



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD AUXILIARY 8TH COAST GUARD DISTRICT (ER) DEPARTMENT of VESSEL EXAMINATION

By James Jackson DSO-VE

How does one perform a VSC on a SUB (sport and utility boat)? I'd like to offer the following tips. These follow the ANSC 7012 (204) form. Some states have specific requirements for these vessels, but most do not. The VSC should take NO longer than 15 minutes to perform.

- 1- **NUMBERING:** There is no Federal requirement.
- 2- **REGISTRATION:** There is no Federal Requirement. Now is the time to locate the HIN. You may have to look for it.
- 3- **LIFE JACKET (PFD):** There MUST be an approved type I, II, III, or type V life jacket for each person on board. Federal law does not specify the type, but it SHOULD be a type III or type V with D rings and pockets that allows for safety equipment and for a wide range of arm movement. A type I and type II are acceptable but bulky. Impress the importance of wearing the life jacket when underway. A type IV is not required.
- 4- **FIRE EXTINGUISHERS:** N/A
- 5- **VENTILATION:** N/A
- 6- **VISUAL DISTRESS SIGNALS:** There is no requirement when operating on inland waters. If, however, the SUB is going to be taken to Coastal areas, VDS are required. Suggest a signaling mirror, and a small strobe light designed to be attached to a life jacket.
- 7- **BACKFIRE FLAME ARRESTER:** N/A
- 8- **SOUND PRODUCING DEVICE:** The Federal Requirements require that all vessels MUST have a means of producing a sound audible for at least one half mile. A regular marine whistle with a lanyard should be attached to the operators life jacket. Discourage a coach's whistle.
- 9- **NAVIGATION LIGHTS:** The Federal Requirements require at least a flashlight or a lighted lantern after sunset on manually propelled vessels less than 22 ft. that can show a white light in sufficient

time to prevent a collision. Suggest spare batteries. A strobe light is a distress device and should only be used in the event of an emergency, not as navigation lights.

10- **POLLUTION PLACARD:** N/A.

11- **MARPOL PLACARD:** N/A

12- **MARINE SANITATION DEVICE:** N/A

13- **NAVIGATION RULES:** N/A.

14- **STATE and LOCAL REQUIREMENTS:** SUB's like all vessels must comply with all state and local requirements. This may include: bailing devices, hours of operation, etc.

15- **OVERALL VESSEL CONDITION:** The SUB must be well maintained and extra gear secured.

Please remember not to limit the VSC to the left side-the mandatory VSC DECAL REQUIREMENTS of the examination form. Don't forget the right side-RECOMMENDED and DISCUSSION ITEMS. Suggest: spare paddle, float plan, a spray skirt, watertight first aid kit, snacks, drinking water, sunscreen, and additional clothing in a tethered waterproof container. A wide brimmed hat or a helmet, wetsuit or dry suit depending on potential conditions should be considered. Other considerations are: a handheld waterproof VHF radio, compass and a trash bag. Kayakers and canoeists should always travel with at least one additional partner. Remember, the VSC is a one-on-one education with the boater, don't lecture or hold them up unnecessarily.

Believe it or not, SUB owners are very receptive to a VSC!! If there is ever any question on how to perform a SUB VSC, please don't hesitate to contact me at jackson0948@att.net.