

Importance of Vessel Safety Checks

Source: United States Power Squadrons®



**America's Boating Club®
Pamlico Sail & Power Squadron**

Recreational boating activity has increasing throughout our local waterways and increased the desire for a return to in-person Vessel Safety Inspections. Vessel Safety Checks are key to a safe boating season. With very few VSC's performed in 2020, this will make 2021 VSC's all the more important for safety on the water.

Before you launch, get a vessel safety check from a qualified vessel examiner. If your boat has the proper safety equipment, you will receive a current VSC decal to display on your vessel. If not, you'll know what safety equipment you should add to keep yourself, your boat and your passengers safe. You won't be fined, penalized or reported to any other agency for a failed VSC.

Displaying the decal doesn't guarantee that you won't be boarded while boating, but you'll have peace of mind knowing that you have the required safety equipment to handle an emergency. You'll also know where the equipment is located when you need it.

As part of the safety check, the vessel examiner will clarify federal, state and local regulations. He or she may also discuss the purpose of the required marine safety equipment, answer safety-related questions, and be a resource for local boating conditions and information.

Benefits of a VSC

A vessel safety check can help keep you safe and save you money:

- By ensuring that your boat meets federal, state and local safety equipment requirements, you can prevent equipment-related citations.
- You may be eligible for boating insurance discounts.
- You can avoid accidents and costly breakdowns by being more aware of safety practices,.
- By learning the use of safety equipment and safe boating practices, you can better avoid accidents.

What a VSC covers

A vessel exam only takes 15 minutes and covers

- registration
- life jackets
- visual distress signals
- fire extinguishers
- ventilation
- backfire flame arrestor
- horn
- navigation lights
- pollution placard
- trash placard/plan
- marine sanitation device
- navigation rules
- state and local requirements
- overall vessel condition

The local Pamlico Sail & Power Squadron has been on hold for in-person Vessel Safety Checks due to Covid and the need to heed our local and state mandates. In-person inspections are now available, schedule now by emailing VSC@pspsnc.com or by contacting the USCG Aux at cgaux.org/vsc. To learn more about our boating courses, email our Education Officer at psps@gmail.com as we are able to restart our in-person classroom education as well.