

Question of the Month

References

[United States Coast Guard Navigation Rules](#)

[California Boating Law and Amendments](#)

[California DMV](#)

[California Harbors and Navigation Code](#)

[State of California Department of Boating and Waterways](#)

[Nevada Boating Regulations](#)

[Paddlesports America](#)

[Utah Boating Regulations April 2010](#)

[Vessel Safety Check Manual, COMDTINST M16796.8](#)

More Questions And Answers on the [National VSC site](#)

December 2011

A boat has navigation lights but they aren't operational. The boater doesn't take the boat out at night. Does the boat pass the nav lights section of the VSC?

No.

If equipped with lights, all boats must be able to display navigation lights between sunset and sunrise and in conditions of reduced visibility.

Slide 49 Vessel Examination Program Annual Workshop (Feb 2011 class)

November 2011

Is a kayak required to have an orange flag on board?

A day signal is not required. However, it is advisable to have one. In case of an emergency, it makes a very good distress signal.

[Paddlesports America](http://www.cgauxed.org/paddle.htm)
<http://www.cgauxed.org/paddle.htm>

October 2011

A 44' boat does not have a bell on board but does have another acceptable sound producing device. Does this vessel pass the sound producing device section of the VSC?

It depends where they are launching. On inland waters you are required to carry a bell. On International waters you are not required to carry a bell.

<http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/?pageName=Rule3233>
Rule 33

September 2011

Why do we ask for the registration/documentation?

- To find out the length of the boat so we know which equipment laws apply (case in point: a boater was asked if he had a Type IV PFD on board. He said he didn't need it, his boat is 15' 8". The registration said 16'. In this case he is required to have the Type IV. The boat dealer had told him 15' 8" and he never checked the registration.)
- Verify the CF and HIN numbers (occasionally the CF and HIN numbers on the registration are different from what's on the boat. Making the boater aware of this would save him/her from a fine if they take care of these issues.)
- Coast Guard has approved what is in the VSC Manual, COMDTINST 16796.7

Page 13 Vessel Safety Check Manual: "Registration or documentation papers must reflect a boat's length accurately."

Page 4 Vessel Safety Check Manual: "... In most instances, the length of a vessel is indicated on the registration certificate or documentation papers. "

July 2011

A vessel has a current state registration sticker on the starboard side and an expired registration sticker on the port side. If this is the only issue in question, do you issue a VSC decal?

No. Proper display of the current registration stickers on the vessel next to the CF number is required to permit enforcement officers to determine, without boarding, that the vessel is currently registered.

Page 46 ABCs of the California Boating Law

June 2011

The owner of the 27' boat you're examining has two USCG approved Type III and one Type IV PFD and a USCG approved Type III PFD with a label stating "Intended Use: Kayak fishing" and has no other PFD on board. He is the only person on board. Do you issue a VSC decal?

Yes. Type V PFDs only count if they are used in accordance with their label. No such restriction is on the Type III PFD. All Type III PFDs meet the same requirement for the amount of buoyancy and ability to keep the wearer face up.

[Code of Federal Regulations](#)

TITLE 33 - NAVIGATION AND NAVIGABLE WATERS 175.15 - Personal flotation devices required.

May 2011

A boat is missing the "WARNING Gas vapors can explode. Before starting, operate blower for four minutes and check engine compartment of gas vapors." label. Do you issue a decal if this is the only thing not in compliance?

No. A warning label for the blower MUST be mounted near each ignition switch. If there is more than one ignition switch, there must be a warning label near EACH one.

Page 20 Vessel Safety Check Manual

April 2011

If you are examining a 43' houseboat at Lake Shasta, is it required to have a copy of the Nav Rules on board?

Yes.

According to the Inland section of Annex V after January 1, 1983, the operator of each self-propelled vessel 12 meters or more in length shall carry on board and maintain for ready reference a copy of the Inland Navigation Rules.

[http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/?pageName=33CFR88 § 88.05](http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/?pageName=33CFR88%20%26%2088.05)