U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

**United States
Coast Guard**

Vessel Identification System (VIS)
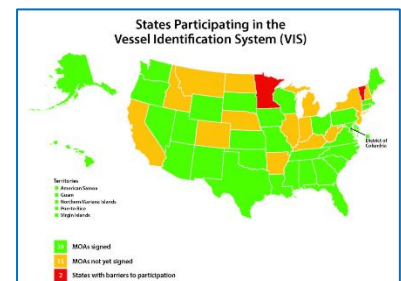## New Participant Information

What is VIS?

The Vessel Identification System (VIS) is a centralized database that contains information on state numbered and titled vessels and Coast Guard documented vessels. The system is only accessible to law enforcement and state registration & titling personnel whose access is approved and managed by the Coast Guard's Boating Safety Division.

VIS serves as a critical tool for federal, state, and local authorities by providing access to vessel and vessel ownership data that helps:

- **Enhance Officer safety** by giving officers access to vessel ownership information prior to approaching or boarding a vessel.
- **Identify potential Homeland Security threats** by providing access to vessel ownership information which, in conjunction with other intelligence, enhances maritime domain awareness and aids in the detection of potentially illicit activities on U.S. waterways.
- **Deter theft and reduce fraud** by enabling registration & titling personnel to research a vessel before it is transferred from another state. Doing so helps to detect suspicious transactions and prevent title washing and other fraudulent activities. This may also help to protect consumers from unknowingly buying a stolen or previously damaged vessel.
- **Support stolen vessel recovery** by improving information sharing between jurisdictions.
- **Streamline abandoned and derelict vessel removal** by serving as a means of identifying a vessel and its most recent owner of record.

Why should your state participate?

Participating in VIS not only helps to protect your state's boaters but also strengthens our efforts to secure our nation's waterways. To date, 40 states and territories have signed on to VIS, and with your participation, we can better meet these objectives by having a more comprehensive picture of the U.S. fleet and the movement of vessels across state lines.

States Participating in the Vessel Identification System (VIS)

How much will this cost?

Most likely, nothing. There is little, if any, extra work required to prepare your state's registration data for inclusion in VIS. And access to VIS is free to participating states and available to approved users via a standard web browser that does not require special software or equipment.

How do you get started?

1. **Contact Kristin Williams**, with the U.S. Coast Guard's Boating Safety Division, who can answer any questions and provide you with the VIS Memorandum of Agreement.
   - Email: VISInfo@uscg.mil or Phone: (571) 607-3999
2. **Sign and return the VIS Memorandum of Agreement**.
3. **Info-Link, the Coast Guard's designee for VIS**, will coordinate the process of incorporating your vessel registration and titling data into VIS. The basic procedures are already in place, so this should be a relatively simple process.