



Vessel Safety Checks

California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways

www.BoatCalifornia.com

What is a Vessel Safety Check?

A Vessel Safety Check (VSC) is a courtesy examination of your boat (vessel) to verify the presence and condition of certain safety equipment required by state and federal regulations. Examinations are not a boarding or law enforcement issue. No citations will be given as a result of this encounter.

The Vessel Examiner is a trained specialist member of the United States Power Squadrons or the US Coast Guard Auxiliary. These volunteers will also make certain recommendations and discuss certain safety issues that will make you a safer boater.

The Law:

In California, recreational vessels are required to carry specified safety equipment which may vary according to type of propulsion, type of construction, area and time of use, and number of people aboard.

The examiner will supply you with a copy of the evaluation so that you may follow some of the suggestions given. Vessels that pass will be able to display a VSC decal. This does not exempt you from law enforcement boarding, but it signals that your intent to be prepared.

What are some safety checks that are performed?

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| ✓Anchor lights | ✓Oily waste discharge placard |
| ✓Backfire flame arrestor | ✓Overall vessel condition |
| ✓Backfire flame control devices | ✓Registration |
| ✓Deck free of hazards, clean bilge | ✓Running lights |
| ✓Display of numbers | ✓Safe electrical and fuel systems |
| ✓Fire extinguisher | ✓Safe galley and heating systems |
| ✓Life Jackets | ✓Sound signaling devices |
| ✓Marine pollution placard | ✓Ventilation systems |
| ✓Marine sanitation devices | ✓Visual distress signals (coastal waters) |
| ✓Muffling system | ✓Waste management plan |
| ✓Navigation lights | |

How do I sign up for a Vessel Safety Check?

Visit the [U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary website](http://www.uscg.gov) to sign up for a free vessel safety check.

