



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

The civilian component of the U.S. Coast Guard
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WebWatch
Division 8, 5NR
September, 2013

A. National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Ms. Terri A. Dickerson, Director, Civil Rights Directorate

1. "Because We Are Equal to the Task," the theme for this years National Disability Employment Awareness Month, captures the sentiments of workers with disabilities who have a right to equal employment opportunity. The annual celebration reminds the public that contributions made by individuals with disabilities are vital to society and the nation's workforce.
2. Through the years, many regulations have been enacted to protect the rights of employees with disabilities. Perhaps the most well known, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination in employment, public services/accommodations, and telecommunications, represents the nations pledge not to underestimate the capabilities of people with disabilities and to provide equal opportunities for all employees. The Federal government has made great strides in establishing processes for employing individuals with disabilities and ensuring executive departments and agencies improve their efforts through increased recruitment, hiring, and retention.
3. Numerous resources are available to help employers identify and remove physical and procedural barriers in making the workplace readily accessible. Among these are modification of employment policies, work schedules and equipment. The Department of Transportation Disability Resource Center (DRC) at www.drc.dot.gov provides job accommodations and related services for Coast Guard employees and job applicants. Assistive technology and needs assessments are available through the Department of Defense Computer/Electronic Accommodation Program (CAP) at www.tricare.mil/cap. The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) at www.askjan.org is a source for free and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues. Advisory assistance from the Human Resources Directorate is also available to assist managers and supervisors in recruiting and retaining persons with disabilities through hiring authorities.
4. Coast Guard units and commands are encouraged to observe National Disability Employment Awareness Month and to participate in National Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) on 16 October. DMD is an international effort to promote career development for students and job seekers with disabilities through job shadowing, hands-on career



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exploration, and ongoing mentoring which may lead to internships and employment opportunities. Additional information can be found at www.aapd.com.

B. NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

RADM Maura Dollymore, Director of Health, Safety, and Work-Life

1. September is National Preparedness Month. Our goal is to create a secure and resilient nation with the capability to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from threats and hazards.
2. Before disaster strikes, prepare yourself and your family by:
 - a. Being informed,
 - b. Making a Family Emergency plan,
 - c. Building an Emergency kit, and
 - d. Encouraging others to do the same.
3. Stay informed by understanding potential hazards in your area. Knowing what to do can make all the difference when seconds count. Visit Ready Coast Guard at <http://www.uscg.mil/worklife/ready.asp> for information and tools to help you gain critical knowledge to prepare. In addition, learn about the emergency plans and evacuation routes established in your area by local and state government.
4. By making and practicing a family emergency plan, that includes evacuation and communication procedures, you and your family are more likely to find each other quickly after an event. Start by identifying an out-of-town contact everyone can check-in with and consider incorporating texting into your communication plan since local phone services may be down or overburdened.
5. Building one or more emergency kits that include enough supplies for at least three days will ensure that your family can meet its essential needs in a crisis. Some basic items to consider are:
 - a. One gallon of water per person, per day, for three days,
 - b. Non-perishable food and a manual can opener,
 - c. Sanitation supplies and a first aid kit with dust masks, and disinfectant,
 - d. At least 100 dollars cash in small bills in case ATM machines are down,
 - e. Important personal, financial, and insurance papers,
 - f. Flashlights with extra batteries, a battery-powered or hand-crank weather radio, and a cell phone charger,
 - g. Maps and your emergency plan, and



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- h. Special needs items, including a supply of prescription medications for family members with medical conditions, infants, and pets.
6. You can be ready for anything if your family is ready, too. Be Semper Paratus on and off duty.

C. NEW ST ELIZABETHS MAILING ADDRESS FOR USCG HQ IN WASH., DC

RADM Robert Day, Assistant Commandant for Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Information Technology

1. On 1 Aug 13, Coast Guard Headquarters began the process of relocating from its current location at Buzzard Point to the historic St. Elizabeth's Hospital site. As a result of this move, a new address for the receipt of mail and small package shipments was established with the U.S. Postal Service. The format for the USCG HQ new mailing address is as follows (the format must not be modified or abbreviated):

COMMANDANT (CG-XX)
ATTN: (FUNCTION/OFFICE/TITLE)
US COAST GUARD STOP XXXX
2703 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR AVE SE
WASHINGTON DC 20593-XXXX

2. Until the relocation is complete, prior to sending mail to a HQ directorate, please check the schedule at the link below to determine whether the directorate has moved yet:
<https://cglink.uscg.mil/e6da8e72>.
3. Each HQ Directorate has been assigned a new four-digit mail stop number. To ensure prompt delivery, please utilize the correct mail stop number and ZIP Code plus 4 digit extension which can be found by accessing the Mail Program Office National Capital Region Address Directory (NCRAD) on CGPortal at: <https://cglink.uscg.mil/2fdae6bd>. In the ATTN: line, insert the applicable office/function/program name also contained in the NCRAD, or if necessary, the name of the applicable staff member.
4. To reduce unnecessary expenses, units should minimize mailing hard-copy correspondence to USCG HQ. The Coast Guard currently pays approximately nine dollars to process each piece of mail received. This cost is for DHS mandated Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives (CBRNE) screening in addition to mail processing/delivery. Units should utilize electronic document routing and transmission (on-line/email/FAX) to the maximum extent possible.



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D. 2012 ASSOCIATION FOR RESCUE (AFRAS) AT SEA AWARD RECIPIENT RDML P. J. BROWN, ASSISTANT COMMANDANT, RESPONSE POLICY

1. This ALCOAST announces award of the 2012 AFRAS Gold Medal. The AFRAS Gold Medal is awarded annually to a Coast Guard Enlisted Member who exhibited exceptional courage and heroism during a rescue at sea.
2. AFRAS has selected Aviation Survival Technician Second Class Robert D. Emley of Air Station Kodiak, Alaska, for award of the 2012 Gold Medal.
 - a. Petty Officer Emley is recognized for his heroic efforts on 25 May 2012 while serving as a rescue swimmer aboard CG Rescue Helicopter 6044. Rescue 6044 launched at night in response to a distress call from the 55 foot *F/V ST JOSEPH* which was disabled in Prince William Sound, six miles east of Kayak Island, Alaska. *F/V ST JOSEPH* suffered a broken rudder while contending with seas in excess of 30 feet and winds over 30 knots. The stricken vessel struggled to remain upright, with only bow thrusters to keep a heading into the seas.
 - b. Rescue 6044 departed Aviation Support Facility Cordova, Alaska, and proceeded to the scene despite adverse weather and a 300 foot cloud ceiling. Rescue 6044 arrived on scene with the disabled vessel which had lost generator power and the ability to maintain steerageway with visibility restricted to less than a mile. Petty Officer Emley assisted in locating the stricken vessel which was now in danger of capsizing in towering seas.
 - c. Plans to deploy the swimmer directly to the vessel and expeditiously rescue the five crewmembers were quickly discarded due to wildly swinging deck rigging aboard the boat. An alternate plan was devised and the crewmembers were directed to don survival suits and enter the water one at a time to facilitate their rescue.
 - d. With full appreciation of the gravity of the situation and no alternatives, Petty Officer Emley departed the aircraft into the mountainous seas. He quickly located two of the five crewmembers and hoisted them to safety.
 - e. While awaiting rescue, an orca whale surfaced not more than 20 feet from the third victim. Petty Officer Emley re-entered the water without hesitation despite being cautioned that a pod of orca whales had been trailing the vessel for some time. Despite the numerous threats to his own safety, Petty Officer Emley continued the mission and effected the rescue of the remaining fishermen.



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- f. Rescue 6044 then proceeded expeditiously to the nearest hospital to deliver the victims to advanced medical care without delay. During the transit, Petty Officer Emley provided emergency medical care to a severely injured survivor who was experiencing breathing difficulty as a result of a punctured lung.
 - g. Petty Officer Emley exhibited remarkable courage, exceptional judgment, and exemplary devotion to duty throughout this rescue. His actions are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.
3. Although there were several inspirational nominations, selection for the Gold Medal was limited to one. Nonetheless, all of the nominees exhibited great courage and brought credit to the service. Their performance honors our profession and life-saving heritage. AFRAS award nominees include:
- a. AST2 Abram A. Heller, Coast Guard Air Station Barbers Point, HI.
 - b. ME2 Michael E. Long, Coast Guard TACLET South Miami FL.
 - c. Auxiliarist Daniel Groenendyk of Holland MI.
 - d. Auxiliarists Denis Eaton, Monica Eaton, Barbara J. Lundquist and Heather Porterfield, Vallejo, CA.
4. AST2 Emley will be recognized at a ceremony hosted by AFRAS in the Rayburn Congressional Office Building, Washington, Dc, on 16 October 2013.
5. Congratulations to AST2 Emley and all Active Duty and Auxiliary AFRAS award nominees for a job well done.

E. SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

CAPT Joel Rebholz, Acting Director of Health, Safety, and Work-Life

1. September is Suicide Prevention Month. Every year we lose members of the Coast Guard family to suicide. Although it is difficult to know why people end their own lives, some of the reasons include not knowing where to go for help, the stigma of reaching out, and neglecting personal and family social, psychological, and spiritual fitness. Suicide is preventable. By taking action when it is uncomfortable and by developing and maintaining personal and family resilience, suicidal behavior can be stopped.
2. Individually, you can build resilience by becoming involved with events or activities that you value and enjoy. These activities might include spending time with loved ones, mentoring others, becoming active in your local community, participating in personally



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meaningful activities, and developing new interests or hobbies. Family strength may be bolstered by seeing a counselor, learning meditation, cooking together, developing a fitness routine, and volunteering to help others. These types of activities improve our ability to cope with the stress of everyday life and are considered protective factors that can reduce the prospects of depression and, ultimately, suicide.

3. In addition to building personal and family strength, it is important to learn to identify and respond to suicidal signs. Family members, close friends, shipmates, and commanders may be in the best position to identify harmful thoughts or behaviors and offer help. A few common behaviors that suggest an individual may be considering suicide are: withdrawal, anger, mood changes, increase or misuse of alcohol and drugs, feelings of being trapped or hopeless, or loss of life's meaning.
4. There are many sources of help for people having suicidal thoughts and for those dealing with a suicidal loved one. If there is an immediate chance of someone hurting themselves or if someone has attempted suicide, treat it as a medical emergency and call 911. Asking for help is a sign of strength. For information about suicide and resources for those in need of help, consider these programs and services:
 - a. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Call 800-273-TALK at any time. Speak with someone who can help you talk about your situation and identify resources. For more information go to: <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
 - b. Contact a Coast Guard medical clinic, Employee Assistance Program Coordinator, or Chaplain. Their contact information can be found at [http://www.uscg.mil/worklife/suicide\(underscore\)prevention.asp](http://www.uscg.mil/worklife/suicide(underscore)prevention.asp)
 - c. For additional information about suicide and Coast Guard policies on suicide prevention and other Work-Life matters, go to <http://www.uscg.mil/worklife>.

F. 2013-2014 SEASONAL INFLUENZA (FLU) IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM

CAPT Joel L. Rebholz, Director of Health, Safety, and Work-Life (acting)

1. The seasonal flu vaccine is mandatory for all Coast Guard Active Duty (AD) and Selected Reserve (SELRES) personnel to ensure force medical readiness and avoid disruption of Coast Guard missions. In accordance with Civilian Employee Health Care and Occupational Health Program, COMDTINST M12792.3 (series), the seasonal flu vaccine is also mandatory for Child Development Services personnel (including certified Family Child Care Providers) and civilian, contract, and Auxiliary healthcare personnel



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who provide direct patient care in clinics. The annual flu vaccine is optional for recreation assistants and aides for youth programs at Borinquen, Cape Cod, Kodiak, and Petaluma.

2. The seasonal flu vaccine is available in two forms at CG HSWL Regional Practice sites: nasal spray (Flumist) or injectable. Flumist can be used for individuals aged 2-49 years who have no medical contraindications. Flumist is not authorized for personnel on active flight or diving status.
3. Commanding officers are responsible for ensuring medical readiness, including the seasonal flu vaccine. Personnel may receive the flu vaccine as supplies become available. A vaccination rate of 90 percent is targeted NLT 16 December 2013. Exemptions to the flu vaccine may be considered in accordance with Civilian Employee Health Care and Occupational Health Program, COMDTINST M12792.3 (series) Immunizations and Chemoprophylaxis (Joint Publication), COMDTINST M6230.4 (series).

G. NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

ADM Bob Papp, Commandant

1. The period from September 15th through October 15th is set aside every year to honor and celebrate the culture, heritage and contributions Hispanic and Latino Americans have made to our Nation. The theme for this year's commemoration is *Serving and Leading Our Nation With Pride and Honor*.
2. Representing more than half of the national population growth since 2000, Hispanic and Latino Americans share a long, proud history as members of our Coast Guard family. This month we celebrate the richness and vibrancy that Hispanic and Latino Americans have added to both our national and our Service tapestry. We are a far better and more capable Coast Guard because of the great diversity and cultural experiences of our people.
3. In observing National Hispanic Heritage Month, we are recognizing more than just the history and contributions of those who came before us. We are celebrating the promise of a brighter and more dynamic future that comes with embracing the heritage, viewpoints, and talents of our members. In doing this we can ensure we remain the world's best Coast Guard.



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4. Commands are encouraged to celebrate this observance with programs and activities that highlight the achievements and contributions that Hispanic and Latino Americans make to our service and our Nation.

H. 66TH BIRTHDAY OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

ADM Bob Papp, Commandant, United States Coast Guard

1. On behalf of the men and women of the United States Coast Guard, it is my privilege to congratulate the United States Air Force on 66 years of service to our nation.
2. Despite remarkably capable aircraft and a legacy of amazing technical achievements in air, space and cyberspace, the real power behind the Air Force is the men and women who dedicate themselves to the principle of service before self and elect to wear the cloth of our Nation. From the first aircraft purchased by our nation in 1909, to the establishment of an independent Air Force in 1947, to current operations around the globe, the men and women of the Air Force have displayed the innovation, commitment and courage that are the envy of the world. Whether establishing air superiority, providing close air support, supporting special operations, or conducting combat search and rescue missions, the U.S. Air Force has consistently provided global vigilance, global power, and global reach.
3. On the 66th anniversary of the birth of the Air Force, the men and women of the Coast Guard salute you and wish you the very best. May you continue to aim high and enjoy great success in the service of a grateful nation.
4. Fly, Fight, Win. Semper Paratus.

I. FAST RESPONSE CUTTER APPROVED FOR FULL RATE PRODUCTION

VADM John Currier, Vice Commandant and Chief Acquisition Executive

1. I am pleased to announce the Sentinel-class Fast Response Cutter (FRC) has received DHS approval to enter full-rate production. This is a significant milestone in our ongoing recapitalization program.
2. The FRC is our next generation patrol boat, designed for the full range of Coast Guard missions. It is capable of speeds in excess of 28 knots and full operations in sea state 4 with limited operations up to sea state 6. It is operated by a crew of 24 and fully accommodates our mixed-gender crews. The FRC features a stabilized remotely-operated 25-mm chain gun, state-of-the-market command and control systems and the



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new standard 7-meter Over the Horizon IV Cutter Boat (CB-OTH-IV) with stern launch capabilities.

3. The FRCs currently in the fleet regularly demonstrates their mission effectiveness and value to the Nation. This summer, Coast Guard Cutter *ROBERT YERED* participated in Operation Unified Resolve, a multi-agency effort to support continuing law enforcement operations in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. During this operation, *ROBERT YERED* supported a narcotics interdiction resulting in the seizure of 35 million dollars' worth of cocaine bound for the streets of the United States.
4. To date, the Coast Guard has ordered a total of 18 FRCs. Seven cutters have been delivered, and six have been commissioned into service. The seventh FRC and first to be homeported in Key West, FL, *CHARLES DAVID JR*, will be commissioned this fall. The production of the eighth FRC, *CHARLES SEXTON*, is nearly complete with delivery in November. FRCs nine through sixteen are under construction at Bollinger Shipyards in Lockport, LA. Modernized FRC sustainment support has been successfully transferred from the Asset Project Office (APO) to the Surface Forces Logistics Centers (SFLC) Patrol Boat Product Line (PBPL). Homeport facilities for the first 12 cutters in Miami and Key West, FL, are complete, facilities for the next six cutters in Puerto Rico are under construction, and homeport contract awards have been made for Pascagoula, MS, Ketchikan, AK, and Honolulu, HI. Likewise, a C4ISR training facility in Petaluma, CA and an engineering training facility in Yorktown, VA, are under construction. The Coast Guard currently takes delivery of one FRC every 90 days. The approved program of record is 58 cutters.
5. Approval to enter full-rate production is a critical step in delivering this game-changing asset to the fleet as quickly as possible and facilitates the retirement of our legacy 110-foot cutters. The FRC project has been organically managed and overseen by the Coast Guard acting as the system integrator. This achievement validates the Services efforts to recapitalize the patrol boat fleet with a highly-capable, state-of-the-market cutter, specially tailored to the unique missions of the United States Coast Guard.

J. E15: A GOOD LAW, FOR YESTERDAY

Nicole Palya Wood, BoatUS

1. Back in 2005, Congress passed the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) as part of a sweeping energy package designed to reduce the country's dependence on foreign oil by blending more homegrown renewable fuel in our gasoline. The RFS is the formula that mandates the annual volume of renewable fuels refiners must blend into the nation's fuel supply, most significantly into gasoline. Ethanol, a corn-based fuel, grew to have the lion's share



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of the renewable market and currently 90 percent of the nation's gasoline contains 10 percent ethanol. Although the transition to this fuel was rocky for boaters, motorcyclists, snowmobilers, and other small-engine owners, most of the public adapted. But today the country is using less gasoline, and there's a different transition approaching, one that may prove too much for our shrinking fuel supply to bear.

"It's ironic to think that fuel efficiency is part of the problem," said BoatUS President Margaret Podlich. "But the combination of more stringent fuel-efficiency standards, a recession, and the growing American concern about fuel usage has decreased the amount of fuel we use. That's a good thing. But with the country as a whole becoming more fuel efficient, it means there's less gasoline to mix with increasing volume requirements of renewable fuel." According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), gasoline consumption peaked in 2007, and has been on a slight decline ever since. "When you no longer can add more ethanol to gas at a safe level for the public, you run right into the 'blend wall,'" added Podlich. Boaters may think that the RFS and so-called blend wall don't really affect their favorite pastime, but an odd set of factors are aligning to create a hurdle in America's fuel policy that could hit boaters square in the wallets.

2. E15, The Straw The Camel Feared - Current EPA label for E15 prohibits use in boats.

In 2010, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved the debut of a fuel that contains 15 percent ethanol. Under the EPA's own regulations, it can't be used in boats, motorcycles, lawnmowers, or cars built before 2001, and it will void some newer car warranties. According to the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), there isn't one marine engine warrantied to use more than a 10-percent blend of ethanol gas. Additionally, higher blends of ethanol gas deliver fewer miles per gallon and less power. So why would the EPA endorse E15 to the market?

The EPA's goal was to put more ethanol in fuel to meet rising mandates, rather than use their option or waiver authority to reduce the volume requirements. Refiners are still able to produce boater-friendly ethanol-free gas, but it costs them more in regulatory penalties, making it more difficult to sell and adding costs that get passed down to the consumer. A recent study prepared for the American Petroleum Institute by National Economic Research Associates, a group also used by the U.S. Department of Energy, found that by 2015 the combination of higher compliance costs imposed on refiners plus a reduced domestic fuel supply could increase the cost of producing gasoline by 30 percent and the cost of producing diesel by as much as 300 percent.

Proponents of the RFS disagree that the financial impacts of the blend wall are that drastic, claiming that potential reforms to the law will limit the choice of fuel options for consumers. Bob Dineen, president of the Renewable Fuels Association (RFA), believes



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the blend wall has been "self-inflicted" by the oil industry, that it's "a false facade built by the oil companies to protect their oil monopoly." Regardless of what factors have brought about the blend wall and the reality of it on consumers, the situation now has the attention of Capitol Hill.

3. Winds of Change

A strong new wind has begun to blow in Washington, as serious lobbying efforts from once-opposing sides mount to change the RFS. It's rare for any issue to land so many hearings in a single session of Congress, or to unite such diverse bipartisan groups. In separate letters sent in the fall of 2012, 152 members of Congress, 40 U.S. senators, and 12 state governors asked the EPA to waive the RFS mandates, citing that the recent drought had seriously impacted their state's economies, and that continuing to keep up with the mandates would cause their states economic harm. According to their letters, 40 percent of all domestic corn is currently being used for fuel. "This means literally billions of dollars in increased costs for livestock and poultry producers, and food manufacturers," stated one letter.

4. Collateral Damage

During the past seven years the amount of corn being used to produce ethanol for fuel has doubled. The press describes this war on the domestic fuel policy as pitting renewable fuel and ethanol producers against the traditional oil and gas refiners. However, it's more nuanced than that, and the collateral damage is nationwide from hunger-relief organizations dealing with increased domestic grain costs, to U.S. poultry and pork operations closing and eliminating jobs. According to Dr. Thomas Elam, president of FarmEcon, an agricultural consulting firm, since 2008, "eight major poultry producers have filed for bankruptcy." And finally, you have boaters, who just want an affordable fuel that won't damage boat engines.

According to Charlie Drevna, president of the American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers, "For boaters and other consumers, the impacts of the RFS are not just limited to higher food prices, higher emissions, or increased possibility of engine damage. If Congress doesn't act, the RFS will force refiners to make tough choices ... to either sell ethanol blends higher than cars, boats, and infrastructure can safely handle, or begin limiting the amount of gasoline and diesel they sell in the U.S." (When domestic refiners export their products, the fuel does not have to be blended, nor is a penalty assessed for ethanol-free fuel, so the product subsequently costs less to produce.)

When the RFS was born, America was at its peak of dependence on foreign oil, and renewable fuels were believed to be America's ticket to oil independence. What the



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policy failed to predict was the degree Americans would reduce their fuel usage, necessitating higher blends — which create the compatibility issues — in order to reach mandated renewable fuel volumes.

5. Reform or Repeal

BoatUS supports renewable fuels as part of the national fuel strategy. However, the move to put higher blends, like E15, into the marketplace creates serious problems for boaters. On June 5, BoatUS submitted testimony to the House Oversight Committee on Energy, going on the record to ask Congress to reduce the RFS mandate, and citing studies conducted by the U.S. Department of Energy that showed the devastating damage to marine engines using higher blends of ethanol like E15. "Reducing the mandate will prevent the artificial stimulation and promotion of 15-percent ethanol fuel, a fuel that is poison to all existing boat engines," wrote BoatUS's Margaret Podlich. Since then, EPA has announced the anticipated 2013 renewable fuel volume requirements which changed very little. However, EPA officials did acknowledge that the impending blend wall and shrinking fuel demand will greatly alter the 2014 numbers.

Now Congress must decide to either reform the RFS to better reflect current gasoline usage and the lack of other renewable fuel options, or eliminate it all together. Hearings on the RFS are likely to come in late fall. BoatUS will continue to advocate for you as this policy moves along.

K. LASER FLARE CAUTION

Seaworthy Magazine, July 2013

Traditional flares have some serious problems associated with them. Some are hard to spot during the day, they are difficult to dispose of, and they can be dangerous if not handled properly — after all, they are pyrotechnics (like fireworks). FCC-approved laser signaling devices, often referred to as laser flares, avoid these problems, but they have four serious drawbacks.

First, laser flares are not a recognized distress signal, so others may not realize you are asking for help. Second, they don't meet U.S. Coast Guard carriage requirements, so they don't replace any of the officially recognized and required equipment. Third, laser flares aimed directly at someone's eyes may lead to laser dazzle where an after-image of spots makes it difficult for a pilot to see. The current Coast Guard policy is that if a pilot gets hit with a laser flare in the eyes, he/she should abort the mission, though in practice each pilot would make his/her own decision. Fourth, pointing a laser at an aircraft is a federal crime with severe penalties EXCEPT in a search and rescue situation. If someone onboard, like a child or a guest, points one at an airplane, you could be held responsible.



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The Coast Guard is working to identify alternative types of laser devices that do not cause laser dazzle. The BoatUS Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water has been asked to test one such device now available in the U.K. and share its findings with the Coast Guard. We will report on their findings as soon as they are available. For more information on visual distress signals, check out Foundation Findings #45 www.BoatUS.com/Foundation/Findings/findings45/.

If you do decide to carry a laser signaling device aboard, remember that you must still carry a Coast Guard-approved visual distress signal as well. Don't buy a laser pointer from an office supply store as these have a much more concentrated beam that is even more likely to affect a pilot's vision. And remember that pointing the device at a rescue aircraft when it is close may cause it to break off its approach.