



## National Association of State Boating Law Administrators Engineering, Reporting & Analysis Committee

### **Vessel Safety Check (VSC) Data Collection Pilot Program - Status Update: *Continued monitoring of USBI and affiliated organizations' efforts to capture data and analyze why vessels fail the VSC***

#### **THE CHARGE 2012 D-1**

*Continue to provide counsel to activities associated with the United Safe Boating Institute and affiliated organizations' efforts to capture vessel safety check (VSC) data that will be used for analyzing the reasons why vessels fail a VSC (with the ultimate intent of providing additional meaningful trend data to examinations of operator non-compliance with safety equipment requirements.*

#### **IN BRIEF**

This is a carryover monitoring and advisory charge in support of the Engineering, Reporting & Analysis Committee's (ERAC's) previous work on operator compliance with safety equipment requirements (2008-2009), and in continuing support of the Strategic Plan of the National Recreational Boating Safety Program and its Objective 8 on this issue. In FY 2011, the United Safe Boating Institute (USBI), which is represented on ERAC, was awarded a U.S. Coast Guard grant to pursue the development of a database, along with a web-based entry screen for examiners to capture and input vessel safety check (VSC) data on the vessels. In 2012, a second Coast Guard grant was awarded to USBI to train on and pilot the program in six states before going nationwide. This report describes the status of the effort as of August 2012.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The National RBS Strategic Plan, 2007-2011, "Objective 8 – Operator Compliance – USCG Required Safety Equipment," called for creating a system to evaluate operator compliance with equipment carriage requirements using the Marine Information for Safety and Law Enforcement (MISLE) system and the Performance Report Part II (PRPII) as a basis. The initial strategy outlined in the plan was to evaluate incidents of non-compliance with required safety equipment to determine any trends. With the states and the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) named as implementing partners for this strategy, ERAC developed and executed a committee charge in response.

However, work directed toward this charge in 2008 and 2009, including reviews of the relevance and applicability of available data sources, yielded mixed results, as described in the ERAC report, *“Analysis of Incidents and Trends Associated with Operator Non-Compliance with Safety Equipment Carriage Requirements: Report on Analysis, Findings and Recommendations”* (available at [www.nasbla.org/ERAC](http://www.nasbla.org/ERAC)). The committee’s review of a short term CG Auxiliary pilot program in 2009 did suggest that a detailed collection of data from Vessel Safety Checks (VSC’s) could greatly enhance data collection, in that approximately 150,000 recreational boats are examined by the CG Auxiliary and the U. S. Power Squadrons (USPS) annually over a wide geographic area.

Ultimately, ERAC embarked on a follow-up charge to provide counsel to efforts associated with capturing these additional VSC data. The committee supported the strategy of a grant project, proposed and headed up by USBI, to examine a method of bringing VSC data into the analysis of incidents and trends associated with operator non-compliance. It anticipated, and would be aligned with, strategies set forth in the updated Objective 8 of the National RBS Strategic Plan for 2012-2016.<sup>1</sup>

## **THE APPROACH**

In fulfillment of a Coast Guard grant awarded in August 2010, USBI convened a task force to develop recommendations on how to collect VSC data, with resulting formulation of a pilot test collection program. Care would be taken to only capture statistical data, ensuring personal information regarding the boat, the owner/operator, and the examiner would be purged from the collection.

The task force recommended a pilot program be conducted in six test states over a two-year period: two East Coast, one Gulf Coast, one Great Lakes, one Inland and one from the West. By 2012, a second grant was awarded by the Coast Guard to move the project along as a pilot with the following states identified for inclusion: Massachusetts; Michigan; Missouri; North Carolina; Texas; and Washington State.

In 2010, in these states, the USPS performed approximately 6,000 VSC’s and the CG Auxiliary, 20,000 VSC’s. As such, the project task force felt this would represent a good cross-section of states with a good probability of yielding sufficient exams to effectively analyze the benefit of going national in the future.

A VSC data collection pilot training session was conducted in May 2012, and the USBI website was updated.

See the next page for a view of [www.usbi.org/vsc.php](http://www.usbi.org/vsc.php).

---

<sup>1</sup> Objective 8, The Strategic Plan of the National Recreational Boating Safety Program 2012 – 2016, 8.1: 1. Identify the number of incidents of non-compliance with safety equipment carriage requirements to determine trends from PRP II and MISLE data. 2. Ascertain when USCG Required Safety Equipment is carried, whether the additional requirements of accessibility, condition, and appropriate size are met. 3. Use NASBLA’s Engineering, Reporting and Analysis Committee (ERAC) 2009 analysis and other available sources to pinpoint realistic means to gather and use non-compliance data. 4. Consider technological solutions and social media to gather and quickly analyze specific compliance data. 5. Recognize that data gathering may require a variety of innovative means, including altering PRP II, using data from USCGAUX courtesy exams, enhancing Operation Drywater, and other sources.

The result was a single page, point and click method for examiners to input the reasons a vessel failed the VSC.

State: AZ-Arizona  
CA-California

Length:  <16'  16-25'  26-39'  40-65'  >65'

Area of Operations:  Inland  River  Coastal

**VSC Decal Requirements**

Item	Failed
1. Number Display:	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Registration:	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. PFD:	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. VDS:	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Fire Exhtingushers:	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Ventilation:	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Backflame Arrestor:	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Sound Devices:	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Navigation Lights	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Pollution Placard	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. MARPOL:	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. MSD:	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Nav Rules:	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. State Requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Examiner**

**Organization**

USPS   
  Auxiliary   
  Other

Other basic information requested includes date of the VSC, location, length of vessel, type of water, and examiner’s organization. Records are captured in a downloadable Excel spreadsheet to facilitate analysis. Additional postings on the page include an outline of the program, a PowerPoint training module, an instruction sheet regarding the coding found in the spreadsheet, and a link to the file.



**THE UNITED SAFE BOATING INSTITUTE**

**DATABASE IN LIVE MODE**

Quarterly Data Dump: vscdecals-6-12.xls	<a href="#">Check Sheet on Data Dump (PDF)</a>
New DSO Training (4mb) (PDF)	<a href="#">Outline of VSC Pilot Program (PDF)</a>

**VSC Base Information**

Date of VSC: 1 - 1 - 12

**Location of VSC**

AK-Alaska  
AL-Alabama  
AR-Arkansas  
AZ-Arizona  
CA-California

State: CA-California

Length:  <16'  16-25'  26-39'  40-65'  >65'

Area of Operations:  Inland  River  Coastal

## **AS OF THIS WRITING**

VSC data are being entered quarterly to the online report; they reflect all USPS reports as well as CG Auxiliary reports from a select number of the states in this pilot phase. A review of the data will be conducted by USBI when all 2012 reports are in, with delivery of the results to ERAC for consideration, and a more formal presentation likely to occur at the 2013 International Boating and Water Safety Summit. At this time, the expectation is that ERAC will continue to serve in an advisory/monitoring role for this data collection effort during the 2013 charge cycle.