



TALKING POINTS FOR VESSEL EXAMINERS & RECREATIONAL BOATING SAFETY VISITORS

Introduction

Because of the terrorist attacks against the United States there has been an increased public awareness of illegal activities. Much like the Neighborhood Watch program, the Coast Guard Auxiliary initiated *Operation Waterway Watch*. USCG District Marine Safety Offices (MSO) have created complimentary programs such as *River Watch*, *Bay Watch* and *Coast Watch*. These programs are meant to inform, educate, and enlist the assistance of all persons who witness suspicious activities. It provides information on what to look for and who to call and is meant to cause uncertainty in the minds of potential terrorists and criminals. Through our Vessel Examiners (VEs) and Recreational Boating Safety Program Visitors we are enlisting the marine industry and the boating public to be our eyes and ears -- people that know every inch of the coastline because it is where they work and play. The public can help authorities in increasing our collective security. *Operation Waterway Watch* and the district specific programs create an effective deterrent measure. This program is meant to inform, educate, and enlist the assistance of all persons who witness suspicious activities. It provides information on what to look for and who to call and is meant to cause uncertainty in the minds of potential terrorists and criminals.

What the marine industry and recreational boater should look for:

It is a core requirement that during a Vessel Safety Check (VSC) or Recreational Boating Safety Visitor Program (RBSVP) encounter that the Auxiliarist discuss Operation Waterway Watch or the district specific program. This is a key component of Operation Patriot Readiness (OPR) and is part of the Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) mission. The Vessel Examiner and the Program Visitor will not have time for an in-depth discussion of the issues. Along with supplying available printed material, here are the **key points** to discuss.

Of particular interest are activities around:

- Under or around bridges.
- Around entrances to tunnels.
- Near power plants.
- Near water intakes/treatment plants.
- Around oil or chemical facilities.
- At fuel docks.
- Near military bases.
- Cruise ship terminals

Unfamiliar individuals who:

- Take photos, videos, notes, or sketches of commercial/passenger vessels, bridges or waterside facilities.
- Loiter near or ask specific questions about commercial /passenger vessels or waterside facilities.
- Attempt to buy or rent fishing or recreational vessels with cash for short-term, undefined use.
- Attempt to gain access to waterside facilities without proper or no identification.

All vessels:

- Recovering or tossing items into/onto the waterway or shoreline
- Unusual diving operations
- Unusual boat characteristics
- Any aggressive activities
- Unattended vessels
- Recovering or tossing items into/onto the waterway or shoreline

Recreational vessels:

- Fishing in locations not typically used for fishing
- Unattended vessels
- Unusual number of people on board
- Lights flashing between boats and shore at night

Commercial vessels:

- Operating/transiting in an area not typically transited
- Anchored in an area not typically used as an anchorage area
- Divers near vessel
- Unusual transfer of personnel or items while transiting
- Unusual night operations

In facilities & waterway structures:

- Fishing/hunting in locations not typically used for fishing/hunting
- Suspicious activity
- Unattended vehicles in unusual locations
- Unusual vehicle characteristics
- Any aggressive activities
- Unusual filming/photographing
- Divers entering water near facility or bridge
- Recovering or tossing items into/onto the waterway or shoreline
- Unusual night operations
- Observed security changes or lack of usually observed security
- Missing fencing, lighting, etc.

Inform the public that any information they give will be handled **confidentially**.

Ask them to record pertinent information such as personnel and vehicle descriptions, along with license plate numbers and boat numbers if possible.

Remind them to **NOT** do anything more than provide information!!! They are **NOT** to try to stop any illegal activity!!!

If a terrorist act is taking place immediately, **call 911**.

If an attack is **NOT** imminent or taking place, instruct them to call **1- 877-24 WATCH!**