



17-Character Hull Identification Number Issue Brief

History of Hull Identification Numbers

The Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971 required manufacturers to assign a unique number to identify vessels for the purpose of recalls or defect notification. This hull identification number (HIN) is a 12-character serial number required on each recreational vessel manufactured in or imported into the United States for the purposes of sale. The Coast Guard assigns the first three characters, a manufacturer identification code (MIC), which identifies the manufacturer or importer; characters four through eight are a manufacturer serial number; characters nine and ten indicate date of certification for vessels subject to safety standards or the date of manufacture for vessels not subject to standards; and characters eleven and twelve indicate the model year. As international trade increased, a two-character country code was added, placed ahead of the 12-character HIN already established, separated by a space or hyphen.

Need for a 17-Character HIN

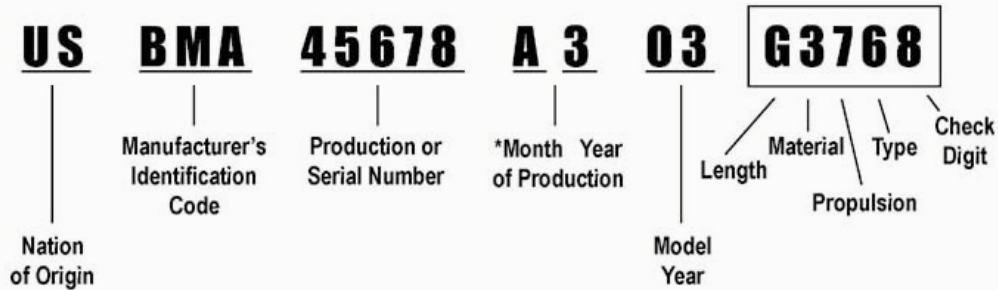
While the current HIN creates a unique identification number, it does not convey the vessel's physical characteristics as a vehicle identification number (VIN) does. Five additional characters would describe the length of vessel, type of vessel, hull material, propulsion type and a check digit for validity of the HIN.

With these additional characters:

- boating safety officials would improve accident analysis through more descriptive information regarding the vessels involved in accidents, and in turn improve safety interventions
- state boating programs could more easily report to the Coast Guard annual vessel data
- registration authorities could improve data accuracy and reduce fraudulent registrations, titling, and documentation as anomalies are better detected with the additional characteristic data and the check digit
- investigators could improve the stolen boat recovery rate

The Proposed 17-Character HIN

Proposed International Hull Identification Number



About NASBLA

The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) is the professional association representing the recreational boating authorities of all 50 states and the U.S. territories. NASBLA fosters partnerships among and between the states, the Coast Guard and others by crafting model boating laws, maintaining national education and training standards, providing members with critical knowledge and skills, assisting in the homeland security challenges on our waterways, and advocating the needs of the state boating programs before Congress and federal agencies.

For more information

Headquarters Office
1500 Leestown Road, Suite 330
Lexington KY 40511
859.225.9487

Washington Office
444 N Capitol Street NW Suite 445-B
Washington DC 20001
202.434.4790