Guidance on the Implementation and Use of the
Revised Accident Report Terms and Definitions Lists (September 2013)

THE CHARGE 2013 A2
In service to the NASBLA membership, and in consultation with U.S. Coast Guard staff, develop and deliver implementation guidance related to the States’ use of the standardized accident reporting terms and definitions lists (see ERAC 2012 and 2013 Charge A1). The lists are for the report categories of: Accident Types/Events; Contributing Factors/Causes; Operation; Activity; Vessel Types (and optional use Vessel Sub-Types).

OVERVIEW
With the approval by NASBLA membership of five accident report terms and definitions products,¹ and the imminent release of final versions of the Reference and Resource Modules associated with them, the Engineering, Reporting & Analysis Committee (ERAC) is offering the following guidance for States to consider when they wish to transition to use of the updated terms.

Of particular importance is that the timeline for incorporating the revised terms and definitions is being left to each State to determine. The only terms that have an established deadline for implementation are the 12 Vessel Types; those terms and definitions have been set in Federal regulation for the States’ implementation by January 1, 2017.²

Questions or issues associated with implementation can be directed to ERAC for assistance (if it is within the scope of the committee’s work or ability to act) or, at minimum, for sharing and exploring resolutions with the rest of the NASBLA Membership.

¹ First two lists—Accident Types/Events and Contributing Factors/Causes—approved Sept. 11, 2012; final three lists—Operation, Activity, Vessel Types/Sub-Types—approved Sept. 3, 2013.
² The 12 Authorized Vessel Types have been set in regulation as per the U.S. Coast Guard’s Final Rule on Changes to Standard Numbering System, Vessel Identification System, and Boating Accident Report Database, 33 C.F.R. Parts 173, 174, 181, 187, issued March 28, 2012, with implementation by the states no later than January 2017. The Vessel Sub-Types in the accident report terms and definitions list are for optional use.
GUIDANCE

Take an inventory of the steps that will be needed to make changes in your State and develop a timeline for implementation based on that assessment.

While your State may have additional steps, at minimum give consideration to the following areas:

- When does your State want to implement the terms?
  - Several factors should be considered when implementing any changes:
    - The Final Rule on Changes to Standard Numbering System, Vessel Identification System, and Boating Accident Report Database requires States to use specific terms for Vessel Types. These new terms will require form and database changes and must be implemented no later than January 1, 2017.
    - The five Accident Reporting Terms and Definitions standardized lists have been approved as work products by the NASBLA membership and are available for use by the States. Further, under the terms of NASBLA Resolution 2012-3, and the vetting process that was used for this work, the approved lists have been or are being forwarded to the USCG for final review and clearance through its appropriate internal channels.
    - As has been discussed in various NASBLA forums since late 2011, the USCG is considering making other changes and improvements to accident reporting requirements (e.g., use of a two-tier accident reporting system). ERAC has been informed that a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) may be published in 2014. While this would not be a final rule, it would give an indication of the direction that the changes are headed in, and, hopefully, the timing of a final rule.
  - Do you want to make rolling changes as events warrant, or do you want to try and limit things to “one big change” if possible? Consolidating the various changes may be worthy of consideration because it might lessen the overall impact on your State’s resources.

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3 Other changes intended to harmonize terminology between the three data systems also are included in the Final Rule (e.g., authorized terms for propulsion, fuel, engine drive type, hull material). For more information, see http://nasbla.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=4198
4 For general information on the various changes and improvements that have been under consideration and that were the subject of the USCG request for comments Docket No. 2011-0674, see http://nasbla.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=4246.
• What changes will need to be made to the hard-copy report forms used to collect accident reporting details by officers in the field?
  
  o In order to potentially reduce costs, consider whether the changes might be made in conjunction with other necessary form changes already anticipated (such as the impending Federal changes in CFR terms resulting from the Final Rule on SNS, VIS and BARD, or other changes that might be required by State law or code).

  o Also consider the procedure to disseminate new forms.

• What changes will need to be made to the database where your State’s accident reporting data is warehoused?

  o If you have direct entry into BARD, you should make contact with the BARD-Web vendor or Susan Tomczuk at the U.S. Coast Guard to determine when the BARD-Web vendor can make the modifications needed. Operational needs, as well as the number of States requesting modifications at any given time, could have an impact on when the changes can be scheduled.

  o If you use third-party vendor software for data entry (i.e., your data is transferred between your system and BARD via a link), contact both your vendor and Susan Tomczuk at the U.S. Coast Guard as it is likely that changes will need to involve input from your vendor, the BARD-Web vendor, and Susan.

• What staff training will need to be done in advance of or conjunction with the rollout of the revised lists, forms, and database updates?

  o Consider how the Terms and Definitions Reference and Resource Modules associated with the revised lists might be used to facilitate these efforts.

  o Consider using the Reference and Resource Modules as a way to educate partners (e.g., Marine Patrols) on use of the terms and definitions.

• What impact will the date of implementation have on your State’s reporting and statistical analysis?

  o To avoid data analysis issues, such as mixing old and new terms within a reporting cycle, consider all of the potential impacts of the planned implementation date (e.g., at the calendar year, at the fiscal year).