

# USCG Auxiliary Operational Facilities

## General:

This chapter covers the required equipment that a boat needs to be considered an Operational Vessel or an Operational PWC Facility (OPFAC). The District Commander (through the Director) may specify additional requirements to support Auxiliary operations.

A primary mission of the Auxiliary, SAFETY, is promoted by the careful and complete inspection of Vessel/PWC Operational Facilities. Every Auxiliary OPFAC is required to pass an annual inspection. An OPFAC, flying the Auxiliary ensign, must be one of the safest boats afloat. It must meet higher standards than are established for award of the VSC decal.

Inspection of OPFACs shall be performed by Auxiliarists who are qualified VEs. The VE cannot be the owner of the vessel/PWC being inspected, or a member of their immediate family. VEs must be fully cognizant of requirements for operational facility inspections as well as those for VSCs.

All OPFACs must first meet the standards for a VSC for a vessel of the same length, and then meet the facility inspection requirements set forth in this Chapter.

Any commercial vessel offered for use must have a current examination/inspection by a qualified Auxiliary or Coast Guard member holding appropriate qualification in that class of vessel. Then must be inspected by a VE and meet all additional requirements for an OPFAC. The District Directors of Auxiliary will review all such Offers of Use for appropriateness for Operational Facilities.

Vessels unacceptable to become OPFACs include any vessel used in commercial towing, salvage, or marine police work (e.g., vessels which may be vested with law enforcement authority such as harbor masters, constables, etc.).

VEs must ensure that, Auxiliarists submit the name(s) of any/all non-owner Auxiliarists authorized to operate the OPFAC in Section VII of the Vessel Facility Inspection and Offer For Use Form (ANSC 7003) or Section VIII of the PWC Facility Inspection and Offer For Use form (ANSC 7008).

The Director shall insure that OPFACs in the district are inspected annually prior to the expiration date of the previous inspection.

An OPFAC shall be deemed to have a current inspection if no more than one-year plus 45 days have lapsed since passing its last inspection.

The Member owner(s), Flotilla Commander, and SO-OP are notified via e-mail from AUXDATA 30-45 days prior to the annual expiration date.

This program shall in no manner be construed as permission to infringe upon the Coast Guard Vessel Inspection Program.

Credit for a Vessel Facility inspection is received by the VE when the Vessel or PWC Facility Inspection and Offer for Use form (ANSC 7003 or 7008) is posted and when the Inspection is reported on the Activity Report, ANSC 7038. If a facility inspection fails to meet operational facility requirements, report the failed inspection as a regular VSC on the current VSC reporting form (ANSC 7038) to receive credit for the inspection.

## **Operational Facility Criteria:**

Auxiliary boats that may be designated as an Operational Facility (OPFAC) are:

**Motorboats 14 feet or over in length** All vessels propelled by machinery 65 feet in length or less, (except tugboats propelled by steam), are classed as motorboats. This includes motorboats carrying passengers or freight for hire and commercial fishing boats. Auxiliary member's motorboats less than 14 feet cannot be inspected as Operational Facilities, but may be examined for the VSC decal.

**Pleasure sailboats 16 feet or over in length** Sailboats less than 16 feet cannot be inspected as Operational Facilities, but may be examined for the VSC decal.

**Personal Watercraft (PWC)** may be accepted as an operational facility.

**Pleasure motor vessels, more than 65 feet in length propelled by machinery (excluding steam)** This section will be mostly concerned with motorboats (vessels between 14 and 65 feet in length) since this is the type of boat most often owned by Auxiliarists.

When the VE completes an inspection of an Operational Vessel/PWC Facility, that VE must certify that ALL the required equipment on the inspection form and by this document is present and functioning properly and that the requirements of the district commander have been met.

An Auxiliarist owning more than one boat may request that all or several of those boats be designated as operational facilities. Each boat must be inspected, offered for use and accepted by the Director as an OPFAC.

### **Special Purpose Facility Criteria:**

Special purpose facilities are designed to transport people and are not otherwise eligible to be issued or display an Auxiliary operational facility decal.

Any motorized (diesel, gas, or electric) watercraft less than 14 feet (except PWCs), may be offered for use (in writing), and accepted by the director is a Special Purpose Facility. Any motorized watercraft that is carried or towed by an Operational Facility, which is NOT otherwise eligible for an OPFAC decal, is eligible to be a Special Purpose Facility.

### **Corporate, Partnership, or Multiple Owner Facility:**

Vessels and PWCs offered as Operational Facilities not solely owned by a single Auxiliarist (including husband/wife combinations), as well as Auxiliary Unit Vessels must meet the requirements as cooperate, partnership or multiple owner facilities..

Auxiliarists offering a corporate owned vessel, and Auxiliary Unit Vessels offered for use as operational or special purpose facilities, must, in addition to all other requirements, provide written information that identifies the legal ownership of the facility.

Non-Auxiliary owner(s) must submit proper authorization by all owners of the facility authorizing the Auxiliary member to use the boat for Coast Guard activities along with their Facility Inspection and Offer for Use form (ANSC 7003 or 7008).

Auxiliary Unit Vessels offered as Operational Facilities must submit documentation from the Auxiliary Unit authorizing the Auxiliary Unit Vessel be used following the same requirements as those for corporate and multiple owner facilities.

See Appendix A and B of the Operations Policy Manual COMDTINST M16798.3 (series) for the information corporate or multiple owners must submit.

### **Operational Facilities Transfers between Districts/Regions:**

If a member owning an OPFAC transfers to another district/region, the new district/region may require the OPFAC to pass another inspection. This is to ensure that the facility meets any additional equipment requirements of the new district/region.

If a member lives in one district/region and has an OPFAC located in and/or intends to patrol in a different district/region, then the OPFAC must be inspected by a VE from the host district/region and meet any special requirements of the host district/region.

### **Operational Facility Equipment Requirements:**

The Vessel and PWC Facility Inspection and Offer for Use forms (ANSC 7003 or 7008) list the specific requirements (except those for vessels the Coast Guard provides to the Auxiliary).

- Directors may waive only the equipment noted on the Vessel or PWC Inspection and Offer For Use Form (ANSC 7003 or 7008) as authorized to be waived or may require additional equipment for OPFACS, based on the operational needs of their respective area.
- District unique items may be included on a supplemental sheet to the ANSC 7003 or 7008, but to reduce local administrative workload, directors are encouraged to use the standard ANSC 7003 or 7008.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) required by COMDTINST or local district policy (above and beyond federal requirements and/or that required on the form ANSC 7003 or 7008) may be supplied by or issued to the individual qualified member. As such, the facility will be not required to have a full complement of such PPE that will be provided by individual crew members as part of their issued equipment, except as required on the inspection form.
- An OPFAC must meet the highest standards of equipment requirements. It must first meet the requirements of a VSC and must also meet OR exceed all requirements for a Vessel/PWC Operational Facility. Remember - this boat is a Coast Guard resource and a vessel of the U.S. when under operational orders.

Auxiliary unit vessels must comply with the Auxiliary marking requirements outlined in the Auxiliary Operations Policy Manual, COMDTINST M16798.3 (series). These markings shall be in lieu of any state or federal requirement for registration, documentation, numbering, or marking of boats.

The following are clarification of some required or optional items on the ANSC 7003 or 7008 forms:

- Communications capability as established by the director (i.e., VHF-FM radio), who will make the determination as to what communications capability of OPFACs are required in the local area.
- Search Pattern Plotting Guides as required by the director. A Course and Leg Identifier Plotter is available for course and time calculations for the Expanding Square (SS) and Sector Search (VS) patterns.
- Stern and bow cleats must be properly reinforced to withstand the stresses of towing. They MUST be bolted through, with additional support such as metal plates, blocks of wood and washers. On some boats it is impossible to inspect the backing without taking the boat apart. If this condition exists, examine the cleats carefully to determine if there is any potential weakness. Special towing cleats could be installed at a location where the cleat can be bolted through with backing.
- A means of measuring time for SAR reporting, executing search patterns, etc. A mounted, portable, pocket or wrist timepiece will suffice.

- Some means of dewatering a distressed vessel (i.e., portable pump, buckets, etc.). This is in addition to the dewatering device required on the AUX-204.
- Local Tide Tables as required by the Director. This may not be available for Facilities/PWCs used strictly on some inland-protected waters. If the Facility is used on coastal/offshore waters, then it is required.
- Light List for area as required by the director. This may not be available for Facilities/PWCs used strictly on some inland-protected waters. If the facility is used on coastal/offshore waters, then it is required.
- All OPFACs 12 meters (39.4 feet) or more in length are required to have on board a copy of the Navigation Rules publication (COMDTINST 16672.2 series).
- All owners of OPFACs may exercise the option to carry a quick reference Navigation Rules card; however, they must also own and maintain a copy of the Navigation Rules publication (COMDTINST M16672.2 series) and must display it for each facility inspection.
- Kicker (Skiff) Hook, if required by the director. The use of this tool is the safest method for connecting the towline to a trailer eyebolt.
- A minimum strength of 7x35 binocular is required.
- A minimum of three extra fenders for side tow operations.
- Adequate towline and bridle with towline free from cuts, abrasions, snags, and fusion.
- The "Y" bridle should be at least 2-3 times the width of the OPFAC and the "V" bridles at least 3 times its width.
- Heaving and mooring lines in good condition, free of rot and weathered areas. The heaving line should be 75-100 feet in length, light and flexible, with weighted throwing end painted international orange. Additional mooring lines should be maintained for side tow operations.
- The forward quarter and after bow spring lines should be approximately 1 1/2 times the length of the OPFAC.
- Anchors and anchor lines.
  - Two anchors MUST be carried. The extra anchor is an emergency anchor.
  - A working or service anchor should have the holding power equal to approximately 6% of the boat's displacement.
  - A storm anchor should be at least 150-200 % as effective as the service anchor
  - Suggested anchor weights are listed in Table 1.

Table of Suggested Anchor Weights Table 1:

<u>Max. Boat Length</u>	<u>Working Anchor</u>	<u>Storm Anchor</u>
20 feet (7 meters)	5 pounds	12 pounds
30 feet (10 meters)	12 pounds	18 pounds
40 feet (12 meters)	18 pounds	28 pounds

Boats operating along the coasts shall have at least 300 feet of anchor line; those used on rivers and inland waterways shall be equipped with anchor line of at least 5-7 times the average depth of local waters. Boats operating on inland lakes that are of extreme depths and those which do not shoal out, may use line and hooks for securing to shorelines, trees, stumps, etc. On rivers where the bottoms are muddy, anchor poles may be used. An anchor does not have to conform to standard configurations as set forth in naval and yachting circles; i.e., an iron bar or a concrete block could be a suitable anchor. The District Commander may define acceptable items. Lines shall be readily accessible in an emergency and shall not be accepted unless they are in good condition, including all splices.

### **Suggested size Rode for Working and <Storm> Anchor, Table 2:**

<u>Max Boat Length</u>	<u>Length/Size (nylon)</u>	<u>Length/Size (chain)</u>
20 feet	120 ft / 1/4" <150 ft / 3/8">	3 ft / 1/4" <4 ft / 1/4">
30 feet	180 ft / 3/8" <250 ft / 1/2">	4 ft / 3/8" <5 ft / 3/8">
50 feet	300 ft / 1/2" <500 ft / 5/8">	5 ft / 7/16" <8 ft / 7/16">

While not mandatory, it is good practice to insert a short length of chain of appropriate diameter between the anchor and the anchor line. This helps bring the anchor to and enhances its holding properties.

- A high-powered searchlight for night search operations. Although permanently mounted electrically connected units are desirable, handheld or battery operated systems are acceptable (carry spare batteries!).
- All OPFACs MUST carry VDS to meet the International or Offshore requirements. Where state law prohibits use of pyrotechnic devices, the director will designate the appropriate substitute.

### **Inspection of a Personal Water Craft (PWC) Operational Facility:**

A Personal Watercraft (PWC) is a small vessel that is propelled by an internal combustion engine powering a jet pump or propeller. The PWC engine may be either a two or four cycle engine. It is designed to carry from one to three persons, and operated by a person sitting, standing or kneeling on the vessel rather than sitting or standing inside the vessel.

PWCs offered for use as a facility must be of the "Sit Down" type, designed for at least two riders.

The following items from ANSC7008 are clarified for acceptance as an operational PWC:

- Towline to be a minimum of 30-foot polypropylene.
- One speed rated PFD for each rider with required survival equipment attached. Personal Flotation Devices (PFD) shall be impact rated for the PWC's maximum speed.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) is normally supplied by the operator and may not be carried aboard the individual PWC.
- Waterproof radio or portable radio in a clear waterproof bag.
- Safety lanyard (kill switch) and one spare.  
Auxiliary Ensign on 5-foot flagstaff is optional.
- 2 sponges for dewatering.
- Additional Spark Plugs are required only a PWC with a 2-cycle engine.

### **Inspection of a Sailboat Operational Facility:**

Only sailboats 16 feet and over in length with an operational auxiliary engine are eligible to be accepted as an OPFAC, and must meet additional requirements.

Sailboats must meet the equipment requirements of a motorboat of the same length.

Meet or exceed all applicable standards for a VSC and OPFAC inspection.

**Inspection of a Pleasure Motor Vessel Operational Facility:**

- Motor vessels are MORE than 65 feet in length propelled by machinery (excluding steam).
- Motor vessels MUST comply with legal requirements and meet standards for award of the VSC decal and the standards for an OPFAC inspection.
- Legal requirements for pleasure motor vessels are briefly stated as follows:
  - Personal Flotation Devices must be Coast Guard approved Type 1
  - Ventilation -- same as for motorboats.
  - Backfire Flame Control -- same as for motorboats.
  - Fire Extinguishers -- per Table 3.

**Fire Extinguisher Requirements Table 3:**

**Gross Tonnage: Minimum number of B-II Portable Fire Extinguishers:**

<u>Over</u>	<u>Not Over</u>	<u>Extinguishers</u>
N/A	50	1
50	100	2
100	500	3
500	1000	6
1000	NA	8

In addition to the hand portable fire extinguishers required by Table 3, the following fire extinguishing equipment shall be fitted in the machinery space:

- One B-II hand portable fire extinguisher shall be carried for each 1,000 B.H.P. of the main engines or fraction thereof. However, not more than six such extinguishers need be carried.
- On motor vessels of over 300 gross tons, either one B-III semi portable fire extinguishing system shall be fitted, or alternatively, a fixed fire extinguishing system shall be fitted in the machinery space.

Requirements for sound producing device, foghorn, bell, and navigation lights are the same as federal requirements.

A pleasure motor vessel will most probably be documented as a yacht, but may be registered.

As this type of vessel will rarely be encountered, Vessel Examiners will not be held responsible for these requirements in their qualification course, but must study them prior to inspecting such motor vessels.

**Inspection of Commercial Vessels (Freight, Passenger or Fishing) as OPFACs**

Any commercial vessel offered for use must have a current examination/inspection by a qualified Auxiliary or Coast Guard member holding appropriate qualification in that class of vessel. Then it must be inspected by a VE and meet all additional requirements for an OPFAC. The District Directors of Auxiliary will review all such Offers of Use for appropriateness for Operational Facilities.

**Inspection of Installed Communications Equipment:**

The inspection of radio-equipped boats will be executed on the Vessel Facility Inspection and Offer for Use form (ANSC 7003/7008). The initial (and all subsequent inspections) of the communications equipment may be accomplished by the Vessel Examiner (VE). The completed

form will be forwarded to the director per district procedures.

- Acceptance as an Auxiliary Radio Facility is not authorized.
- The owner of inspected radio equipment will be responsible for the proper maintenance of the equipment. While not a mandatory requirement, annual frequency checks and a technical inspection by an appropriately licensed FCC electronics technician is encouraged to insure that specific transmitter requirements are maintained.
- The initial (and each subsequent annual inspection) is limited to a check of the documents required to be aboard and a cursory inspection of installed equipment.
- The inspection will not include CB equipment installed in or carried aboard the facility.
- Station Documents. Radio logs must be carried and maintained by all OPFACs. OPFACS less than 65 feet in length and operating under direct communications control of Coast Guard or Auxiliary land stations are not required to make log entries. If an FCC license is otherwise required by current regulations, this license must be valid and available for inspection.

**Physical Checks of Installed Communications Equipment:**

The VE will make the following physical checks of installed communications equipment:

- Check the antenna mounting. It must be secure and in good condition.
- Check condition of lead-in wire or lead-in coaxial cable, where it enters through the skin of the facility. It must be flexible, the insulation undamaged and have no breaks in the outer shield or center conductor.
- Check the general condition of the transmitting and receiving equipment. It shall be securely mounted so that it cannot shift position. Shock mounts are, of course, permissible. Equipment must be clean, dry, and undamaged, and, if not installed in a watertight enclosure, it must be protected from the elements.
- The owner shall demonstrate a radio check on each required frequency. The VE should not touch the controls.
- Reception must be clear of interference, (other than another station transmitting) both with the engine in operation and with it secured.
- If an auxiliary generator is installed in the facility, the quality of the signal and clarity of the reception must not be reduced when it is in operation.

Have the owner/operator start the engine(s) and re-check reception. Signals should not be broken up by ignition noise. If the noise level is excessive, suggest that the ignition system be cleaned up, check the wiring, etc., or have a radio technician install noise suppressors.

Depending on District policy, failure to pass the radiotelephone check may disqualify the vessel for acceptance and awarding of the operational decal with wreath.