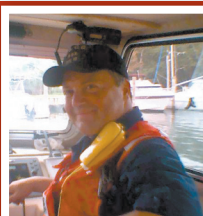




# No Fuss, No Muss, and Your Favorite Price FREE! – Vessel Exams



## PART II.

**By Vincent Pica**

*Division 18 (ISR) Captain,  
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**Continued from last week's Independent.**

*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 know as the Vessel Exam. Oh, and it's free.*

### 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 3-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 3 day and 3 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% 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.

So, let's be sure we go to sea with a vessel that meets the gold standard and increase the safety of life at sea – yours! Oh, and it's free...

**BTW, if you are interested in being part of USCG Forces, email me at [JoinUSCGAux2008@aol.com](mailto:JoinUSCGAux2008@aol.com) or go direct to MaryJo Cruickshank, who is in charge of new members matters, at [FSO-PS@emcg.us](mailto:FSO-PS@emcg.us) and we will help you "get in this thing..."**

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