



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AUXILIARY

**Recreational Boating Safety
Visitation Program Manual**

COMDTINST M16796.3(D)

XX XXX 2020

Prepared & Submitted by:

**National Directorate of Vessel Examination
&
Recreational Boating Safety Visitation Programs**





COMDTINST M16796.3D
{DATE}

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION M16796.3D

Subj: RECREATIONAL BOATING SAFETY VISITATION PROGRAM MANUAL

1. **PURPOSE.** This Manual prescribes policies and standards for the administration of the Recreational Boating Safety Visitation Program (RBSVP). It is intended for use by members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary, the United States Power Squadron, and other authorized organizations, who desire to become qualified and serve as Program Visitors (PV). The Auxiliary RBSVP was initially named Marine Dealer Visitors (MDV) and the program was renamed in 2005. Certified Marine Dealer Visitors are grandfathered into the RBSVP as PVs and are encouraged to review this guide in its entirety.
2. **ACTION.** Area and District Commanders, commanders of maintenance and logistics commands, and commanding officers of headquarters units shall ensure that the units and Auxiliarists under their command adhere to the provisions of this Manual. Internet release authorized.
3. **DIRECTIVES AFFECTED.** The previous edition of the Recreational Boating Safety Visitation Program Manual, COMDTINST M16796.3C, is hereby canceled and printed manuals should be recycled.
4. **DISCUSSION.** This Manual outlines policies and procedures necessary for effective administration of the Coast Guard Auxiliary's Recreational Boating Safety Visitation Program. The goal of this program is to establish lasting relationships between the recreational boating community and the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and its boating safety partners.
5. **MAJOR CHANGES.** This Manual represents a significant revision of the previous Marine Dealer Visitor Program published in November 2005.

This Manual recognizes that the Recreational Boating Safety Visitation Program is a stand-alone program in the V-Directorate. By establishing and maintaining relationships with local business and agency partners, the RBS Visitation Program provides extensive, broad support for the Vessel Examination, Public Education, Public Affairs, Human Resources, Member Training, Marine Safety programs, and many other Auxiliary programs. As such, the RBS Program Visitor must be knowledgeable in many areas, including the U. S. Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Auxiliary policies and procedures as well as their missions and programs.

Specific references and training requirements for certification as a Program Visitor have been revised to reflect the RBSVP as a stand-alone program within the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary V-Directorate. In addition, this Manual is designed to act as a study guide for potential and current Program Visitors.

NOAA Small Craft Marina Facility Chart updating, now a part of the Auxiliary Navigation Systems program, is removed from this RBSVP Manual.

All references to the Manufacturer ID Code and Mailing Label System, no longer supported by the U.S. Coast Guard, have been removed from this RBSVP Manual.

Reference materials and resource information have been updated as well as policies to positively affect the training, development, certification and retention of Program Visitors. Revisions include a defined time requirement between the online exam results and certification as PV, recertification requirements, and uniform guidance including wearing Operational Dress Uniforms for Program Visits.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECT AND IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS. Environmental considerations were examined in the development of this directive and have been determined to be not applicable.
7. RESPONSIBILITY. Commandant (G-OCX-2) is responsible for the content and upkeep of this Manual. Questions or concerns about this material contained in this Manual should be addressed to Commandant (G-OCX) at (202) 267-1001.
8. FORMS/REPORTS. The forms mentioned in this Manual are listed in Appendix G are available on the [Auxiliary Forms Warehouse](http://forms.cgaux.org/) at the following address:
<http://forms.cgaux.org/>

/s/

signature

Assistant Commandant for Operations

NON-STANDARD DISTRIBUTION:

National Association of State Boating Law Administrators

National Directorate Commodore-RBS

U.S. Power Squadron

Auxiliary National Supply Center

FOREWORD

The U.S. Coast Guard has assigned the U. S. Coast Guard Auxiliary with the primary responsibility for Recreational Boating Safety (RBS). Thank you for deciding to support the Recreational Boating Safety mission by becoming a Program Visitor. After you have studied and learned the material in this manual, and successfully completed the required supervised visits, you will be qualified as a Recreational Boating Safety Program Visitor (RBS-PV). This qualification enables you to participate fully in this valuable safety outreach program. The RBS Visitation Program provides a great opportunity to learn more about boating safety, and to become an important resource for your local recreational boating community.

The overall goal of the RBSVP program is to reduce boating accidents, injuries and fatalities by educating and influencing boaters with relevant boating safety news, information and knowledge in a convenient local area. With this increased knowledge, boaters can make better decisions to boat safely while still having an enjoyable time on the water.

An important step in this process is establishing and maintaining good working relationships with local businesses and agencies, which become our Program Partners. Regular visits to the Partner location will ensure dependability and continuity of service to our Partners. The primary purpose of the visit is to inform the Program Partner of the Coast Guard's Recreational Boating Safety program and the applicable federal, state, and local safety requirements. While doing so, the Program Visitor can clarify safety issues, promote safe boating education, the Vessel Safety Check program and other Auxiliary programs.

This community outreach extends to a wide range of boaters and all types of vessels, including human-powered vessels, sailboats and traditional power boats, as well as emerging watercraft such as jet levitation devices and innovative floating 'play' vessels with trampolines and slides.

We firmly believe that by educating the business establishments in the recreational boating safety community, we are leveraging our contact with the recreational boater. A knowledgeable Program Partner literally multiplies our contact with and impact on our ultimate customers, the recreational boat community.

Again, I offer my sincere thanks for your support of, and especially your involvement with, our capstone, the recreational boating safety mission.



ROBERT M. LAURER
Assistant National Commodore for
Recreational Boating Safety,
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Policy Statement



THE COMMANDANT OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
Washington, DC 20593

AUXILIARY POLICY STATEMENT

The Coast Guard Auxiliary is the uniformed volunteer component of our Service. Guided by our Core Values of *Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty*, Auxiliary contributions are paramount to excellence in mission execution and in facing our Nation's current and future challenges. The Coast Guard Auxiliary is an indispensable part of the Coast Guard Team.

Established by Congress on June 23, 1939 as the "Volunteer Reserve", the Auxiliary conducted many of the Coast Guard's domestic missions while the Active Duty and Reserve components were forward deployed during World War II. The Auxiliary has continued its great service to our Nation ever since.

The spirit of volunteerism and patriotism that called the first Auxiliarist to duty continues today in the more than 24,000 professional men and women who faithfully execute assigned Auxiliary missions across our Nation, its territories, and in foreign countries where U.S. engagement is enhanced by Auxiliary services. Upon enrollment, Auxiliarists pledge to support the Coast Guard Auxiliary and to faithfully execute assigned duties, and to abide by the governing policies established by the Commandant. Auxiliarists are a crucial force multiplier for sustained Coast Guard mission excellence.

Auxiliarists enthusiastically provide experience, talent, and facilities for a wide range of activities including: Maritime Safety Outreach, Search and Rescue, Safety and Security Patrols, Disaster Response, Pollution Response and Recruiting. These activities enable the Coast Guard to successfully execute all of its missions, and they do it as volunteers!

The Auxiliary missions are:

- To promote and improve Recreational Boating Safety;
- To provide a diverse array of specialized skills, trained crews, and capable facilities to augment the Coast Guard and enhance safety and security of our ports, waterways and coastal regions;
- To support Coast Guard operational, administrative, and logistical requirements.

I charge all Commanders, Commanding Officers and Officers in Charge to continually strive to include the Auxiliary in both mission execution and mission support so that we can maximize sustained excellence across all mission areas.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Karl L. Schultz".

KARL L. SCHULTZ
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard

Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty

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CHAPTER 1

**THE RECREATIONAL BOATING SAFETY
VISITATION PROGRAM**



CHAPTER 1: THE RECREATIONAL BOATING SAFETY VISITATION PROGRAM

Recreational Boating Overview

Recreational boating is a very popular outdoor activity with nearly 12 million registered recreational powered vessels in the United States in 2019. Paddle vessels of all types (canoes, kayaks, standup paddleboards, etc.) account for nearly one million additional vessels.

Over 87 million adults participate in recreational boating, using a boat for water sports and activities such as fishing and water skiing and/or to travel. ⁱ An increasing number of the general public is becoming part of the boating public whether through boat ownership, boat rental or boating as a guest.

Recreational boating and watercraft activities contribute significantly to the nation's economy. A study by The National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) reported that the recreational boating industry generated \$170.3 billion in economic activity in 2018, supporting more than 35,000 businesses and 691,000 American jobs across all 50 states. A twelve-year growth in retail sales of new boats continued in 2019 with an estimated 280,000 units added.

Particularly during the summer boating season, the potential for accidents, fatalities and injuries increases with the sheer volume of different vessels on the water. The RBS Program is designed to reach boaters with prevention initiatives to reduce accidents, fatalities and injuries.

U.S. Coast Guard National Recreational Boating Safety Program

Recognizing the significance and value of recreational boating to the nation, the United States Congress authorized creation of the U.S. Coast Guard National Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) Program in 1971.

The U.S. Coast Guard's Strategic Plan of the National RBS Program describes the Coast Guard's goals and strategies "to ensure the public has a safe, secure, and enjoyable recreational boating experience by implementing programs that minimize the loss of life, personal injury, and property damage while cooperating with environmental and national security efforts" ⁱⁱ.

The plan, renewed every five years, is developed and implemented with the assistance of national recreational boating leaders, stakeholders, nonprofit public service organizations, and private citizens.

Creating a Culture of Safety

Actively and continually building a coalition of safety partners in the recreational boating safety community brings a united effort to help create and advance a "culture of safety". Working together, the safety partners can effectively influence the boating community with safe boating practices and encourage an attitude of safety.

The scope of the Coast Guard boating safety partners is large and encompasses all areas of watercraft and waterways recreation. These partners include American Canoe Association (ACA), BoatUS, National Association of Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA), Water Sports Industry Association (WSIA), National Safe Boating Council (NSBC), Sea Tow Foundation, International Boat & Water Safety Summit (IBWSS), and many others.

RBS Visitation Program

The RBS Visitation Program is a blending of U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) , U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, and other boating safety programs. A Program Partner is defined as any community business or facility which will allow the Program Visitor (PV) to place a literature display rack in that facility and where the general public visits or waits. Program Partners are the subject topic of Chapter 2. Program Visitors, the subject topic of Chapter 3, bring boating safety information to Program Partners and their customers in support of the vessel examination (VE), public education (PE), marine safety (MS) and other Auxiliary programs.

Vessel Safety Checks (VSC)

During visits, the Program Visitor will typically discuss a wide range of boating safety topics but should encourage the possibility of having a jointly sponsored VSC station on the Partner's premises if space allows. The PV would provide VSC posters and pamphlets explaining vessel safety checks with the Partner supplying the publicity for the VSC event.

Public Education

While conducting the visit, the PV can introduce the Partner to Auxiliary public education programs. Should a Partner express an interest in sponsoring a program at their location, the Program Visitor could inform them of the best program suited for their customers as well as any needed support requirements.

Recruiting

During visits and at any co-sponsored event, the PV should be alert to all opportunities to inform the public about the advantages of Auxiliary membership. Membership pamphlets may include local contact information in display materials, such as an email address or website links.

Member Training

Training advantages of the Coast Guard Auxiliary membership can be discussed and information regarding boating safety programs should be provided during the visits to the Partners and during any co-sponsored events.

Marine Safety

Marina safety materials from the Coast Guard Auxiliary, federal, state and local environmental protection and marine safety agencies may be included in the literature distribution. Local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may produce maps, guides and other relevant information useful to recreational boaters.

America's Waterway Watch

America's Waterway Watch is a public outreach program of the Department of Homeland Security. The program is like a neighborhood watch program but does not require participants to join an organization. The program encourages people who spend time on or

near the water to report suspicious activity or behavior to the Coast Guard and/or other law enforcement agencies by calling 911 or the National Response Center toll free at 877-24-WATCH. The program also urges the public to adopt a heightened sense of awareness toward unusual events or individuals encountered in and around ports, docks, marinas, riversides, beaches, structures, or waterfront communities. These unusual events or individuals could possibly indicate a threat to our nation's homeland security. A key premise to identifying suspicious behavior is that *"People are not suspicious, behavior is"*.

Suspicious activity may include the following:

- People taking photos or videos of bridges, trains or tracks, buildings, government vessels or facility's or other items that might be used to cause harm to the U.S.
- A person running away from an area close to a secure facility.
- A person engaged in what looks like surveillance.
- Suspicious conditions or physical breaches of security.
- Unusual activity by individuals or vessels under or around bridges, tunnels, or overpasses.
- Unusual activity by individuals or vessels near commercial areas like ports, fuel docks, cruise ships or marinas.
- Unusual activity by individuals or vessels near military bases or vessels, other government facilities, or secure zones.
- Unusual activity by individuals or vessels near industrial facilities.
- Unattended vessels or vehicles.
- Vessels anchored where they shouldn't be.
- Lights flashing between boats.
- Transferring of people or things between ships and boats.



U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary RBS Objectives

The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) has tasked the Coast Guard Auxiliary with RBS outreach missions, including program visitation, vessel safety checks, marine safety and public education. The USCG Auxiliary Recreational Boating Safety Visitation Program (RBSVP) promotes safe boating for the recreational boating public in order to reduce boating accidents, injuries and save lives.

This manual is intended to provide training and guidance for new Program Visitors and serve as a useful reference for those members already certified.

The goal of the RBSVP is to educate the Program Partners of the importance of promoting boating safety by establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with local businesses that offer their locations for the distribution of free educational materials to its customers.

The broad objective of the RBSVP is to develop a “safety culture” in the boating public using an appropriate combination of various boating safety initiatives and Auxiliary resources. Better decisions while boating can result in safer, more enjoyable boating by instilling safety awareness and knowledge to the boating public.

Specific RBSVP objectives include:

- Establishing or enhancing effective working relationships between Partners and PVs.
- Establishing the Partners as a source location of federal, state and local boating safety literature, information and requirements.
- Providing information regarding public education (PE) programs, vessel safety checks (VSCs), membership, and other Auxiliary programs.
- Distributing through Partners available federal, state, local and other boating safety handout materials approved for distribution through the RBSVP by the Coast Guard, the Coast Guard Auxiliary and other agencies.
- Providing the Partner with a reliable resource person for boating safety issues. The PV becomes a trusted point of contact for Partner/Auxiliary RBS relationships.
- Encouraging and educating Partners and their boating customers to download and use the U.S. Coast Guard RBS Application for mobile devices.
- Timely visits to Partners to inform them about safety equipment recalls, new regulations, safety alerts and time-sensitive boating safety news. In turn, this timely information makes the Partner a reliable resource for its customers and local boating community.

The RBSVP mission is to visit Program Partners on a scheduled basis and to maintain open lines of communication with the Program Visitor on behalf of the U.S. Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Auxiliary. A visible, active relationship can be a source of pride and prestige for the participating Program Partner.

Boating Community Benefits

A successful RBS Visitation Program will benefit the recreational boating public by:

- Providing public education information and local class schedules.
- Public awareness of federal, state and local safety requirements and/or other educational opportunities with literature available at the Partners business location.
- Advising the Partners of U.S. Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary boating safety missions and services to convey to their customers.
- Providing the Partner with literature that provides the public with a better understanding of the responsibilities of being a boat operator or a passenger on a boat.



- Increased awareness of life jacket features, use and safety.
- Providing the Partner with literature that provides the public with information on America's Waterway Watch (AWW) Program.
- Familiarizing the Partner with literature and knowledge of the "You're in Command" initiative which encourages all recreational boaters to take responsibility for their actions on the water.

RBS Memorandum of Agreement

Under a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, acting as the National Director and Executive Agent of the program, and the United States Power Squadrons, the USPS has been authorized to act as an affiliate of the RBSVP.

Recognizing the importance of the USPS as an affiliate, it should be noted that this Manual is written for the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary membership to provide training, development, certification and retention of Auxiliary Program Visitors in compliance with specific policies of the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.

The USPS is encouraged to use this Manual as a reference guide to development of a USPS RBS Manual for their members which addresses their organization's leadership, staffing, forms, reporting and other topics unrelated to the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.

CHAPTER 2

PROGRAM PARTNERS



CHAPTER 2: PROGRAM PARTNERS

Identifying Program Partners

A Program Partner is defined as any community business or facility which will allow the PV to place a literature display rack in that facility and where the general public visits or waits. These participating businesses or facilities are valuable safety partners, referred to simply as Partners.

Examples of Partners could include: marine dealers, plumbing shops, hardware stores, vessel rental agencies, vessel repair agencies, marinas, canvas or sail makers, hospital emergency or other waiting rooms, doctor's and dentist's offices, insurance agency lobbies, chain stores, libraries, townhalls, visitor information centers, county boat/car license agencies, dentist offices, bait and tackle vendors, surf, dive or snorkel shops.

In addition, BoatUS, Boaters World, West Marine, Bass Outlets and other large retail stores with sporting or boat equipment departments should be included.

Non-traditional Partner Locations

Where the Partner is not a traditional marine business or dealership, maintaining the supply of safety related literature and federal, state and local requirements is the primary focus of the program. All visits should be conducted with the clear objective of providing boating safety information and educational opportunities to the boating public.

Unattended boat ramps as well as state and local park information centers are good examples of partner resource locations for boating safety literature. Approval from the governing authority is required prior to adding a display case. Outdoor displays should be plastic with a lid cover to keep the literature dry.

These type of locations with high traffic must be monitored often. It is essential to replenish the safety literature frequently during times of heavy use, such as long holiday weekends.



RBSVP Benefits to Program Partners

There are significant benefits for the participating Partners. These benefits are both tangible and intangible, but many can be related to economic advantages.

- A very powerful selling point for Partners in the commercial industry is that knowledge and the right equipment can lead to safer boating. Partners could gain a significant economic advantage by advising boaters and potential boaters that safety equipment, and knowledge of how to properly store and use it, is readily available at the Partner location.

- The ability to advertise educational opportunities and other safety related safety information is also a major public relations advantage for those community Partners not in the marine industry.
- Establish a “public boating safety center” image with the general public. The safety information which the Partner receives can impress the general public by indicating that here is a community-minded Partner interested in providing the public with the best boating safety information.
- Keep the Partners up to date on the latest information and programs of interest. Each Partner facility will be visited regularly so there can be follow-up action with the Program Visitor.
- Provide a point of contact with the Program Visitor through whom the Partner can obtain answers to technical questions or other issues such as: documentation, recall status, reference sources, etc. The Program Visitor should be ready with referral information, including the name and phone numbers of contact persons.
- The Program Visitor should be ready with referral information, including the name and phone numbers of contact persons, such as the point of contact (POC) for education, vessel safety checks, public affairs, etc.
- Provide Partner employees with guidance in areas such as: showing the Partner’s service department staff how to correctly apply registration numbers; providing sales staff with training on safety equipment; or advising rental vendors on required safety equipment.
- An active relationship with the Coast Guard Auxiliary may enhance the Partner’s credibility with the boating public. For example, marinas requiring tenant boats to have VSCs promotes boating safety and can reduce a Partner’s insurance cost. Promoting boater education classes can enrich the Partner’s reputation among the local boating community.

Program Partner Benefits to RBSVP

- Educating the boating public can help save lives and property.
- Partners will provide a convenient distribution point for boating safety materials as well as a means of notifying the boating public of the Coast Guard, the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and other boating safety programs.
- The Partner’s facilities may be available for use as a VSC station or PE program site.
- Partners, as well as their customers/consumers, can become aware of the Coast Guard, the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and other boating and environmental safety programs.
- Partners provide a useful contact point for recruiting new members.

- Partners will be kept informed of changes in federal, state and local boating safety regulations and equipment requirements.
- In general, all Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary programs can gain presence and credibility from the increased exposure provided by the participation, cooperation and involvement of Program Partners.
- Partners as well as their customers/consumers can become aware of the AWW program and how they can participate.

RBS Value-added Benefits

The Partner location becomes a dependable source of safety information for its clients and customers. Serving as an easily identifiable resource for the U. S. Coast Guard RBS Program, the Program Partner provides federal, state and local boating safety requirements, as well as state and local boating safety educational programs.

In addition, RBSVP service provides value-added benefits:

- vessel safety check schedules
- marine inspection information
- recreational boating classes and courses
- other boating education opportunities
- boating-related safety literature
- awareness of safety partnerships
- public relations opportunities
- membership recruitment
- may lower boat insurance premiums



The Partners must feel the Program Visitor is committed to promoting boating safety. The Partners must be made aware that the Program Visitor provides a vital link in the safe boating or boating education process.

RBS Literature and Information

It is essential that the PVs maintain contact as necessary and restock the literature displays of the Program Partners. Irreparable damage to the program and image may be done if the PV does not maintain a proactive posture.

Boating safety consumer fact sheets, boating safety circulars, and organization recruiting information, along with state and local information on equipment and education should be made available for distribution to the Partners.

Numerous pamphlets and brochures are available from the Auxiliary National Supply Center (ANSC). In addition to stocking federal, state and local regulations for recreational vessels, environmental protection pamphlets and clean water literature are valued resources. Other

agency literature that is proximity specific should be included, such as locally produced circulars about aquatic invasive species that may impact the immediate area.

Most of the display literature and materials will be requested via the Auxiliary Flotilla Staff Officer-Materials (FSO-MA).

Conducting Visits to Program Partners

Initial visit to a new Partner

The Program Visitor should introduce their self as a Program Visitor for the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary RBSVP and ask to see the person in charge (owner, manager or supervisor). The Program Visitor should explain the program in detail and ask if they would be interested in becoming an RBSVP Partner in this valuable public service program.

Visit timing

The best time to initiate contact with Partners will vary from area to area depending upon the length of the local boating season. A good rule is to make initial contact just prior to the beginning of the season, but not so late as to interfere with their busy period in those parts of the country with seasonal boating. Familiarity with an area and preliminary contacts with the Partner will pave the way to a successful partner relationship and continuing RBS visits. Ideally, the Program Visitor has time to make contacts during normal business hours.

Visit frequency

The Partners should be visited as often as necessary to keep an ample supply of handouts and current information available in the literature display racks for the boating public. This may mean a visit weekly during high traffic periods, every two weeks or monthly, but not less than quarterly. An empty literature display rack sitting on a counter will soon be discarded. The Program Visitor can best determine the appropriate visit and timing schedule and should plan their visits accordingly.

To properly participate in the RBSVP program, Program Visitors are required to actively visit their area Partners facilities. The actual number and frequency of visits recommended will vary with location and the density of the boating population and the actual boating season. Careful attention to, and consideration of, the Partner's needs and the customer traffic will indicate the number of visits required.

Purpose of visits

- Acquaint the Partner with the Coast Guard, the RBS program, and the Coast Guard Auxiliary.
- Point out the value of promoting the Coast Guard RBS program.
- Obtain the Partner's permission to display a variety of boating safety literature.
- Promote You're in Command (YIC), the U.S. Coast Guard's public boating safety outreach initiative, which encourages all recreational boaters to take responsibility for their actions on the water, and the America's Waterways Watch (AWW) program.

- Set up or re-stock the display racks with boating safety literature, vessel safety check schedules, PE information and federal, state and/or local regulation materials.
- Advise the Partner how to contact a PV for information or with questions.

Area coverage

Every Partner in each area should have the same opportunity to participate in the RBS Visitation Program. Most Partners are proud of their involvement and genuinely feel that their business or agency is helped by identifying with safe boating programs of the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

In the event that there are not sufficient numbers of Program Visitors to provide complete coverage in a given area, the Auxiliary Division Staff Officer for Program Visitors (SO-PV) will coordinate with the Flotilla Staff Officers for Program Visitors (FSO-PV) in the division to provide Program Visitors for area coverage. The SO-PV may also contact other SO-PVs in the geographical area to provide adequate area coverage.

Partner coverage

Although there are no “territorial boundaries” in the RBS program, in some Auxiliary Districts the FSO-PV may assign a PV to specific Partners in their local area to alleviate over-visiting a Partner location. The PV assigned will be responsible for those Partners and provide continuous service. In case of an absence that disrupts this service, the PV will assure that another PV will be available to assist their assigned Partner. It is strongly suggested that all Auxiliary units follow this practice.

Other Auxiliary Districts may choose to not assign a PV to specific Partners in their local area. In this case, duplications may occur and do no harm as long as the visits do not become a nuisance.

The SO-PV, in unison with the FSO-PVs, should maintain a listing of all Partners in their area of responsibility (AOR) and regularly update the list and visits made.

In a situation where all potential Partners are not being contacted, the SO-PV and USPS’ District PV Chair should check and see if any of the PVs can shift his or her efforts. In most metropolitan areas, both groups can use the same Partner for PE Program announcements, VSC stations, etc.

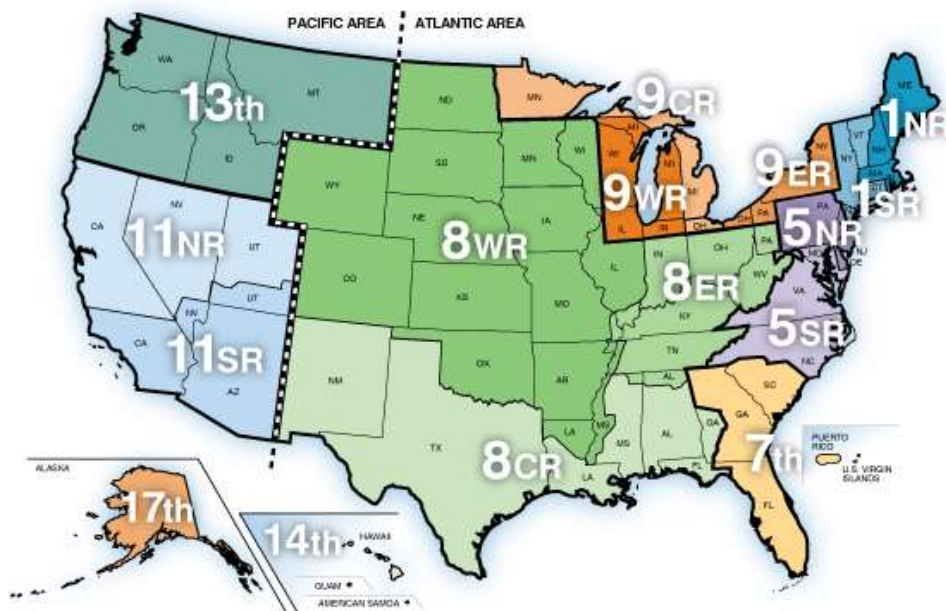
Local Commitments & Coordination

The PV should make full use of the opportunity to promote activities such as PE programs and VSC events. They must also understand the capabilities of the local Auxiliary in terms of participation in Partner events and activities. The Program Visitor will coordinate with the Auxiliary Flotilla Commander (FC) before any commitments are made to schedule activities and resources with the Program Partner.

Scheduling of VSC and PE program activities by the Flotilla Staff Officer-Vessel Examiners (FSO-VE) and Flotilla Staff Officer-Public Education (FSO-PE) should be done far enough in advance to make the information and schedules available to the Partner's customers.

The FSO-PV must evaluate the impact of the program upon the local area. They must also be attentive to possible over-commitment and be ready to seek assistance from other flotillas if the situation dictates. Such requests for assistance should normally be coordinated at the division level.

U.S. COAST GUARD AUXILIARY AREAS, DISTRICTS AND REGIONS



CHAPTER 3

PROGRAM VISITORS

The Recreational Boating Safety Program Visitor is an ambassador for the Coast Guard and the Auxiliary to the Partners and their customers.

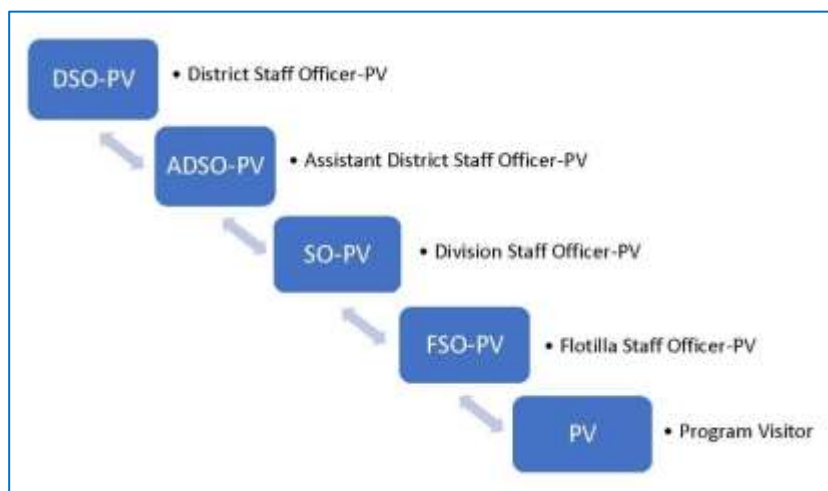
CHAPTER 3: PROGRAM VISITORS

USCG Auxiliary Chain of Leadership & Management (COLM)

Program Structure

The RBSVP is a program in the National Vessel Examination Department. In most districts, the District Staff Officer-Program Visitor (DSO-PV) will assume charge of the program in terms of promotion and augmentation. All divisions should appoint a SO-PV to promote and manage this important program in coordination with FSO-PVs in the division. A smooth flow of information from the DSO-PV to the FSO-PV is conducted via the SO-PV, and the ADSO-PV positions in some districts. In districts not utilizing SO-PVs, the FSO-PV will liaise directly with the DSO-PV.

PVs will follow the appropriate chain of leadership and management for all communications within the Auxiliary RBSVP.



PV Staff Responsibilities

The DSO-PV is responsible for advising other staff officers of expected levels of activity resulting from this program and opportunities available for other department participation. The DSO-PV will also participate in the RBS Directorate on the district level and will respond to the National Division Chief RBSVP (DVC-VP) as requested. The DSO-PV shall report on RBSVP performance to the District Commodore (DCO) and District Chief of Staff (DCOS) as well as the DVC-VP as often as designated or requested. The DSO-PV (and ADSO-PVs) will assist each Division SO-PV. If there are no SO-PV, the FSO-PV will assume this role.

The SO-PV is responsible for the division coordination of the flotilla programs. The SO-PV will periodically receive information and material from the DSO-PV or ADSO-PV and must disseminate such to their FSO-PVs in a timely manner. The SO-PV also works with the

Division Staff Officer-Material (SO-MA) and Flotilla Staff Officer-Material (FSO-MAs) to ensure the PVs receive the necessary materials for their visits. Normal distribution channels (i.e. the FSO-MA) will accomplish the actual procurement and distribution of these materials.

The FSO-PV is directly responsible for the flotilla RBSVP and reports directly to the Vice Flotilla Commander (VFC) and SO-PV. They must keep their PVs informed of new materials, policies or changes in the program. They are also responsible for the proper reporting of new PV certifications, PV training conducted, new Partner participants, number of Partner visits made and any flotilla participation in a Partner event.

RBSVP staff officers at all levels must be certified PVs in order to understand, manage and promote the program.

The RBS Program Visitor

Representing the U.S. Coast Guard

The Coast Guard Auxiliary Program Visitor is an ambassador for the U.S. Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Auxiliary to the Partners and their customers. An ambassador is defined as “authorized representative or messenger that typifies others of the same group”. This places the Program Visitor in a position of increased visibility, responsibility and influence. The success of the RBSVP is dependent on the personal interest and willing participation of the Program Visitor to service Partner locations.

Becoming a Program Visitor

The Program Visitor should have a well-rounded knowledge of the RBSVP and be truly interested in fulfilling the objectives of the program. The PV should also be knowledgeable on relevant federal, state and local programs and regulations as well as the Coast Guard Auxiliary, its programs and benefits of membership.

The Auxiliary’s Program Visitor qualification is also an excellent and appropriate place to begin a new member’s Auxiliary “career” and provide a valuable service. The PV qualification is a particularly effective pathway to learn about other Auxiliary programs, include attaining Vessel Examiner (VE) and Instructor (IT) qualifications. Questions and interests from Program Partners will naturally guide new PV’s to learn more about RBS, the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Auxiliary.

Becoming a Program Visitor is an especially useful first qualification in the Auxiliary that allows new members to immediately become engaged with their flotillas and become an active member. Program visits can quickly earn new members awards that provide tangible recognition for participation and achievement. Auxiliary national RBS awards are highlighted in Chapter 11 of the Auxiliary Manual (COMDTINST M16790.1 [series]), including the Service Performance Award. Some Auxiliary Districts have initiated additional district awards for member recognition and participation in the program.

Conduct and image

The Auxiliary Program Visitor must present a good personal image. Applicants for this program must be those who will portray a good Coast Guard Auxiliary image with knowledge, good will and diplomacy. They must approach the Partner in a business-like manner, ever conscious of the fact that the Partner's main consideration may be conducting business, meeting customer demands, and making a living.

Uniforms

Program Visitors should be in uniform for the initial visit to a new Program Partner business. Uniforms are encouraged for subsequent visits, although civilian clothes are allowed. While conducting visits, the Program Visitor may wear the Tropical Blue Uniform, Operational Dress Uniform (ODU) or the Auxiliary Blue Blazer outfit for visits.

Wearing the uniform promotes the professionalism of the member in the eyes of the Partners and the general public. In addition, the Auxiliary Program Visitor is on official assignment to duty and should be properly attired.

Uniform descriptions and standards may be found in Chapter 10 of the Auxiliary Manual (COMDTINST M16790.1 [series])

PV restrictions

Marine law enforcement officers who are members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary may be certified as a PV. However, to prevent conflict of interest when acting as a Program Visitor, they must comply with this manual by wearing the authorized Auxiliary uniform. When acting as a Program Visitor, they have no law enforcement authority.

Growing the RBSVP

In order for the RBSVP to grow, all Program Visitors must seek out new Program Partners. When new Program Visitors become qualified, they are expected to sign-up new Program Partners and be responsible for them. This requires personal initiative. Finding new partners may involve reaching out to local agencies that can provide useful insights and referrals regarding best locations for RBS information displays. Libraries and volunteer fire departments are excellent referral resources.

PV Initial Qualification Status

In order to become a Program Visitor, a member in good standing must meet the core requirements of Auxiliary membership and must have completed a recognized boating course. Completion of the Auxiliary core requirements will give the member the background to communicate knowledgeably with Program Partners and the boating public.

All requirements must be shown in the Auxiliary data information system (AuxData) and can be confirmed by the Flotilla Staff Officer-Information Services (FSO-IS).

PV Certification

Study: Members interested in becoming a Program Visitor should study the RBSVP Manual (COMDTINST M16796.3 [series]). It is recommended that the member study the Vessel Safety Check Manual, (COMDTINST M 16796.8 [series]) and also become familiar with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Manual (COMDTINST M16790.1[series]). [Auxiliary manuals](http://www.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=H-DEPT&category=auxiliary-manuals) are located here: <http://www.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=H-DEPT&category=auxiliary-manuals>.

Test: To qualify as a PV, members must take and pass the current RBSVP Qualification Examination. This examination is an open book exam with a three-hour time limit and a passing score of 90% or greater. PV candidates may take the exam online via the Coast Guard's [National Testing Center](#) (NTC) website.

Perform: In addition, the candidate must perform at least two (2) successful visits under the supervision of a certified Program Visitor, who is not a relative of the candidate, within two years of completing the RBSVP exam. The certified supervising Program Visitor determines whether or not the candidate has a good understanding of the program and provides specific instructional feedback to the candidate to assist in gaining certification. It may take more than two visits for the candidate to become familiar and comfortable conducting visits.

Report: During the qualifying process, only the certified Program Visitor will receive credit for the visits performed. The candidate will be recorded as “trainee” on the same AuxData form with remarks that two supervised PV visits were conducted successfully. The AuxData form is used to report the member and unit information, the dates, locations, number of visits, and time spent conducting visits. This information must be recorded in the AuxData system before a candidate can become certified.

Request for Certification: After the RBSVP exam results and the completed visits as a “trainee” are verified in AuxData, the FC or FSO-PV or FSO-MT shall request certification of the member as RBS Program Visitor to the District Director of Auxiliary (DIRAUX) office.

Certification: The District Director of Auxiliary (DIRAUX) office will issue a certificate and/or a letter of certification to the member acknowledging the member's certification as a PV. A sample of the letter is shown on Appendix A.

Each Auxiliary district may have a different certification process via the DIRAUX. Check with your PV leadership via chain of leadership and management (COLM) for specific certification requirements in your district.

Visit: Once the candidate has passed the RBSVP online exam, has completed the two supervised visits, and the certification is confirmed in AuxData, the member may conduct program visits as a certified PV. Following qualification as a PV, four (4) annual visits must be made and reported before the calendar year end.

Annual Qualification Requirements

To remain certified, a minimum of four (4) program visits must be completed and reported in AuxData each calendar year. The Program Visitor should confirm with the FSO-PV that their visits have been recorded in AuxData.

Re-certification & REYR Status

If a PV fails to perform the annual certification procedures during a year, they are considered to be Required Yearly Not Met (REYR) status. The PV must perform and report two (2) satisfactory visits as a trainee under the supervision of a certified PV who is not a relative of the candidate.

After completing both recertifying visits, the PV must be removed from REYR status to become recertified. *Check with your local DIRAUX office for this procedure in your AOR.*

The PV must then complete and report an additional four (4) more visits to meet the minimum requirements for that same year. All visits must be recorded in AuxData.

*AUXILIARY MANUAL:
Auxiliarists in REYR status must complete all program-specific requirements in order to regain program currency and authorization to perform program activities. Only the Director has the authority to remove Auxiliarists from REYR status and restore them to current program status if all other currency maintenance requirements are met.*

Loss of Certification

If the member does not perform and report a minimum of four (4) visits annually for five (5) years (REYR status), the member must requalify the same as a new Program Visitor.

Optionally, a PV may wish to request a voluntary termination of the PV certification through the DIRAUX office. *Check with your local DIRAUX office.*

Workshops

RBSVP Workshops are produced by Auxiliary national V-Directorate staff. At present, the workshops are not required to remain qualified as PV. National RBSVP workshops are located in the [V-Directorate website](#) (login required). When conducted in a classroom, they are reported as a national workshop in AuxData, noting the instructor and all members in attendance.

However, should new information need to be disseminated to the members, the national, district or division leadership may determine the need for a workshop and require the PVs within their Area of Responsibility (AOR) to attend. Failure to attend would not disqualify the individual member as long as written information was provided for updating their knowledge.

CHAPTER 4

PROCEDURES & LOGISTICS



CHAPTER 4: PROCEDURES & LOGISTICS

Auxiliary Manual (COMDTINST 16790.1 [series])

From the Auxiliary Manual:

The Auxiliary Manual promulgates the Commandant's policy regarding the administration of the Auxiliary and serves as the primary policy guide for every Auxiliarist. In this capacity, the Auxiliary Manual (AUXMAN) outlines the authority and responsibility for Auxiliary administration, and governs the conduct, duties, and responsibilities of all Auxiliarists. The Auxiliary Manual applies when an Auxiliarist is assigned to duty, under orders, in uniform identified as an Auxiliarist, or performing any duty or function directly related to Auxiliary missions. Details on specific Auxiliary programs can be found in specialized Coast Guard manuals and directives. In case of conflict between the Auxiliary Manual's provisions and the provisions of any other manual pertaining to the Auxiliary, the Auxiliary Manual governs.

Assignment to Duty

To qualify for assignment to duty, a Program Visitor must be recorded in AuxData as a certified PV. The PV must advise their activities in advance of conducting visits to a flotilla elected officer or the FSO-PV, preferably in written form (email, text, etc.) Auxiliarist members are referred to the Auxiliary Manual (COMDTINST 16790.1 [series]) for information on specific details of assignment to duty.

Endorsement Policy

Being designated a Partner does not mean the Coast Guard or the Coast Guard Auxiliary endorse or approve products or services sold or provided by that facility. Partners must be advised that implying or stating such in any form of public advertising is not appropriate.

Display Materials

By providing the RBS literature and materials, the Program Partner is provided with a reference library of information regarding boating safety, the Coast Guard, and the Coast Guard Auxiliary. Educating our Partners enables them to provide boating safety messages to their customers.

Always ensure that an ample supply of boating safety and related literature is left with the Partner at each visit. Literature racks should have several copies of all appropriate brochures for the area and type of facility.

The PV should leave a contact phone number with the Partner's staff so the PV can be notified when a literature rack needs restocking during particularly heavy traffic at the Partner location.



The PV should have an ample supply of materials for distribution. Most of the supplies are available at the Auxiliary National Supply Center (ANSC). Program Visitors should contact their FSO-MA to request supplies from the ANSC catalogue, available in the [Auxiliary Manual Warehouse](#).

- Boating safety pamphlets
- Any current Coast Guard Boating Safety Circulars
- Literature display rack
- Posters & flyers
- State and local handouts available from the individual agencies
- Local public education program schedules
- Vessel Safety Check station schedules
- Other applicable district or locally printed boating safety material
- Federal Requirements for Recreational Boaters



Optional Materials and Information

- USCG National Response Center 877-24-WATCH
- BoatUS Infoline – 800-245-BOAT (Annapolis, MD)
- BoatUS Infoline 703-461-2878 (Springfield, VA)
- State toll-free numbers, if available
- Local Notice to Mariners
- Charts or representations of local boating areas



National Safe Boating Week (NSBW)

Program Visitors are encouraged to enthusiastically support and participate in NSBW activities, a national campaign aimed at providing safety education and awareness to recreational boaters at the start of the summer boating season. PVs should ensure that all Partner display racks are stocked appropriately during NSBW, scheduled each year just prior to Memorial Day weekend.

The U.S. Coast Guard prepared a Resolution, and on June 4, 1958, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed PL 85-445, to establish National Safe Boating Week. Over the years, this action has evolved into a coalition of international partners and organizations to promote boating safety at the [National Safe Boating Council](#). NSBC offers NSBW campaign educational information and resources on their website: <https://www.safeboatingcouncil.org/>.

The “Wear It” campaign, sponsored by NSBC, encourages boaters to wear life jackets and personal floatation devices (PFD) for boating safety. The campaign encourages, reminds, and highlights the importance of life jacket wear and provides valuable resources to its partners, such as the trademark “Wear It” logo with specialty names and locations.



Reporting and Forms

The PV mission is not over when visits have been completed and materials have been stowed until next time. The PV must take the final steps to submit reports in a timely manner to the Flotilla Staff Officer-Information Systems (FSO-IS).

Reporting is a necessary and important task to:

- ensure that PV candidates become certified
- avoid REYR status
- guarantee that visits, time and expense are recorded for the PV
- provide personal performance awards to PV who qualify
- add measurable value to the flotilla, division and district
- evaluate RBSVP program performance
- gain Coast Guard program support and credible value

Some districts may use an additional form, may require additional reports and/or may also establish their own routing for reports. All reports should flow through the chain of leadership and management (COLM).

Auxiliary forms are available online only at the [Auxiliary Forms Warehouse](http://forms.cgaux.org/), located here: <http://forms.cgaux.org/>

The new AuxData, rolled out in 2020, enables members to directly enter PV visits into the system. Members may use the legacy ANSC forms below during the transition:

ANSC 7046 – Activity Report-RBS Visitation

Use this form to report the date, name and location of RBSVP visits to Partners.

Reporting visits on ANSC 7046 should be completed within the month of the visits.

ANSC 7029 – Member Activity Form

Use this form to report preparation time, travel time and expense associated with RBSVP visits.

ANSC 7039 - Workshop Mission and Attendance Report

Use this form to report officially released workshops, developed by national directorates, that are held in classrooms.

The FSO-PV should submit a monthly report to the Flotilla Vice Commander (VFC) and the Division Staff Officer-Program Visitors (SO-PV), accounting for RBSVP activities and news. The report can be presented at flotilla meetings and published in the unit newsletter. FC should work closely with the leaders in other flotillas in this coordination effort.

Partner Certificate of Appreciation

Eligibility

A Certificate of Appreciation has been designed to honor those Partners who have made an outstanding contribution to the RBS Visitation Program. It is the responsibility of the individual PV to educate the Partners about the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard Auxiliary programs. Awarding the certificate could be the catalyst to motivate active participation by the Partner. It is left to the judgment of the PV as to which Partner(s) should receive this certificate.

Availability

The Certificate of Appreciation (ANSC-6022) is available online at <http://certs.cgaux.org/>. Auxiliary members must login with their member number and password.

Presentation

The Auxiliary FC should prepare and present the Certificate of Appreciation to the Program Partner at a member meeting, an official function, or at the Partner's business location. The PV responsible for that Partner should be invited to participate in the presentation. All Auxiliary members participating in this presentation must be in uniform.

Publicize

This is an ideal opportunity to invite the Flotilla Staff Officer-Public Affairs (FSO-PA) to the presentation. The FSO-PA can prepare and submit a photo release to the media for printed publications and online media sites in the local area.

A simple photo can foster awareness of the RBSVP to the local community, while displaying the Program Partner and Coast Guard Auxiliary working together to promote and encourage boating safety.



Glossary

ABC	“America’s Boating Course”
ABS	“About Boating Safely”, taught by U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary
ADSO-PV	Auxiliary Assistant District Staff Officer for RBS Visitation Program
ANSC	Auxiliary National Supply Center
AOR	Area of Responsibility
ATON	Aids to Navigation
AUXDATA	Auxiliary information system for records
AWW	America Waterways Watch
COMDINST	Commandant’s Instruction by U.S. Coast Guard
DCO	Auxiliary District Commodore
DCOS	Auxiliary District Chief of Staff (Vice Commodore)
DDC	Auxiliary District Directorate Chief
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DIRAUX	U.S. Coast Guard District Director of Auxiliary
DSO-PV	Auxiliary District Staff Officer for Program Visitors
DVC-VP	Auxiliary national Division Chief for the RBS Visitation Program.
FSO-IS	Auxiliary Flotilla Staff Officer for Information Services
FSO-PA	Auxiliary Flotilla Staff Officer for Public Affairs
FSO-PV	Auxiliary Flotilla Staff Officer for Program Visitors
FSO-MA	Auxiliary Flotilla Staff Officer for Materials
IT	Auxiliary Instructor qualification
NASBLA	National Association of Boating Law Administrators
NMMA	National Marine Manufacturers Association
NSBC	National Safe Boating Council
NSBW	National Safe Boating Week
ODU	Operational Dress Uniform
PE	Public Education
PFD	Personal Flotation Device or Life Jacket
POC	Point of Contact within an organization
PV	Program Visitor
RBS	Recreational Boating Safely
RBS-VP	Recreational Boating Safety Visitation Program
SIC	Suddenly in Command boating class
SO-IS	Auxiliary Division Staff Officer for Information Services
SO-MA	Auxiliary Division Staff Officer for Materials
SO-PV	Auxiliary Division Staff Officer for Program Visitors
USCG	United States Coast Guard
USCGAUX	United States Coast Guard Auxiliary
USPS	United States Power Squadrons
V-DIR	Auxiliary Vessel Examination & Partner Visitation Directorate
VE	Vessel Examiner
VSC	Vessel Safely Check
YIC	“You’re in Command” boating course

PPENDIX A

Sample Program Visitor Letter of Certification

Department of Homeland Security
United States Coast Guard
Director of Auxiliary
(District Address)

Date

To whom it may concern:

This letter will serve as official confirmation that (name, district-division-flotilla), U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, is certified as a Program Visitor in the Coast Guard's Recreational Boating Safety Visitation Program. This member has been provided with details concerning this campaign that could prove of great interest to you and the operation of your establishment.

If you have any questions concerning the Recreational Boating Safety program of the Coast Guard, please feel free to ask the Program Visitor. If answers are not readily available, the Program Visitor will be able to obtain them for you.

This campaign can prove to be of great value to all participants: you, the Coast Guard, and the Auxiliary. More importantly, it can greatly benefit the general boating public. I strongly encourage your cooperation in this program and welcome any and all recommendations that you may care to offer concerning the Recreational Boating Safety Visitation Program.

Sincerely,

(Director of Auxiliary)

References

ⁱ <https://www.statista.com/topics/1138/recreational-boating/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.uscgboating.org/content/strategic-plan.php>