

# NASBLA Engineering, Reporting & Analysis Committee (ERAC) FY 2010

## Committee Charter, Organization, Meeting Date

ERAC will work to advance boating safety by analyzing recreational boating accident data and other boating-related statistics for risk factors, patterns and trends that could help to inform policy and program decision making; by examining and recommending improvements to the criteria and methods that are used to report, collect and measure these data and indicators; and by identifying boating safety program and equipment design efforts that can mitigate risks associated with recreational boating.

To further inform its work, the committee will affiliate with key external task forces and committees. During FY10, these will include monitoring and reporting on efforts of the Underwriters Laboratories PFD Reclassification and Labeling Working Groups, the American Boat and Yacht Council's Product Interface Committee, and the National Marine Manufacturers Association Boating Industry Risk Management Council; and monitoring the status of recommendations put forth by the National Boating Safety Advisory Council's Accident Reporting Regulatory Review Task Force and accepted by NBSAC in 2009.

ERAC members will be assembled into project teams, taking the lead on specific, assigned charges and monitoring activities.

The committee is scheduled to meet May 11, 2010, in Lexington, Ky.

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**State and Associate Members – see Page 2**

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### **Associate Members (see Page 6 for email addresses)**

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David Carter, Boat U.S. Foundation  
Ted Sensenbrenner, Boat U.S. Foundation  
Dick Snyder, Mercury Marine (ret.)  
Pete Chisholm, Mercury Marine

Cindy Squires, NMMA  
Fred Messmann, NSBC  
Chris Neal, PWIA  
William Griswold, USBI  
Dan Maxim, USCG-Auxiliary

### **FY09 Products**

During the 2009 committee cycle, ERAC team members addressed five charges and produced six reports that will provide a substantial foundation for the FY10 cycle:

- Recommended Guidelines for Investigators and BARD-Web Data Entry Personnel: Types of Boating Accidents and Contributing Factors/Causes Defined
- Template for In-depth Analysis of Fatality Trends by Body of Water
- Report on Analysis, Findings and Recommendations (re: Operator Non-Compliance with Safety Equipment Carriage Requirements)
- Report on Factors Associated with Fatalities among Children and Youth Boater Populations
- Report on Analysis of Fatality Patterns and Safety Campaigns
- Final Report on Survey Results and Recommendations (re: Survey on Gaps in Accident Reporting)

These products can be found at <http://nasbla.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3305>.

### **FY10 Charges—as approved by the NASBLA Executive Board 10/28/09—see Pages 3-5**

## FY10 Charges

1. Develop recommended guidelines (reporting guidance and definitions) for investigators and BARD-Web data entry personnel on **vessel type**, **operation** at time of boating accident, and **activity** at time of the boating accident. (Related to RBS Objective 9, Boating Accident Reporting, especially strategies 9.2 and 9.3 regarding reporting reliability and improved training; and to NASBLA's strategic goal of offering professional development opportunities and providing standards that support uniformity among the states and territories.)

*This charge is as an extension of work conducted on three FY09 ERAC charges, and is intended to improve incident reporting and data entry. In an FY09 examination of selected states' boat accident report data, an ERAC team identified issues associated with existing reporting categories, variations in definitions and coding, and overall data accuracy. One result, after reviewing existing reference materials and related web sites, was development of guidance to assist accident investigators and BARD-Web data entry personnel in the accurate capture, recording, and entry of accident types and contributing causes/factors. However, analyses conducted by two other ERAC teams on BARD-Web data exposed similar definition inconsistencies and high levels of missing data in other critical categories—vessel types, the operation at the time of the accident, and the activity at the time of the accident.*

2. Identify key **accident-, injury-, and fatality-related research questions** that are critical to developing or refining work being conducted by ERAC and other NASBLA committees and/or that are components of national efforts to improve boating safety. **Audit the current BARD-Web database** to determine whether **adequate and sufficient data are available to answer those questions**. **Conduct analyses** on the identified questions, as feasible, and **develop recommendations** for improving BARD-Web; for using BARD-Web to answer such questions; or for using other data sources in the case of questions that cannot be answered through BARD-Web. (Related to RBS Performance Goal of reducing casualties; RBS Objective 9, Boating Accident Reporting; and NASBLA's strategic focus on conducting meaningful research for evaluating/sustaining RBS programs.)

*This charge is an extension of work on four FY09 ERAC charges; it is intended to identify and clarify the most critical boating safety research questions and determine whether existing data sources can meaningfully answer them. For example, in FY09, two charges—one analyzing factors associated with children/youth boaters; the other, analyzing vessel accident patterns and relationships with safety campaigns—were completed for fatalities. In both cases, however, data issues and inability to answer research questions of interest hampered certain aspects of the fatality analyses. Before engaging in an even larger-scale analysis of the more voluminous injury data components of these charges, ERAC members need to come to a more comprehensive understanding of what they are looking for, what they should be looking for (as a result of broader NASBLA/national interests), whether the existing data can accommodate those needs, and if not, what further improvements can be made over the long-term to insure meaningful information about the efficacy of RBS program efforts.*

3. Continue **examining methodologies** and **refining processes that could effectively isolate operator- and vessel-related factors from other potential influences on recreational boating accidents**, including but not limited to demographic, economic, climatic, and other external trends and patterns. (Related to the RBS Performance Goal and sub-tier goals of reducing casualties; RBS Objective 9, Boating Accident Reporting, especially strategy 9.7 regarding the study of human factors in boating accidents; and to NASBLA's strategic goal of providing models for best practices and strategic focus on conducting meaningful research for evaluating/sustaining RBS programs.)

*This charge is a continuation of FY09 charge work, and may form the basis for development of a grant proposal for external funding. It is intended to afford a fuller understanding of problem areas now and potentially identify future problems for the sake of RBS program planning. There are two aspects of this charge. First, in FY09, as part of an examination of selected states' boat accident data and trends, a template for more in-depth analysis of fatality trends by body of water was developed for one state; the template will be refined and additional factors added in coming months for use by that state. Replication of the template in other jurisdictions—or training in the development of such a template—might be beyond the scope of committee work in FY10, but could serve as one element for development of a larger grant proposal in this area. Second, and in a related vein, during FY09, ERAC had hoped to learn from the experience of a state gearing up to undertake a comprehensive analysis of human-, boat- and selected external factors using other methodologies. Delays in the start-up / implementation of that project prevented ERAC from being able to use that study in its own work; at minimum, then, during FY10, ERAC will monitor any plans the state has to restart the project.*

4. **Provide counsel to and monitor external efforts** to capture additional **vessel safety check data** that will be used to analyze incidents of and potential trends associated with **operator non-compliance with safety equipment carriage requirements**. (Related to RBS Objective 8, Operator Compliance, USCG Required Safety Equipment; and to NASBLA's strategic goal of fostering partnerships and strategic focus on conducting research for evaluating/sustaining RBS programs.)

*This charge is a redirection of charge work conducted during FY09, and may form the basis for participation on a working group and in a grant proposal for external funding. In FY09, an ERAC team conducted a review and, with the assistance of the USCG, an analysis of available data (especially MISLE) to evaluate safety equipment compliance rates for selected jurisdictions. The resulting report and data are currently being used by the workgroup evaluating the implementation of—and potential revisions to—RBS Objective 8. However, one data source only partially exploited during the FY09 cycle was the USCG Auxiliary Vessel Safety Check data. During the summer of 2009, a test program was established in selected Auxiliary districts to go beyond its standard practice of only recording vessel pass/fail information, to gather and record the reasons for the failure. Since the NASBLA annual conference and committee report out, an effort has been spearheaded by an ERAC member to move forward on a longer-term plan and process for improving the capture and recording of these VSC data; the intended result is the convening of a work group for the purpose of exploring appropriate processes and related costs, and development of a grant proposal (submitting organization: United Safe Boating Institute). ERAC would be represented on such a work group and monitor the continuing efforts.*

5. Research **nighttime boating accidents** to determine **prevalence of glare-related incidents**. Based on results, explore potential efficacy of **boat lighting options** to eliminate glare at the helm in small recreational vessels while not adversely affecting conspicuity. Review accident data, along with publications, studies, demonstrations, and recommendations associated with the feasibility of identified lighting options. (Related to RBS Objective 5, Operator Compliance with Navigation Rules, and Objective 7, Manufacturer Compliance; and to NASBLA's strategic focus on developing policy and regulations to guide states.)

*This is a new charge, developed in response to a submission from a NASBLA member. It is intended first to explore the magnitude of nighttime glare incidents and then, depending on the outcomes, assess alternatives to eliminating glare from navigation lights. Several Boating Safety Circulars have addressed the issues, resulting in various recommendations, and several presentations have been made*

*in the past year to various organizations, including NASBLA, and urging involvement in finding solutions or alternatives to eliminating glare.*

**6. Track the development of an Inland Stability Standard (ISS)** that will apply to **passenger-carrying vessels** operating on sole-state waters. Review the ISS—under construction by the Westlawn Institute of Marine Technology, with anticipated completion of March 2010—and determine applicability to NASBLA member states and evaluate to facilitate adoption of recommendations. (Related to RBS Objective 2, Awareness of Safe Boating Practices; Objective 7, Manufacturer Compliance; and Objective 8, Operator Compliance-Safety Equipment Requirements; and to NASBLA’s strategic focus on developing policy and regulations to guide states during legislative/rulemaking processes.)

*This is a new charge, developed in response to a submission from a NASBLA member. Numerous small commercial passenger vessels operate on inland waters outside USCG jurisdiction. These vessels come in all shapes and sizes. There currently is no generally-recognized stability standard applicable to them. States seldom have personnel trained to apply the 46 CFR stability requirements or to assess the safety of a boat with regard to stability. The lack of standards and trained personnel leaves a gap in public safety for these vessels.*

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