

Smart Harbors

Raising the Standard

Summer 2021

Why become a Virginia Clean Boater?

By adopting pollution prevention measures, Virginia Clean Boaters can take satisfaction in knowing they are doing their part to:

- Keep Virginia waterways clean.
- Preserve our waterways for the future.
- Learn and teach clean boating habits.



Please Send Us Your News!

Do you have a new and exciting method for managing recyclables at your facility? Are there any regulatory items that you would like addressed? Has your facility won an award, hired a new manager or purchased a fancy pump-out boat?

If you have any news that you would like included in the Clean Marina Newsletter, Smart Harbors, please let us know. This is a quarterly newsletter with the next issue scheduled for Fall 2021 and we would like to include information from the marina community.


Comments or questions please email VCMP:

askVCMP@vims.edu or call 804-684-7768.



How to Get a Vessel Safety Check This Season

No cost, no penalty inspection can improve safety aboard your boat

NEWS From BoatUS 

SPRINGFIELD, Va., March 31, 2021 – [No cost, no penalty vessel safety checks](#), which up until last season were given more than 150,000 times each year by hundreds of U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and U.S. Power Squadrons volunteers at launch ramps, boat clubs and marinas, are back.

While COVID may still be with us, both groups are ramping up efforts to get vessel examiners back in the field, responding to individual requests from boaters seeking potentially life-saving vessel safety inspections, as well as encouraging new DIY virtual safety checks. With program sponsorship from the [Boat Owners Association of The United States](#), here's how boaters can get a vessel safety inspection this boating season.

DIY virtual safety check: A new virtual safety check continues the tradition of no-cost inspections by offering a combination of an easily downloadable virtual safety checklist – the same used by actual vessel examiners – along with online guide that makes it easy for any boater to perform their own examination. To start, go [here](#).

Doing a DIY virtual safety check does two things: It can give first-time boat owners a line-by-line recipe for making their boats safe. It can also greatly increase the chances of any boat successfully passing an in-person vessel safety check. Examiners note that it's often just one or two items, such as



A vessel safety check can greatly increase safety aboard your boat. All in-person vessel safety checks follow COVID safety protocols. (credit: U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary)

expired flare or a burnt-out navigation light, that prevents a boat from earning a passing grade. The Auxiliary and Power Squadrons also note that some boaters desire to earn a vessel safety check decal to display aboard the boat, which can only be earned through an in-person vessel check.

In-person vessel safety check: While COVID has affected many groups, including the Auxiliary and Power Squadrons, each is endeavoring to get vessel examiners in the field this year. The easiest way to find out if a marina, boat club, or launch ramp will be the site of a scheduled vessel safety check event is to contact your local U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary or U.S. Power Squadrons. You can also request an individual vessel safety check at cgaux.org/vsc, but note that scheduled vessel safety events may offer the surest way to earn a vessel safety check decal this season. All in-person vessel safety checks follow COVID safety protocols.

USCG Changes Certificate of Documentation to 5 Years

Posted April 14, 2021 by [US Harbors](#)

Of the nation's nearly 12 million registered recreational boats, those owners who [federally document their vessels](#), or about 165,000 boats, will be spared the hassle of renewing their U.S. Coast Guard Certificate of Documentation every year as a result of recent rule change that now makes documentation valid for five years. The move was the result of Coast Guard cost-saving efforts and [requirements set forth in the Frank LoBiondo Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2018](#).



"The change to a five-year documentation period will be a time-saver," said BoatUS Manager of Government Affairs David Kennedy. Kennedy notes the new rule also eliminates some options that were formerly available.

"Going forward, the five-year Certificate of Documentation is the only option available for recreational vessels as the 2018 Act did not allow for alternatives," added Kennedy.

Formerly, documentation was \$26 per year and boaters could select the number of years, from one to five.

The new five-year documentation cost for is fixed at \$130. Additional fees apply for initial documentation as well as exchanges. The Coast Guard will not issue refunds if an owner chooses to cancel documentation before its five-year expiration or if a vessel is sold during the renewal period.

Boat owners generally choose to federally document vessels with the U.S. Coast Guard versus the more common practice of state registration, for one of two reasons: the boat was purchased with a bank loan and the lender required it or the owner plans to travel beyond U.S. waters. A Certificate of Documentation is internationally recognized and makes it easier for American vessels

to enter and leave foreign ports.

Documented vessels must also be a minimum of 5 net tons, which is about the size of a 26-foot boat. BoatUS notes that net tons are more about (cargo) volume, than weight.

In a related issue, BoatUS continues to advise boaters to be vigilant when renewing U.S. Coast Guard vessel documentation as [official-looking vessel documentation renewal notices can lead to confusion and higher costs](#). Some BoatUS members have received notices that are not from the Coast Guard but rather third-party companies whose name or return addresses may appear similar to that of the official U.S. Coast Guard National Vessel Documentation Center (NVDC).

For more information on documentation go to [BoatUS.com/Documentation](#).

Coming Soon: CleanWay™ Fuel Fill Kits!

A large part of the ongoing mission of the Virginia Clean Marina Program (VCMP) is to support marina operators in maintaining local water quality and educating their clients about the harmful effects of nonpoint source pollution in Virginia's waterways. To that end, the VCMP has secured a grant to provide each certified marina with three Clean Way™ baffle devices for use at their fueling stations. Clean Way™ Fuel Fill's patented baffle design captures fuel overfills and redirects them back into the tank. This unique device captures spills before they happen eliminating the need for rags, fuel absorbent sheets, fuel absorbent towels, fuel absorbent pads, or fuel dispersal sprays. This keeps fuel, dispersants, and debris out of the marine environment and flammable absorbent materials out of the landfill. While private boat owners typically purchase one Clean Way™ device for their exact fuel port,



marinas typically need three separate devices to accommodate all port sizes.

Starting in the Fall of 2021, VCMP representatives will begin distributing three Clean Way™ devices to each certified Virginia Clean Marina. Full color laminated instructions will be provided, and a brief training will be conducted with marina operators and staff. Operators can then instruct their clients in the proper use of the units when refueling. Funding for this project was secured through the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund and sales of the "Friend of the Chesapeake" license plate. For more information, please contact Celia Cackowski at [ccackowski@vims.edu](#).

OIL ABSORBENT BILGE PADS AVAILABLE

The Virginia Clean Marine Program has oil absorbent bilge pads available for distribution. The bilge pads were purchased with a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund. Please email askVCMP@vims.edu, if you would like bilge pads for your slip holders.



Fuel Dock Safety: Complacency Kills

By Dan Rutherford. Published on February 24, 2021. *Marina Dock Age*

Editor's Note: This is just a small amount of the data included in NFPA 30A. It is recommended that all fuel dispensing facilities purchase, read, and review this document thoroughly with their staff. Original copies can be obtained from NFPA headquarters, 1 Batterymarch Park, P.O. Box 9101, Quincy, MA 02269-9101; email: stds_admin@nfpa.org.

I don't really need to show you a video of a boat explosion after it was improperly fueled at a fuel dock to get your attention, or do I? Being involved in marine claims for over 35 years, I can tell you that at least twice each year, I have either investigated a case or handled a claim involving fuel being pumped into a rod holder resulting in either a fuel spill and environmental catastrophe or worse, an explosion resulting in heavy damage to the vessel, dock, serious injury and sometimes death. So, am I serious when I say this is important stuff? You bet I am.

Not to stereotype, but the days of high school kids in shorts and tee shirts manning fuel docks is over. That is unless you have really well trained, experienced, safe, and responsible high school kids working for you. If you have a busy fuel dock, it is perhaps the biggest single stream of revenue at your facility. A single accident can take that all away in an instant.



PGA Marina in Florida has this sign (left) posted at the fueling dock, notifying boaters to pay attention to the type of fuel they need for their boats.

For this article, and a

follow up article, I am going to focus on two different types of losses as well as prevention:

First, is the simple, "Gas in Diesel" or "Diesel in Gas" scenario. This sounds so "simple stupid" but it happens dozens of times a year and it may have even happened to you (you can be honest... no one is watching you nod your head). While this may be a simple mistake, the consequences can range from minor damage to very serious and expensive repairs.

Second, is the unfortunate and often very serious consequence of not following the proper rules and regulations regarding the fueling of motor vessels at your "Motor Fuel Dispensing Facility." Improper fueling (primarily with gas) can result in fire, explosion, catastrophic damages and, as noted above, death.



Gas or Diesel

So, let's talk the easy stuff first. Putting the right fuel into your customer's boat. As a claims manager, my adjusters and I have to review cases brought forward by other carriers (subrogation) against the marinas we insure for cases involving alleged improper fueling. "Gas in diesel" or "diesel in gas" can result in, at a minimum, the need to pump the fuel tanks and dispose of the contaminated fuel to more complex repairs to engines (diesel engine injectors don't really like gas). In my experience, however, all of these improper fueling have one thing in common... the boat owner pumped



the wrong fuel into his or her own boat. That is right, you, the marina owners who sold the fuel, are being blamed for putting the wrong fuel in the customer's boat, but you did not put it into their boat, THEY DID. That does not seem to matter anymore. No one ever accepts responsibility; it is always someone else's fault. Welcome to the world of subrogation.

The green circle tag clearly identifies diesel, while the red square tag marks gas.

We have a current case where there is a woman on the foredeck of the boat as it is pulling in saying that they want "gas, a pump out and ice." They pull up in front of the gas pump (the diesel pumps are 80 feet away), ask for gas, the gas hose from the dispenser (you know, the one with the 3" high letters that say "Gasoline") is handed to them and they proceed to fill not one, but both tanks with gas. They got the pump out and ice and drove away. Remember, I said that diesel engines don't like gas? Well, theirs didn't and now our insured is being blamed for a couple of hundred thousand dollars of damage. I could recount this several times over. The names have been changed, but the fact pattern is often the same. So, what do we, as an industry do to prevent this type of accidental fueling from occurring? A couple of simple things come to mind.

Three-Syllable Rule

Train your staff the three-syllable rule. Your staff can't be asked to know what type of fuel every boat

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Virginia Flood Awareness

Virginia's hurricane season starts June 1 and lasts until Nov. 30. You can't control the weather, but you can prepare for it. This hurricane season, make sure your family has a plan and is protected with flood insurance. Follow DCR on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) to stay up to date throughout hurricane season.

Know Your Risk

Flooding — whether from hurricanes, rain events, or storm surge — is the most common and costly natural disaster, but most Virginians

aren't prepared. Finding out if you live in a high-risk flood zone is as easy as entering an address on the [Virginia Flood Risk Information System](#). If you live in coastal Virginia know if you live in a hurricane evacuation zone and what that means. Use the [Virginia Department of Emergency Management's Know Your Zone map](#) to find out.

Hurricanes don't just hit coastal Virginia. In 2018, Hurricanes Florence and Michael tore through central and western areas of the state.



During Hurricane Michael, the Dan River region alone suffered roughly \$12.9 million in damages. Floods aren't limited to mapped flood risk areas either. In fact, many of the 2,000 homes that were flooded in 2016 during Hurricane Matthew

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Fuel Dock Safety: Complacency Kills, continued from page 3

needs. That is the boat owner's/operator's responsibility. Period. But we can help them not screw up, right? The three-syllable rule is as "Keep it Simple Stupid" (KISS) as it comes. Train your staff to ask each operator: "Do you want 'GAS-O-LINE' OR 'DIE-SEL-FUEL?'" If they screw that up, they deserve the headaches. Next, be sure your pumps are well marked. Many facilities have the diesel fuel set far away from the gas but that is not as necessary as good, clear, and legible signage on each dispenser. NFPA requires 3" block lettering prominently displayed on the pump that says "GASOLINE" or "DIESEL FUEL." The hoses should be color-coded. Most standards call for green for diesel and black for gas but you should be sure to check your state regulations to be compliant. Fuel nozzle covers should be green for diesel and I personally think red for gas. You may also look into nozzle covers or tags to attach to them that say "diesel" or "gas."

It goes without saying, that unless your state requires your staff to actually fuel the boat, your fuel dock crew member should hand the pump to the boat owner/operator to fuel his or her own boat. ABYC requires that the fuel fills on deck be clearly



and permanently marked (H24.13.6 for gas and 33.12.3) but unfortunately, unlike your car, the design of the fills can allow the introduction of the wrong fuel into the tank because, while there is a standard for the opening of the gas fill(1-1/8" minimum), that standard does not exist for diesel fills. We expect that boat owners should be capable of pumping the correct fuel into their boat, so that is why I guess there are no further safeguards at the fill location, but perhaps we need to rethink this as an industry.

In addition to any fire suppression system required by NFPA 303 or 10, it is recommended that marinas include a rolling high volume Amerex 489, or similar, on the fuel dock. Fuel dock attendants should be trained to use it twice per year.

All boiled down... train your staff

to use the three-syllable rule and confirm, more than once if necessary, what type of fuel your customer wants, but more importantly, needs. This and proper signage and color-coding are essential to keep the very highest of standards at your fuel dock.

Well-Managed Fuel Dock

My best advice to summarize is that your fuel dock, if managed well and professionally, should take all that NFPA 303 and especially 30A to heart and make it your fueling Bible. Your staff needs to be incredibly well trained and disciplined. All customers must follow the rules, or they can fuel up elsewhere.

Before fueling, make sure that the boat is off; the bilge blowers are engaged and remain engaged during the entire fueling process; the engine hatch is closed; the cabin hatch is closed; and the bilge pumps are off. Confirm prior to fueling if the vessel requires "Gas-O-Line" or Die-Sel-Fuel." Let the boat operator fuel his or her boat. Observe the fueling process as best as possible.

Once fueling has been completed and the hose has been returned to the dispenser, the bilges need to be visually examined, and the engines and systems should be restarted or energized only once it has been determined that there is no spilled fuel, odors or hazards present.

NOAA begins transition to electronic navigation charts

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) began to implement its sunset plan for paper nautical charts last month, starting with the current paper chart 18665 of Lake Tahoe. After August, NOAA's electronic navigational chart will be the only NOAA nautical chart of the area. This is the first traditional paper chart to be fully supplanted by an electronic chart as part of NOAA's Office of Coast Survey Raster Sunset Plan, which includes a new process to notify mariners of the transition of individual paper charts to electronic charts. These charts are easier to update and maintain, keeping mariners safer with up-to-date information on marine hazards.

As part of the sunset plan, released in 2019, mariners will be officially

notified of this chart's cancellation in the U.S. Coast Guard Local Notice to Mariners. A note in the lower left corner of the chart will state that it is the last paper edition and it will be canceled six months later on Aug. 26. NOAA will continue to announce the cancellation of additional paper charts as the sunset plan progresses, initially based on volume of sales or downloads, and in regions with improved NOAA electronic navigational chart coverage. Cancellation of all traditional paper and associated raster chart products will be completed by January 2025.

NOAA announced the start of a five-year process to end traditional paper nautical chart production in late 2019 via a Federal Register



Notice. While NOAA is sunsetting its traditional nautical chart products, it is undertaking a major effort to improve the data consistency and provide larger scale coverage within its electronic navigational chart product suite.

Over the next four years, NOAA will work to ease the transition to electronic products by providing access to paper chart products based on electronic data. The online NOAA Custom Chart tool enables users to create their own paper and PDF charts from the latest NOAA ENC data.

Source: AIWA E-News March 2021

3 tips from the BoatUS Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water

ANNAPOLIS, Md., April 26, 2021. The nation's biggest recreational boating safety event of the year, National Safe Boating Week, took place May 22–28. The annual event helps remind boaters to keep boating safety front and center all season long. How can you be a safety hero aboard your boat? Here are three tips from the BoatUS Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water.

≈ 1. The best life jacket is the one you will wear, meaning one that's comfortable. There are many lightweight inflatable life jackets that fit the bill. Check the jacket's label to ensure it's approved for your type of boating. If the kids are visiting, don't be tempted to put a child in an ill-fitting adult life jacket. The BoatUS Foundation's Life Jacket Loaner program for kids offers a free and easy way to [borrow an infant, child or teen life jacket](#) for the day or weekend with

locations at nearly 600 marinas, boat clubs, and other waterfront locations across the country.

≈ 2. Learn from what the U.S. Coast Guard boating safety reports tell us: Operator inattention, improper lookout, operator inexperience, excessive speed, and alcohol rank as the top five primary contributing factors in accidents. This summer, recreational boaters can focus on



these factors by putting down the cellphone, [practicing using S.C.A.N. procedures to avoid distracted boating](#), taking a [free boating safety course](#), slowing down, and driving more defensively, especially in congested boating areas. Alcohol use is the leading known contributing factor in fatal boating accidents, so save the celebration for after the boat is safely tied up for the night. Boat operators also need to recognize they are responsible for the safety of their guests, including inebriated ones.

≈ 3. Remember to wear an engine cutoff switch if your boat is less than 26-feet, traveling on plane or above displacement speed. Some exemptions apply to this [new rule went into effect April 1](#), including if the vessel has an enclosed helm. Engine cutoff switches can prevent boat strike injuries after an operator has been ejected from the vessel or displaced from the helm.



These 5 Earth Day Tips Keep Waters Clean All Season Long

April 22 marked 51st annual environmental celebration

ANNAPOLIS, Md., April 13, 2021. Back in 1970 on the first [Earth Day](#), going out boating often meant tolerating polluted waterways. We've come a long way since then. Largely gone are the foul-smelling air and unswimmable waters, remnants of a prior age. How can boat owners keep the momentum going? The BoatUS Foundation offers five simple Earth Day tips for boaters to follow all summer long.

≈ 1. Take time to prepare your boat's shrinkwrap for recycling by removing vents, strapping or zippers. Only the plastic film can be recycled. Many shrinkwrap recycling programs today are offered at the local level, so if your marina does not recycle, ask your county government. Some boaters have found that by carefully removing

the wrap it can be reused for a second season.

≈ 2. If you trailer your boat to different waterways each summer, leave the uninvited [aquatic hitchhikers](#) at home by following "Clean, Drain, Dry," ensuring your boat, trailer and motor are cleaned thoroughly (including any tackle or watersports gear) and allowed to dry completely before splashing in a different body of water.

≈ 3. The earth may be 71% water, but it's no place for trash. Always have a trash receptacle aboard, and when underway ensure nothing goes overboard. (A waste can with a closable lid helps.) A second receptacle for recyclables also helps honor Earth Day and make cleanup easier at the end of the boating day.

≈ 4. Prevent a spill by [refueling your boat](#) with care. Always have an absorbent pad, fuel nozzle absorbent "donut," or "bib" (to soak up back splashes) when you pump. Actively listen to fuel being dispensed into the fuel nozzle receptacle. Slow down the dispensing pump as fuel reaches the top of the tank – usually when you start to hear bubbling or gurgling noises rising from the fuel filler tube. Refuel portable tanks ashore.

≈ 5. Help keep discarded fishing line and soft baits out of the water by building a fishing line recycling bin and placing it in your community. To learn how, go to [BoatUS.org/Monofilament](#).

Virginia Flood Awareness continued from page 4

were outside the mapped floodplain. Also, hurricanes don't just hit coastal Virginia. In 2018, Hurricanes Florence and Michael tore through central and western areas of the state. During Hurricane Michael, the Dan River region alone suffered roughly \$12.9 million in damages.

Although it's hurricane season, flooding doesn't only occur during hurricanes or named storms. In February 2020, southwest Virginia communities had severe flooding after experiencing heavy rain,

requiring some residents to be rescued from their homes and resulting in damaged buildings and road closures.

Tides can also impact flood risk, and they're not only found along the coast. Tidal waters extend inland to places like Richmond and Fredericksburg, as well as north, like Alexandria and Arlington. **The Virginia Institute of Marine Science** developed [Tide-watch](#), a map that forecasts water levels to help visualize the magnitude and impacts of coastal flooding.

Learn more about sea level forecasts through [ADAPTVA](#).

Anywhere it can rain, it can flood. Make sure you know your risk and you're prepared.

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
600 East Main Street, 24th floor
Richmond, VA 23219-2094
804-786-6124

