

NASBLA Engineering, Reporting & Analysis Committee Boats & Associated Equipment Subcommittee

Analysis of Non-Compliance of Safety Equipment Carriage Requirements Status Report

Charge 1:

In coordination with the USCG, analyze boating accident and other relevant data for incidents of and potential trends associated with non-compliance with safety equipment carriage requirements. Determine problem areas. Develop issue brief on findings.

For the 2008 Committee cycle, the Boats & Associated Equipment Subcommittee was charged with analyzing data from three primary databases to identify incidents and possible trends associated with non-compliance with safety equipment carriage requirements. Based on the data identified in related strategies in the National RBS Strategic Plan, the Subcommittee split into three subgroups – one to explore the relevance of boating accident data in BARD; another, the vessel safety check data from MISLE; and a third, the safety equipment carriage requirement citations, arrests and warnings from Performance Report Part II data.

In preliminary explorations, the Subcommittee members began identifying the merits and limitations of these data for getting at the crux of the charge and the difficulty – and, in some cases, inappropriateness – of attempting to create linkages between these very different datasets. The Subcommittee has requested, received and/or begun reviewing the following with varying degrees of success:

BARD Data: The USCG Division of Boating Safety has provided the Subcommittee with BARD 1997-2006 data related to the carriage of fire extinguishers and PFDs during accidents. Unfortunately, the more recent sets (2003-2006) have data gaps in these fields that appear to have been the result of data transfer problems, a situation not correctable at this time. However, USCG personnel, fresh from several months dedicated to compiling the 2007 Boating Statistics, will be exploring and pulling additional data for the Subcommittee's consideration, including -- from the accident descriptions -- instances where carriage items failed in accidents or alternately, helped in accidents. Such an exploration may be suggestive of non-compliance or may be supportive of the need for compliance. Overall, however, the BARD data appear to have lesser relevance to the research charge than data from the two other datasets under consideration.

Performance Report Part II Data: These data – notably the citations, arrests and warnings associated with enforcement of safety equipment requirements -- were already available for the calendar year 2006; however, the 2007 data did not become available

until late May. In the period leading to the annual conference, the Subcommittee subgroup assigned to this dataset will be reviewing and comparing the data to determine what, if any, observations can be made -- especially given the limitations of two years worth of data and issues of quality and completeness.

MISLE Data: For this charge, perhaps the most relevant will be MISLE, produced regarding non-compliance data from the approximate 30,000 boardings per year via the CG 4100. The extractable non-compliance data will report on the following carriage requirements:

- PFDs
- Bell
- Sound Producing Device
- Fire Extinguisher
- Backfire Flame Arrestor
- Ventilation
- Navigation and Anchor Lights
- Visual Distress Signals

The data runs, per the Subcommittee subgroup assigned to this dataset, currently are in process.

Data Run (A): Excludes after-SAR boardings. For years 2003-2007 (5 years) a run of all CG 4100 recreational vessel boarding reports. Of the total number of boardings, the subgroup will focus on the percentage of vessels in compliance with the above-listed carriage requirements.

Data Run (B): This run would look at after-SAR boardings only. This run would show the carriage compliance of vessels involved in some type of incident worthy of inclusion in the after-SAR category.

As the subgroup has learned, however, MISLE data only are generated in areas of the nation where the USCG works. Much of the data will not be directly applicable to many of the states. Nevertheless, the data are expected to assist in establishing trends and incidents of non-compliance with carriage equipment.

Next Steps: The three subgroups will continue their work through the annual conference, with the expectation 1) that some preliminary findings/observations on non-compliance with carriage requirements will be generated for review and presentation at that time; and 2) that the charge – or aspects of it – will carry over into the next Committee cycle. The Subcommittee also anticipates that the work (via the issued report) will contribute to an improved understanding of the value and limitations of the data being captured, reported and archived; a more deliberate consideration of the primary reasons for which these data are collected; the hazards of trying to address certain safety questions with data not collected or intended for those purposes; and the articulation of other data needs.