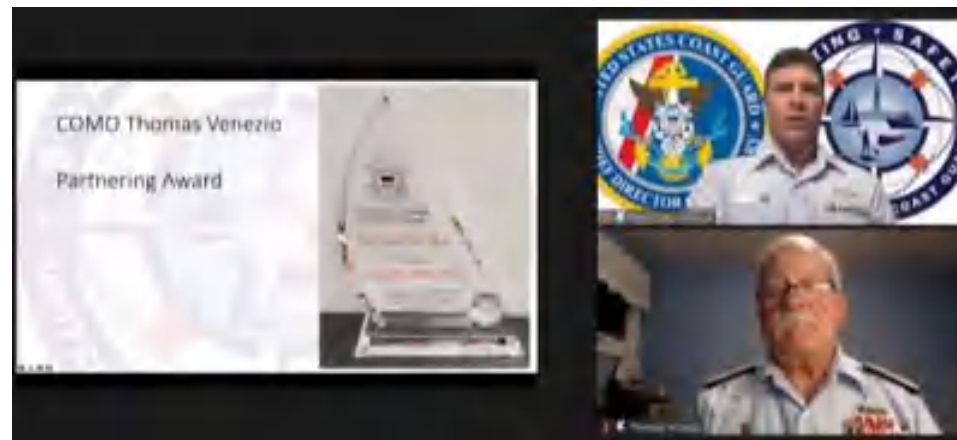
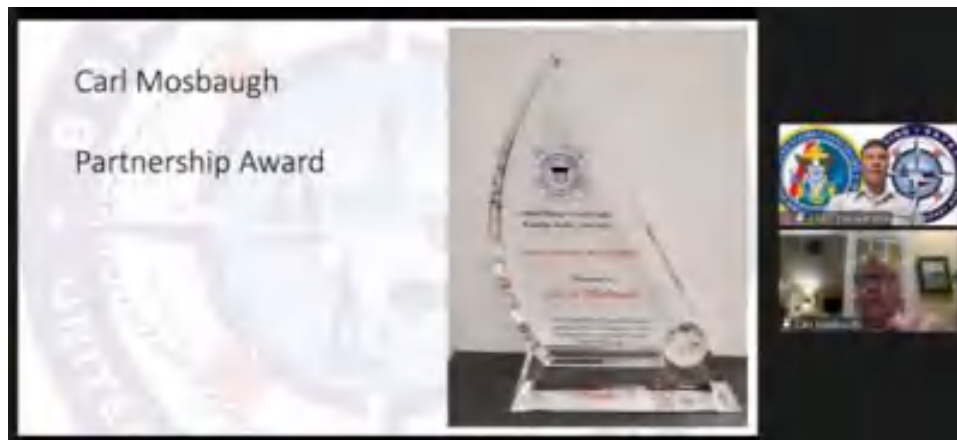
Ms. Karen Miller

Ms. Miller is cited for outstanding achievement in Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) production in 2020. Ms. Miller served as Division Chief-Instructor

Development in the Education Directorate. She was the key team member responsible for the final product as Instructor Development 2020 was developed and deployed. This significant upgrade of the Instructor Development course now ensured Auxiliary Instructors can follow the most current techniques and best practices. Her attention to detail, steadfast guidance on best practices, and insistence on proper grammar and sentence structure made the final product the best it could be and ensured the content could be successfully deployed in both a classroom and virtual environment. Ms. Miller held two national sessions qualifying 20 new Auxiliary instructors virtually. The feedback from students was highly positive and conveyed the infectious enthusiasm Ms. Miller put into her instruction. Ms. Miller's dedication, judgment, and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard and the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Mr. Greg Fonzeno

Mr. Fonzeno is cited for outstanding achievement in Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) production in 2020. Mr. Fonzeno served as Division Chief-Course Development in the Education Directorate. He was the key team member responsible for course development and course certification with the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA). He worked closely with NASBLA to ensure Auxiliary courses met the national standards. He was responsible to obtain approval from the 50 State and Puerto Rico Boating Law Administrators for the individual state presentations. This responsibility required great knowledge of individual state laws as well as diplomatic skills in dealing with state officials. Mr. Fonzeno stood out for his tact and timely results-oriented leadership, securing approvals from individual states. He was always calm, cool, and patient in negotiating changes requested by the states, and he quickly communicated to the District Staff Officers any changes made in their presentations. In addition, Mr. Fonzeno used Google forms for end-of-course exams for virtual instruction. This required an enormous amount of time and patience in dealing with individual instructors calling for help setting up their forms. Mr. Fonzeno's dedication, judgment, and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard and the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary.



COMO Thomas Venezia

COMO Venezia is cited for outstanding achievement in Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) production since 2010. COMO Venezia served as a Branch Chief for Advocacy Partners support for the past nine years. Possessing a wealth of institutional knowledge that has proven valuable to both the boating law administrators and the state liaison officers nationwide, he has served as the “go-to” person when questions concerning recreational boating safety arise, especially when they are technically complex. COMO Venezia was instrumental in the development and execution of the NASBLA Boat Program, which established the process for qualifying and credentialing marine law enforcement and first responder personnel. Given the role these enforcement officers play in ensuring boating safety on the waters, this has a multiplying effect for the program. COMO Venezia continues to be engaged with this program that now encompasses all 50 states, District of Columbia, and the various territories. A former District 1SR Commodore as well as Assistant National Commodore for Operations, COMO Venezia possesses outstanding expertise in the Auxiliary. His dedication, judgment, and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard and the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary.

COMO Robert Shafer

COMO Shafer is cited for distinguished service in Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) production as the Assistance National Commodore for Recreational Boating from November 2018 to August 2020. Leading three national staff directorates, COMO Shafer demonstrated exceptional leadership in negotiations with BoatEd, the Auxiliary vendor for the production of Public Education course materials. Despite a change in ownership within BoatEd at the mid-period of the negotiations that caused a great deal of repeated effort, his efforts concluded in a successful agreement that led to the new course at a greatly reduced cost. COMO Shafer served with distinction as Project Officer for the Japan Coast Guard visit to Anchorage, Alaska, which was held in conjunction with the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) conference. As Project Officer, he was responsible for arranging an opportunity for Japan Coast Guard guests to get underway in Prince William Sound on a USCG Auxiliary facility, which allowed them to meet and interact with Auxiliarists. The Japan Coast Guard guests also visited Sector Anchorage, toured the USCGC MUSTANG, and conducted an impromptu visit to a sea plane base. As a result, the Japan Coast Guard party received a much better understanding of the Auxiliary’s role and relationship with the Coast Guard.

COMO Shafer also spearheaded the strengthening of relationships with partner organizations, including the U.S. Power Squadrons, the National Safe Boating Council, the American Canoe Association, and the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, which directly resulted in signed memorandums of agreement. Finally, the Recreational Boating Directorates revised the State Liaison Officer Manual, created a new Instructor Development Course, established the Commodore Dan Maxim Award for Educational Excellence, and increased the Recreational Boating Safety footprint via social media. The Directorates also resumed the publication of “RBS Job One,” developed new Vessel Exam and Program Visit workshops, and created a Vessel Examiner practice exam and study guide. COMO Shafer’s exceptional professional ability, steadfast initiative, and selfless dedication to duty reflect great credit upon him and upheld the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard and the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary.



BEAR LAKE, UT - Auxiliarist Lana Visser from Flotilla 78 Garden City maintains stern watch while on Auxiliary Facility *Mama Bear* on a maritime observation patrol on Bear Lake. Coast Guard Auxiliary photo by Anthony King.

Boating Safety Isn't Just One Week a Year

Anthony King, DVC-BR



NEW YORK – U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary City Island Flotilla (54) kicked off National Safe Boating Week with a Vessel Examiner Boot Camp for trainees to obtain hands-on vessel safety check experience. Auxiliary photos by Jose Pena.

National Safe Boating Week (NSBW) this year was a great success! Recreational safe boating was spread throughout the U.S., proclamations declared from various local, county, and state leaders (including one from President Joseph Biden, Jr., [click here](#)), various public affairs booths and displays from the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, along with boating safety courses taught, vessel exam stations and blitzes, social media campaigns on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, radio interviews, YouTube videos/PSAs, and much more!

The Coast Guard Auxiliary was essential to making this annual event a success and easily fulfilling our overall mission “to contribute to the safety and security of our citizens, ports, waterways, and coastal regions” by promoting and improving recreational boating safety. Our job as Auxiliarists is recreational boating safety—RBS is our number one job.

Although National Safe Boating Week is finished for this year, our work is just beginning. With all the recreational boating safety we have been promoting, we must continue and follow through. Boating safety is not just one week, it's a 24/7, 365-day mission we have been given by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Continue to promote and share the command messages for recreational boating safety:

- Always wear a life jacket. Always wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket while underway.
- Have a Marine VHF Radio. While everyone has a cell phone, they may go out of range or lose battery power when needed most.
- Register and carry an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) or a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB). A locator beacon can help us find you faster.

- Know your navigation rules.
- Be on the lookout for illegal charters.
- Check the capacity plate on your vessel for the maximum load of passengers and items.
- Never boat under the influence. Alcohol consumption remains the single-greatest contributing factor in recreational boating fatalities.
- Dress for the water temperature, not the air temperature.
- File a float plan.
- Take a boating safety course.
- Use your engine cut-off switch on boats under 26 feet and powered by engines with 3Hp or more – it is the law as of 1 April 2021.
- Get a free, annual vessel safety check.
- Check the weather before going underway.
- Label kayaks and paddlecraft.
- Check out the Coast Guard Boating Safety app.

What can we do as Auxiliarists to continually promote recreational boating safety?

- Get active in public affairs. Become a [Public Affairs Specialist](#) and/or attend the AUX-12 C-School. We need writers, graphic designers, editors, photographers, videographers, and much more. Social media has become a vital form of communication and we need those proficient in social media to contribute. Public Affairs allows us to

spread our message to the general boating public through a variety of media.

- [Become a vessel examiner](#). Hold a weekly, biweekly, or monthly vessel exam station at your local boat ramp or other locations with permission from the property owner. Walk the docks and talk to various boaters. They may be interested in some boating safety information or a vessel exam.
- [Become a program visitor](#). Share recreational boating safety information with local businesses. Many important connections and relationships can be made through the use of this program.
- Get involved in surface operations in your area (boat crew, coxswain, personal watercraft (PWC) operator, and Auxiliary Paddlecraft Program (AUXPAD)). As a surface operator, we can have meaningful conversations with a variety of people on the water about many aspects of recreational boating safety.

While there is so much more we can do to promote recreational boating safety that I'm sure I missed or did not cover, we as Auxiliarists must strive to stay relevant in our communities. Do not be afraid to try something new.

There is a great quote that goes, “After all is said and done, more is said than done.” We have spent a week saying our message. It is time to get to work.



(Left) LINCROFT, NJ – Auxiliarist John Fisher showing a boating safety class how to tie off to a bollard. Auxiliary photo by Christopher Orlando, AUXPA2.

(Right) LAVALLETTE, NJ – Auxiliarist Bill Castagno showing a boating safety course how to tie knots. Auxiliary photo by Christopher Orlando, AUXPA2.

COMO Daniel Maxim Award for Excellence in Education: And the Winners Are

Karen L. Miller, DVC-ED

The Public Education Directorate is pleased to announce the selection of Auxiliarist Cono "Buddy" Casale of the Seventh District, Flotilla 11-10 in Dunedin, Florida, as the National 2020 Commodore Daniel Maxim Award for Excellence in Education awardee.

Auxiliarist Casale also earned the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Commendation Medal for his successes in 2020. Casale enrolled in the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary in February 2002, and has consistently volunteered between 75 to 100 hours a year in Public Education and Member Training, on top of thousands of additional hours in multiple mission areas. He is a masterful instructor who skillfully runs his classes with respect, tact, and humor. Casale brings a wealth of experience and in-depth knowledge of boating skills and safety to his classes.

While Auxiliarist Casale readily uses the resources provided by the Auxiliary, he is also very talented in identifying when there is a need to explain or add to the information to suit the audience and boating area. He regularly incorporates information relevant to the local geographical area, in addition, to the materials either in the textbooks or the PowerPoint slides.

Casale identified a need to develop a less lengthy course that did not require the purchase of a book. In collaboration with fellow Auxiliarists from the Dunedin Flotilla, he designed and created an Introduction to Basic Coastal Navigation Seminar and presented it to several high school and middle school algebra students within the Clearwater and Dunedin, Florida area. Because of COVID-19, the 2020 course was conducted via Zoom in the high school classrooms. Over 300 students have

experienced this course since its inception in 2017.

Once the virtual model of instruction was introduced, Casale quickly acquired the skills to teach using Zoom. In addition, he encouraged his instructors to join him in the learning journey, and most classes in 2020 took place virtually and continue to this day.

Casale is approachable, humble, and a natural leader. He realizes and elevates the talents of others while, in turn, allowing others to critique his work and ideas. These qualities generate effective and engaging learning environments and allow his students to excel.



Auxiliarist Dennis Kellner of the Ninth District Western Region, Flotilla 47-2 in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and Auxiliarist Douglas MacPherson of the Eleventh District Northern Region, Flotilla 35 in Gold Country, California are also congratulated for being selected as the Regional winners from Atlantic West and Pacific Regions.

Kellner and MacPherson both earned the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Achievement Medals for their success. These Auxiliary instructors, along with Auxiliarist Casale, have demonstrated model performance and an outstanding spirit of service to members of the public and their shipmates.

The Commodore Daniel Maxim Award for Excellence in Education was established in 2018 to motivate and inspire Auxiliary instructors to reach beyond the comfortable or ordinary to achieve the extraordinary. Some of the goals of the award are to increase the diversity of courses offered by flotillas; to improve Public Education and Member Training Instructor effectiveness and performance; to improve mentorship of newer or lesser experienced Instructors; to develop new and innovative teaching methods and techniques; to develop new and innovative teaching aids.

Flotillas should consider assembling a team now to begin accumulating supporting documentation for the numbers of courses taught, numbers of graduates, variety of courses led, and all other data and testimonials deemed pertinent to preparing the nominee package.

More information on the award is available at <https://bit.ly/MaximAward>.



PVs and VEs Go Hand-in-Hand: Program Visits Often Lead to Vessel Safety Checks

Richard Young, Ph.D., DVC-BD

When Jesse James was asked why he robbed banks, his reply was that was where the money was. When the Auxiliary does program visits (PVs), it's because that is where the boaters are. The following are some thoughts on how to be more effective.

While it is recommended that we do PVs wearing the tropical blue uniform, a case can be made for the Operational Dress Uniform (ODUs) or the Vessel Examiner golf shirt. There is a reason for this when considering possible PV locations, why they were chosen, and some of their benefits. In all cases, there is far more to a PV than merely restocking literature racks, although that is a perfect reason to initiate the visit. Consider these scenarios experienced first-hand:

The Convenience Store and Bait Shop

Located only 500 feet from a public boat ramp, this place gets a lot of traffic from fishermen making last-minute purchases before hitting the lake. I'll usually buy a cup of coffee and have a friendly conversation with the owner. It is not uncommon for a customer to note that I'm with the Auxiliary and ask a question, the most recent being how old a child has to be before not being required to wear a lifejacket or personal flotation device (PFD). After taking the state boating regulation booklet from our rack, it was a perfect opportunity to discuss why everyone should always wear a PFD on the water.

On another occasion, I struck up a conversation about courtesy vessel examinations and explained that one only took maybe 15-20 minutes to do. Moments later, I was giving this person's bass boat a once over in the parking lot. After awarding the decal and being thanked, I told the boater that the no-wake zone on the lake was 200 feet and not 100 feet, as is the case on neighboring lakes.

The Boat Dealership

After a conversation on boating safety, the boat dealership's owner walked in on the discussion and we continued. The result was that they agreed to host a public education course and a vessel examination blitz. Moreover, the dealer would provide advertising and an email blast to their customers. Simple conversations can have impacting results.

Marina #1

Over the years, a relationship had been established with the service

manager, and it is not uncommon for a visit to result in an "As long as you're here, would you be willing to do a couple of vessel examinations for some customers?" That is a reason to do PVs in a uniform other than tropical blues!"

However, at the end of the 2021 season, I received another request, albeit an unusual one. The service manager asked if I had a connection with any maritime-related youth groups because they had some grant money that they wanted to give away to such a youth group. Yes, the Sea Scouts!

Marina #2

When pursuing my Marine Environmental Education Specialist qualification, I needed to do a marina assessment. Upon completion and final debrief, the owners were eager to accommodate such a request. They expressed appreciation to the Auxiliary for our contributions to making them a more efficient and effective operation.

From all of these experiences, the bottom line is that there is always much more available for the Auxiliary to do. Part of it is our presence, but also our willingness to engage those establishments that regularly engage the boating public. We make the nation's waters safer one boater at a time, so go where the boaters are.



Vessel Examiners prepare to conduct Vessel Safety Checks. Coast Guard Auxiliary photo by Richard Young.



Above: Coast Guard Auxiliary photo by Richard Young.
Below: GREAT SALT LAKE, UT – 2020 VSC on the mast of a sailboat. Coast Guard Auxiliary photo by Anthony King.



Vessel Examiners Save Lives: Real-World Stories

Sydney Hay, Auxiliarist



WHITING, IN - Members from U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 35-7 - Calumet Harbor Chicago, held vessel safety checks on Saturday, May 14, 2022, at Whiting Boat Ramp, continuing their annual Vessel Safety Check Blitz.

It may not be as dramatic as Auxiliary boat crews performing on-water rescues of boaters in distress, but Vessel Examiners also save lives. In the real world, even experienced boaters can overlook a problem with their vessel that could lead to a ruined day on the water, possible injury, or even death.

Auxiliary Vessel Examiner Don Lindberg of Bath, North Carolina, acknowledges, "We have no way of knowing how many lives we have saved by our vessel exams, but stories of examiners' experiences illustrate how they have helped ensure the safety of boaters."

Don was inspecting a vessel whose owner was proud of his mounted fire extinguisher. Fire extinguishers are not required to be mounted, but it is a good idea. The problem Don noticed was that the extinguisher was mounted directly over the alcohol stove. Don asked, "Were you planning to reach through the fire to grab the extinguisher?" The slightly red-faced owner quickly grabbed a

screwdriver and moved the equipment to a better spot.

"The things Vessel Examiners see are astounding," Don said. "Batteries corroded, four years' worth of flares stored near a stove, inflatable life jackets stored in a locker over the winter that inflated because of moisture, jury-rigged wiring that fell to the bottom of the bilge. The list is endless."

Although anchors are not required, Don always asks if they are aboard. One new owner of a used 24' center-console boat said the previous owner told him one was aboard. A search revealed a 4-inch mushroom anchor with 20' of line. Don had him walk to the end of the dock and throw the anchor as far as he could, then pull it back. He brought it back with no trouble and then realized that it couldn't possibly hold his boat. That led to a discussion of anchors, rode, and how to properly use them and a trip to the marine store for a suitable anchor and 100' of line.

“

We have no way of knowing how many lives we have saved by our vessel exams, but stories of examiners' experiences illustrate how they have helped ensure the safety of boaters.

”

Another Auxiliary Vessel Examiner, Dan Hay of Scottsdale, Arizona, was conducting a safety check at Lake Pleasant in Arizona when he noticed something that would be easy for a boat owner and even a vessel examiner to miss. When checking the ventilation system on the boat's twin inboard engines, Dan, standing by the starboard side vent, asked the boat owner to turn on the two blowers, heard both working, and felt the air coming out of the side vent.

The owner was about to turn the switches off when Dan told him to wait while checking the port side vent. To the owner's surprise, no air was coming out of that vent. Sure enough, the exhaust hose had come loose on that side, and the gasoline fumes, rather than venting to the outside, were circulating in the engine compartment.

"It was an easy fix," Dan said later. "The hose was quickly and securely re-clamped, but had the vessel not been checked for safety that day; he had the

makings of quite a bomb."

Auxiliarist Steve Rogers of Atascadero, California, performed a vessel safety check on a motorboat. Even though it is unnecessary to have the boater start the motor, this vessel examiner felt that the boat needed a start-engine check as it did not look well-used, and the owner was about to take his family on an ocean trip. The boat would not start – the battery was dead and needed a jump start. Steve suggested he not take his family out on the ocean until his engine starting system was fixed. The boater insisted on going out. For safety's sake, the vessel examiner contacted the local U.S. Coast Guard station and informed them about a boat with a possible dead battery going out. A description of the vessel was given; the Coast Guard stopped the vessel before it got out of the harbor and found the boat to be unsafe because it could not re-start the motor away from the dock. Rogers believes a family was probably saved.



Captions Left to Right

1. Auxiliary Vessel Examiner, Dan Hay, applies the all-important VSC decal to a boat that has passed the safety check. U.S Coast Guard Auxiliary photo by Auxiliarist Sydney Hay.
2. An Auxiliary Vessel Examiner points out the uncovered battery post, an easy but important fix. Photo courtesy of U.S. Coast Guard Boating Safety Division.
3. Auxiliary Vessel Examiner Doug Houle goes over VSC findings with a kayak owner. U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary photo by Auxiliarist Sydney Hay.
4. WHITING, IN - Vessel Examiner from U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 35-7 - Calumet Harbor Chicago conducting a vessel safety check. Photo courtesy of Flotilla 35-7.
5. AMALGA HARBOR, AK - Vessel Examiner Bob Mattson from U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 11 Juneau, conducting a vessel safety in April 2022. Coast Guard Auxiliary photo by Flotilla 11.

Auxiliarist Alec Milstein of Venice, California, inspected a live-aboard vessel that was so packed with belongings that he could not get to most of the essential parts of the boat, such as the engine compartment for proper ventilation, the Y-valve settings of the sanitation system, and the engine and battery compartments to check for the positive post cover on the battery. He deemed the vessel unsafe and could not issue a decal.

Alec also recalls a vessel safety check he performed on a motor vessel with diesel engines. It is required on gasoline engines to check for a proper spark arrester on the carburetor. This is unnecessary on diesel engines, but the VE saw several bolts on the bottom of a diesel engine compartment. These bolts had come off the timing belt frame and posed a potentially dangerous situation at sea by having a dead-in-the-water vessel. The owner was unaware of this and immediately had this fixed. This alert VE may have saved the lives of the boater and his guests.

Auxiliarist Robert Hamming of Ventura, California, said, "When I do vessel exams, I intend it to be a safety lesson. For instance, I have experienced several boat owners who do not know how to handle hand-held pyrotechnic flares in an emergency properly."

When asked how they would use the flare, the answer has been "Ignite it and wave it overhead." NO! You will burn a hole in your skull and the boat if you do that." Hamming explained this teachable moment by saying, "I instruct them on the proper use of the flare and suggest that they teach their shipmates the proper and safe use of this visual distress signaling device. More importantly, I recommend that all my boating friends invest in an electric visual distress light that is U.S. Coast Guard approved, ensuring they get the emergency day flag and check it regularly."

Auxiliarist Dave Fuller, a VE from Acworth, Georgia, said, "I have examined thousands of boats over the past 20 years, and I am never surprised when a

boater suddenly realizes the exam just taught them an unexpected lesson."

One example Dave recalls is when he offered a Vessel Safety check to a couple who had completed approximately three thousand miles of the 5,500 plus mile Great Loop on their trawler but were never stopped by Law Enforcement or the Coast Guard for a safety check. They eagerly took advantage of Dave's offer to examine their yacht and were confident they would pass with flying colors. Everything went well until Dave reviewed their inflatable life jackets. They proudly told Dave that they wore them religiously and had multiple inflatables in addition to inherently buoyant ones for backup and for guests.

Dave asked them when the last time was that they examined the cartridge and serviced the firing mechanism. He was met with a blank stare. "Well, never," was the reply. So, Dave opened one up, and there was no cartridge installed - it was packed inside but was not armed. The same situation existed on all their other inflatables. The look on this couple's faces was priceless when they realized that for more than three thousand miles of a lifetime trip, they had a piece of safety equipment that would not have been able to save them had they fallen overboard.

Another couple Dave encountered had just purchased a boat two weeks before casting off the dock lines to embark on the Great Loop and was unprepared for the 5,500 plus mile journey. He spent over two hours with them on the VSC checklist (they failed on multiple checklist items) and on numerous other critical things they needed to know. Dave strongly encouraged them to enroll in a boating safety class as soon as possible to have at least a foundational knowledge of boating safety. This was a very satisfying encounter for the couple as they left that day knowing what they did not know.

Dave said, "Do not judge a book by its cover, and do not judge a boat owner

by the size of their boat. I approach all my VSCs, regardless of the size of the boat, with the expectation that I can share my knowledge and experience to make them safer. Even seasoned old salts miss things or need reminders for those items they may not use every day."

"Sometimes I spend an hour or more doing a safety check during which there are many teachable moments," Dan Hay added. "For instance, some boaters may never take their boat out at night, so they have no idea how the navigation lights work. I have taught many a boater about the various lighting requirements and why they are necessary."

Don Lindberg agreed, "At least once a year, preferably early in the season, every boat operator should sit down with an examiner to check everything to ensure it is correct and in good working order. I remember once when checking life preservers; I noticed that the boat owner had never unfastened the straps of the jackets that came with the boat—while addressing that, I asked if he had ever tried one on. He said that he hadn't. When he tried to don the jacket, the straps wouldn't reach around his sizeable waist. 'My God,' he said, 'if I had needed this, I'd have drowned.' I explained how to make an add-on to the existing jacket and suggested trying to find one more suited to his physique. Complacency leads to disasters."

Dave Fuller concluded, "That is the real value of conducting the VSC annually - to keep it fresh in the boater's mind and check for things that fail during the year. Keep it a positive learning experience for the boater."



Thinking Outside the Box for Program Visits

Keith Ridgeway, BA-BREW



HOT SPRINGS, AR - Auxiliary member from District 8 Western, Division 15, Flotilla 7 conducting a program visit as part of the Coast Guard Auxiliary commitment to Recreational Boating Safety. Coast Guard Auxiliary photo by Flotilla 15-7.

The first meeting with a new Program Visit partner can make or break relationships. The Program Visitation Program was built to promote boating safety, as was the case with a local battery company owner I was meeting. I walked into the office wearing my neatly pressed Tropical Blue uniform, shined shoes, and information related to the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary mission of boating safety.

The owner was open to conversation but was somewhat surprised I was reaching out to his company to partner with us. He simply stated he was unsure what a “battery company” had to do with Recreational Boating Safety (RBS). A partnership was formed by bringing up the company’s deep cycle marine batteries line and how it pertained to boating safety. Not only did the company supply marine batteries for local businesses, but they also offered the same line for

sale in their retail showroom.

One of the keys to a successful Recreational Boating Safety Visitation Program is to reach those boaters who may be missed. Thinking outside of the box for places to visit, leaving literature, and partnering with the Coast Guard Auxiliary is paramount to the mission.

Many Program Visitors visit well-known locations such as marinas, libraries, and boat dealerships, but how many get off the beaten path to search out atypical prospective partners? To reach as many individuals of the recreational boating public as possible, we have to think outside of the box.

Below are 12 places that you may or may not have considered becoming partners with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary that provide excellent ways for visitors to excel at their program:

12. Local Hotels and Motels: The lobbies of most hotels or motels have information available to travelers about attractions, events, and activities in the area. Partnering with local hotels is a great way for us to place literature for boaters who may be passing through the area and find information related to local events and attractions that may result in future Public Affairs activities.

11. Campgrounds: During warmer months, many people enjoy local campgrounds, several of which are situated near bodies of water used for recreational purposes. Canoeing and kayaking seem to go hand-in-hand with outdoor recreation. Some campgrounds may even have small liveries where paddlecraft or small power boats may be rented.

10. Rental Liveries: Paddlecraft, such as canoes, kayaks, and stand-up paddleboards (SUPs) are available for rent in many locations. Similarly, powerboat rentals are also typical in many areas. Including these rental locations as RBS partners provides a unique opportunity to train those renting boats of all kinds so the rental briefings can contain adequate safety information. These rental agencies may even sponsor or host safety classes for customers during the off-season.

9. Insurance Agencies: Many owners of boats carry insurance policies, and some agencies even provide discounted rates for boats that have a yearly Vessel Safety Check. By partnering with insurance agencies, the Auxiliary can develop a steady stream of vessels requesting VSCs, thereby educating more of the boating public. Having literature and contact information for local Vessel Examiners and Auxiliary units provides much-needed contact and promotes recreational boating safety.

8. Financial Institutions: Banks often have “information stations” where local attractions are advertised. Placing flotilla and boating safety information in these areas is an excellent way to get out information. Discuss with the loan officers and see if they can pass information related to VSCs or PE classes to customers purchasing boats.

7. Local Restaurants: Local restaurants and cafes are often “hang-outs” for local fishermen. Leaving literature, and contact information and frequenting the establishment during times of mutual agreement provides the opportunity to intermingle with boaters who may have questions or need information. While people do not necessarily want to be bothered while they eat, some places offer community dining (sometimes known as a

“liars table”) where patrons gather and socialize. These places provide great education opportunities.

6. Outfitters and Bait Shops: From custom rod builders to small live bait stands, there are several places that offer the opportunity to interface with fishermen and other boaters. The goal of partner visitation is to go where you find boaters.

5. Convenience Stores: Fishermen and boaters utilize convenience stores for snacks, ice, fuel, etc. By setting up a literature rack or partnering in other ways, we have the opportunity to reach some of the boaters in the area at a crucial time, right before they hit the water. Some convenience stores may even allow Vessel Safety Checks to be conducted in their lot or sponsor a VSC day at their location.

4. Marine Repair Shops: This may be a given location for some partner visitors. To others, it may be uncharted territory. The key to visiting a repair shop is to be prepared not to spend excessive time at the location. Pre-planning for these visits will maximize potential. Leaving Federal and State Boating Law literature and recruiting and VSC pamphlets is an excellent way to advertise your unit.

3. Churches and Community Organizations: Most Americans are involved in community activities, local clubs, and community service organizations. Some churches have offices where local community information is readily available. If your local organization or church allows for similar things, add them to your partner list.

2. Big Box Department Stores: Many of the national department stores sell boating equipment and paddlecraft supplies. Look in the stores you frequent as a consumer and see what is offered for sale. If there is a selection of boating supplies, including paddlecraft, consider talking to the management about partnering.

1. Local Government Agencies: Local police, fire, EMS, and administrative offices are great places to leave literature and develop partnerships. Many local governments offer enrichment campaigns such as fire safety, hunter's education, or emergency planning. Offer to partner with them to teach boating safety.

If making contacts and partnerships with various businesses and people interests you, consider becoming an Auxiliary Program Visitor. Visit <https://bit.ly/RBS-PV> for more information on how to become a Program Visitor.

A Basic Paddling Safety Message

Robin Pope, DVC-BP, BA-SYSC



Auxiliarist and Kayak Instructor Robin Pope instructs another kayaker on how to turn over their kayak. Coast Guard Auxiliary photo by Robin Pope.

As a boating educator and paddling instructor, I prefer to spend at least an entire weekend teaching new paddlers to paddle safely. Students would receive on-land and in-water instruction: learning the importance of safety preparations, including life jacket wear and trip planning; learning rules and regulations applicable to paddling; practice strokes, maneuvers, rescues, and ways to recover from a capsize on the water. The class would close with a trip that allowed them to use trip planning guidelines and put together everything they learned. Perhaps most importantly, they'd realize they still have a lot to learn at the end of the weekend.

Some paddlers, particularly those who join a paddling club or pay for training at a paddling school, receive this experience. But unfortunately, it's not the learning experience most new paddlers have before going out on the water independently. We often cannot offer on-the-spot training when we see these boaters, although we should encourage them to pursue further education. But, if we focus on common problems, we can help educate new paddlers about the risks involved with paddling and steer them towards mitigating those risks in just a few minutes.

Recreational boating statistics compiled by the U.S. Coast Guard Office of Boating Safety demonstrate the most commonly reported paddling accidents are paddlecraft being capsized and falling overboard, followed by collisions. The most frequently reported contributing factors are inexperience and exposure to hazardous waters. This knowledge and experience from a wide range of paddlers and paddling instructors show a few simple messages can make a huge difference.

More than 21 million people paddle a canoe, kayak, or stand-up paddleboards (SUPs). Each year, more than a hundred deaths occur out on the water. Nearly all these fatalities could have been prevented. Paddling is relatively safe, but a few simple steps can make it even safer—helping paddlers have more fun on the water AND making sure they go home at the end of the day.

Wear your lifejacket all the time when you paddle. Your lifejacket should be snug with all fasteners adequately fastened. Paddling lifejackets should allow free shoulder movement and, ideally, have pockets for signaling and rescue and survival equipment and should be brightly colored to contrast with the water. The best way to test a lifejacket is to swim with it, in controlled conditions, before an unexpected swim. Most boating fatalities are drownings, and most weren't wearing a life jacket.

Dress to swim. Water is cold; every paddler should expect to spend time swimming. If the water temperature is below 70 degrees Fahrenheit, consider specialized paddling clothes. The colder the water, the more critical proper paddling clothes become. Coldwater immersion can be quickly fatal if water temperatures are below 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

Get hands-on, in-water instruction that includes preventing and responding to capsizes/falls overboard and how to recognize and avoid hazardous water conditions.

Boat in a group. If you have trouble, someone will be there to help you.

File a float plan. If you have trouble, someone will come looking for you.

Assume other boaters can't see you. Avoid channels and other high-traffic areas. Stay in a group to be more visible. Keep a sharp lookout for other boaters.

Because these points are all straightforward, simple, and evidence-based, they can be presented by nearly anyone. A presenter who knows almost nothing about paddling can still accurately report what decades of accident reports show, and discuss how to use that information. When questions require more paddling knowledge, non-paddling presenters can refer people to paddling instructors for more details.

We could share other messages - bring food and water; wear sunblock; learn how to use and be sure to have rescue, survival and signaling equipment, and more - but the messages above are easy to deliver. Boating fatality records demonstrate that addressing the simple points above will make paddling safer.

The last point, "have fun," is critical to wrap up any presentation. People paddle to have fun - and having a preventable accident isn't fun. Simple steps will help every paddler stay safe and have fun while on the water.



Auxiliarist and Kayak Instructor Robin Pope instructs another kayaker. Coast Guard Auxiliary photo by Robin Pope.

Vessel Safety Checks for Paddlecraft: It's About the Conversation

Roland McDevitt, BC-BPU

“If it floats, it’s a boat” is a straightforward expression used to explain what classifies a vessel according to the Rules of Navigation. Under these rules, “vessels under oars” directly refers to paddlecraft, classifying them as vessels. Because they are vessels, they must follow federal, state, and local regulations. Paddlers generally are not required to complete a boating safety course or register their craft, and there are very few equipment requirements for paddlecraft. Not surprisingly, recreational boating statistics from 2010 through 2019 show paddlecraft were associated with 21 percent of all boating fatalities, and deaths related to kayaks grew from 8 percent to 14 percent of these fatalities. Deaths related to kayaks grew by six percent according to recreational boating statistics ranging from 2010 to 2019.

Voluntary vessel safety checks (VSCs) are an excellent opportunity for Auxiliarists to educate paddlers about safety and training opportunities, but Auxiliarists should keep in mind the tremendous resources available through the Auxiliary Paddlecraft Safety Program (AUXPAD). This partnership with the American Canoe Association (ACA) offers ACA sanctioned on-water courses and ashore training.

The Conversation

VSC Form 7012a provides the framework for discussion. Beginning with questions about the paddler’s education, we discuss the value of boating safety classes and ACA instruction specific to the vessel type and venue.

Section III of the form presents an opportunity to discuss the importance of wearing a lifejacket, carrying a whistle, and a white light or flashlight. Finally, we carefully inspect the general condition of the vessel, including such items as deck lines and hatch covers.

Bulkheads and flotation are essential topics. Sea kayaks with bulkheads provide ample buoyancy even

when the cockpit becomes filled with water. This is not true for recreational kayaks with only a tiny amount of foam, just enough to keep the kayak afloat but not sufficient for effective paddling. Most importantly, these kayaks are challenging to dewater when swamped, as AUXPAD Operators experience first-hand in training.

Recommendations differ depending on the kind of environment the paddler will encounter. Open water recommendations might include a bilge pump, spray skirt, spare paddle, compass, towline, and marine radio. These items are not for everyone, and they may require training for safe and effective use. Risk assessment and filing a float plan are also great topics to discuss in the context of each paddler’s skill and paddling environment.

A Real-Life Conversation

Joey Taguding is a Vessel Examiner, AUXPAD Qualifier, and ACA instructor in District 5 Southern, Division 25, Flotilla 6 in Occoquan-Fairfax, Virginia. Joey and Guy Campbell, another AUXPAD operator from the same flotilla, tells of offering a VSC to a young couple about to launch recreational kayaks they had just purchased from a big box store along with new PFDs and paddles.

As Joey and Guy inspected the kayaks, the young woman asked, “What do I do if I fall out of the kayak?”

Our ACA training provides us the skill to perform an assisted rescue – but this isn’t easy with a recreational kayak, and it creates the potential to capsize a second paddler. Joey noted this is a valuable skill, but it requires training and practice. ACA instruction would be a great idea.

He suggested a short-term solution might be for the paddler to grab the carry handle on the bow of her partner’s kayak, wrap her legs around the bow, and have him paddle her to the nearest shoreline.

“

Vessel Safety Checks (VSCs) are an excellent opportunity for Auxiliarists to educate paddlers about safety and training opportunities, but Auxiliarists should keep in mind the tremendous resources available through the Auxiliary Paddlecraft Safety Program (AUXPAD).

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OCCOQUAN, VA – Auxiliarist Joey Taguding and Guy Campbell demonstrate the use of various gear at an AUXPAD training in Northern Virginia in 2021.



OCCOQUAN, VA – Auxiliarist Joey Taguding and Guy Campbell stand with Officer Suarez from the Town of Occoquan’s Police Department Marine Unit.

 PADDLE CRAFT VESSEL SAFETY CHECK (VSC) To be completed by a U.S. Coast Guard approved Vessel Examiner.		Date of VSC:	
		Decal Awarded: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Sections 1, 2 and 3 must be completed			
I. Owner / Operator Information		II. Paddle Craft Information	
Name:		Registration No.:	HIN:
Attended Safe Boating Class: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		Make & Model:	
Attended Related Skills Class: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		Kayak <input type="checkbox"/> Canoe <input type="checkbox"/> Row Boat <input type="checkbox"/> Paddleboard <input type="checkbox"/>	
Location of VSC- County: _____ State: _____		Scul <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
Replaced decal was: Check a selection below		Color: Deck _____ Hull _____	
Last Year <input type="checkbox"/> Outdated <input type="checkbox"/> First Time <input type="checkbox"/>		Length (in feet): <12 <input type="checkbox"/> 12-16 <input type="checkbox"/> >16 <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Water craft used in: Protected <input type="checkbox"/> Open <input type="checkbox"/> Swift <input type="checkbox"/>	
III. Safety Check Requirements		V. Other Recommendations	
Sound signal (whistle, horn, etc)	Y N N/A	Dressed for immersion / helmet	Y N N/A
Life jacket(s)		Personal ID on operator	
Overall Vessel Condition: as applies		Float plan with someone on shore	
a. Hull & deck sound		Adequate food and water / Sun Protection	
b. Hatch covers (good condition/secure)		Assess the risk / good awareness	
c. Deck lines & Bungee Cords		High visibility clothing, gear, etc.	
d. Hardware secure (in working order)		Appropriate emergency kit (might include first-aid kit, knife, repair kit, etc.)	
e. Bulkheads/Airbags/Flotation		Appropriate self-rescue system / skills	
f. Paddle / Oars (serviceable)		Contact information affixed to craft	
Navigation Lights: White lights		Accident Reporting – Owner Responsible	
Visual Distress Signals (VDS)		Anchor lights (if applicable)	
State and/or Local Requirements			
IV. Open Water Recommendations		Vessel Examiner Comments	
Pump or bailer			
Spray skirt			
Spare paddle / oars			
Compass / GPS / navigation chart			
Tow / boat recovery system			
Marine radio (VHF) / cell phone / PLB			

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Form a7012A – Paddle Craft Vessel Safety Check Form.



Paddlecraft and an inflatable vessel on the shore. Coast Guard photo from U.S. Coast Guard Great Lakes.

After she is ashore, gear and other items can be brought in safely. This is also much easier and safer if the paddler wears the proper life jacket. Joey and Guy offered “IF FOUND” stickers that could be attached to both kayaks with each owner's name and phone number. If the kayaks escaped down the river, this would give the finder a way to contact them. It would also allow the Coast Guard and other emergency responders to avoid an unnecessary search when the owners are found safely ashore.

Local Partnerships

Joey and fellow Auxiliaries have joined forces with local businesses and authorities to promote safe paddling. A local livery at the public launch agreed to have all their vessels inspected. This allowed Joey and colleagues to engage with those renting kayaks and those who brought their paddlecraft to the launch.

The Town of Occoquan has been very receptive to partnership, asking for AUXPAD safety patrols to assist in monitoring a paddling race, and helping to staff a safety booth where safety checks are offered, and paddlers are engaged.

Vessel Safety Checks are one of the most effective ways to get paddlers thinking about safety on the water. The discussion takes place with the vessel and gear present and promotes discussion about risks and mitigation strategies. The AUXPAD program offers excellent resources for Vessel Examiners to gain the necessary training and experience for specialized paddlecraft exams.



Take responsibility for your paddlecraft by labeling it with an 'If Found' sticker. This label allows responders to contact and confirm if someone is in trouble and collect additional information to aid in search efforts.

If you don't have a sticker, a simple label or piece of tape with a name, contact information, and alternate contact number written in waterproof ink or paint can drastically reduce search times when we contact the owner. The contact label can also assist in the return of the paddlecraft to its owner. Get a sticker from your local Auxiliary.





Scan these QR Codes to stay informed on boating safety.



RBS Job One

Publication of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Recreational Boating Safety Directorates comprised of the Public Education Directorate, Vessel Examination and Program Visitation Directorate, and Recreational Boating Safety Outreach Directorate.

Our mission is to prevent the loss of life, personal injury, property damage, and adverse environmental impact associated with recreational boating, through outreach to the recreational boating community.

This is what we strive for. Recreational Boating Safety is our Job One. It is a cornerstone of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.