



# No Fuss, No Muss - and Your Favorite Price (Free!) - Vessel Exams

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In the springtime, the saying goes that a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of love. This may be true but just about everyone I speak to lately has had it with "cabin fever" and wants to get back out on there! And, fitfully, spring is nearly here. When getting to work commissioning your boat for the water, stop for a moment and consider getting the "gilt edged" United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Vessel Safety Check - better known as the Vessel Exam. Oh, and it's free.

### What It is Not!

USCGAux vessel safety checks are not a regulatory event. If your boat doesn't pass all components of the exam, no one "turns you in." The examiner will explain exactly what needs to be brought back into line to conform to federal standards and, most likely, will also give you his or her cell phone number. "Call me when you've addressed the issue. I'll come over and we'll get this boat decal'd as having passed the USCGAux Vessel Safety Check."

### What Does the Decal Mean?

It says something very simple. This boat meets, at least,

federal minimums for 15 specific safety or regulatory features. Can USCG active-duty members still come alongside and board you? Of course they can. They need no reason whatsoever (see "We're Being Boarded by the Coast Guard - Now What!?" SSP, 11/15/06). But experience tells me that when the regulars are faced with two boats, and one has passed our exam and the other hasn't, the other guy had better hope that he has no reason to worry.

### How Do I Get One?

In an outreach program started a few years ago, the USCGAux flotillas "Out East" created "Vessel Exam Days" with a number of marinas and dock masters. Some throw BBQs for their customers. Some set up tables with fresh sets of flares (the most common reason for a boat not to get its decal) and other necessary items like fire extinguishers or air-horns, etc. So, check with your dock master and, if he or she isn't planning to sponsor a "VE Day," email me below and I will follow up directly. Or, you can go online. [WWW.CGAAUX.ORG](http://WWW.CGAAUX.ORG) and click on Vessel Safety Checks.

Follow a few simple prompts and you will be asked for your zip code. The computer will then list for you, closest first, where the Vessel Examiners are and you can email them automatically. Or just email me below and we'll get it set up for you.

### What Will the Vessel Examiner Check?

Believe it or not, the first thing that the Examiner will ask for is your registration. The registration, not a copy, is required by law to be on the boat. If it isn't there, the examiner will still conduct the exam to see if there are any other show-stoppers but the VSC decal cannot be awarded without a valid registration on the boat. It can be in your wallet as long as you are on the boat!

An important reason for the registration to be in hand is that right on it is the length of the boat as it is known to DMV. USCG safety standards are size-dependent. For example, a boat over 39.4 feet shall (must!) have a copy of the Navigation Rules (the COLREGs you've seen so much on here) on the boat. Twenty-six feet or more? Where's your Pollution placard? Trash placard? At least

two "B-1" fire extinguishers aboard?

### Why Typically Don't All Boats Pass?

Well, as I noted above, the most common reason is expired flares. What does that mean? Your flares come from the factory with 40 months of "life" and that date is stamped on the side of the flare. Why 40? So, after shipping and sitting on a shelf, hopefully you have three years (36 months) of coverage. Are the flares still good after the expiration date? Almost without a doubt, they are. But the Examiner cannot give you your decal unless you have at least three day and three night "pyrotechnic devices" aboard in an un-expired state.

What else can go wrong? Well, before you get nervous, with over 100,000 exams as the basis, 75 percent of all boats pass on the first pass. And it is not a regulatory event if it doesn't. You get specific advice from the Examiner on what you need. And likely his or her cell phone number to schedule the re-exam. And, oh yes, it is free. Both times...

### Here is the breakdown:

Display of Numbers  
5.435%

Registration/Documentation  
5.574%

Personal Flotation Device  
2.832%

Ventilation  
1.451%

Visual Distress Signals  
12.221%

Fire Extinguishers  
4.501%

Backfire Flame Control  
1.639%

Sound Producing Device  
5.156%

Navigation Lights  
8.465%

Marine Sanitation Device  
2.921%

Pollution Placard  
2.375%

MARPOL Trash Placard  
2.802%

Navigation Rules  
2.742%

State and/or Local Regulations  
10.432%

Overall Vessel Condition  
(catch-all) - 4.670%

Does every boat need to pass every item? Not at all. If you don't have a marine sanitation device (a "head") aboard, the Examiner just checks "N/A." But if you do, it must meet federal standards for safe and secure operation. Does your 20' Seahunt need a set of Nav Rules aboard? Nope. But that 46' Ocean yacht of yours does! You get the picture.

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14					15				16				
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27	28	29					30						
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51	52						53						
54				55			56				57	58	59
60			61							63			
64						65				66			
67						68				69			

**ACROSS**

- 1 Port of Iraq
- 6 Burden
- 10 Healing sign
- 14 Was sore
- 15 Johnnycake
- 16 Top-rated
- 17 Vacuous
- 18 Perry's penner
- 19 Piece for two
- 20 Legitimate underwear?
- 23 Backstabber
- 24 French mother
- 25 Old Blue Eyes
- 27 Prepare for printing
- 30 Off. skill
- 31 Highway or byway
- 32 Farm enclosure
- 34 Terra firma
- 37 \_\_\_ longa, vita brevis
- 38 More sedate
- 41 Vegas cube
- 42 Passover, to many who celebrate it
- 44 Female swan
- 45 Congeal
- 46 "To hold as \_\_\_ the mirror up to nature"
- 49 Guided

**DOWN**

- 1 Security cash
- 2 Complexion problem
- 3 Uneven cut
- 4 Titled anew
- 5 Simpson and Astaire
- 6 Light musical production
- 7 Japanese purple seaweed
- 8 Except if
- 9 Think best
- 10 Low
- 11 Fast food for the bench?
- 12 Close, to Blake
- 13 Siamese fighting fish

21 Brittany seaport  
22 Contemptuous expression  
26 Last of a collection?  
27 Snare  
28 Olden times  
29 Stay on the wagon?  
33 Little yelp  
35 Roof piece  
36 Maintained  
38 Outcropping  
39 Processed seawater  
40 Door  
43 Amazement  
45 Ones who mock  
47 Bellowed  
48 Deep-seated mutual hatred  
50 TV dinner element  
51 Photorealist painter  
52 Inclined trough  
56 Bit  
57 BTU part  
58 Mobyutu \_\_\_ Seko  
59 Glum drop?  
61 Santa's helper

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See Solution on Page 6

~ TOWN CRIER ~

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

### VOLUNTEERS WANTED!!

#### Mastic Beach Fire Department

It takes Someone with a desire to do something important for the community: Someone with courage and dedication, who isn't afraid of hard work, and is willing to accept the challenge of a difficult job.

If you're this kind of person, you're needed as a volunteer

Applications are available at the firehouse  
Monday through Friday from the hours of 8AM - 4PM  
or Call 281-9840

265 Neighborhood Rd • Mastic Beach • NY 11951

www.masticbeachfiredepartment.com