



**Engineering, Reporting & Analysis Committee (ERAC)
2021-2022 Recommendations: Initial Charges and Related Activities
Reviewed/Approved by the NASBLA Executive Board, Aug. 27 2021**

CHARGES

Each item in the list presents the 2020-2021 cycle's charge number and language followed by the recommendation for its disposition in the 2022 cycle (i.e., carry over, carry over w/modification, some other action). One new charge also was proposed for Executive Board consideration. During an Aug. 27, 2021, teleconference, the board reviewed and approved all of the recommendations.

The committee will discuss the 2022 versions during the full committee session scheduled for Sept. 26, 2021, and detail the scope of work and final language for each charge during teleconferences that will be conducted post-conference.

INVESTIGATION, REPORTING & ANALYSIS

ERAC IR&A 2020-1A – Complete phase one of USCG/STATES/ERAC collaborative recreational boating incident reporting policy project.

Reinstate this 2020 phase one charge with modifications as needed for 2022: This 2020 charge, as written, was successfully completed. The consensus recommendations were developed, vetted, voted on by NASBLA membership in July 2020, and formally delivered to Coast Guard leadership in the Office of Auxiliary & Boating Safety immediately thereafter for the purpose of informing their internal development of regulatory and policy provisions. As such, the charge was not carried over to 2021 in the traditional sense; the expectation was that when the Coast Guard issued the formal response to the consensus product the charges IR&A 2021-1 and -2 (next page) would be the logical successors to carry the work forward in the new cycle. That formal response had not yet been issued as of this writing, although elements were or will be discussed with NASBLA members as part of two information sharing/refresher webinars pre-annual conference (Aug. 26 and Sept. 16), with more detail anticipated during a conference general session on Sept. 27. As such, because ERAC leadership and staff are participating in developing the content for these sessions and because the committee – in coordination with the project workgroup members who are not already on ERAC -- can play a valuable and valid role in assisting and advising the Executive Board as it identifies and executes next steps associated with this product, this charge will be reinstated -- with appropriate modifications based on the status/outcomes of the Coast Guard response -- to ensure that it remains on the "front burner."

ERAC IR&A 2021-1 --- [Best Practices Development in Phase Two of USCG/STATES/NASBLA ERAC recreational boating incident reporting policy project](#). In accordance with and as applicable to the project's consensus recommendations to the U.S. Coast Guard (reference **USCG/ERAC IR&A 2020-1A**), develop the "best practices" and other guidance necessary to effectively implement them. As a starting point, review the [Best Practices list presented and triaged](#) at the Feb. 28, 2020 ERAC meeting. In coordination with the Coast Guard, initiate work on the highest priority components/items. In developing the content of the guidance, ensure close coordination with the charge team activities described in **ERAC K&CM 2021-1** and determine the best format(s) for delivering this information to the audiences of potential users (officers/investigators; incident report reviewers; data entry personnel; etc.). (NASBLA Goal 5, Obj. 5.1, Strategy 5.1.5) (RBS Initiative 2, CoA 5, milestone 13; and Initiative 3)

Carry over the best practices charge, but with modifications to scope of work for 2022: In spite of the delays and uncertainties associated with the Coast Guard's response to the incident reporting project recommendations, the team assigned to this charge did commence work on nine (9) of the components/items in the recommendations that had been tagged as needing an accompanying "best practice" or further guidance for effective, future implementation. Those items were selected because they would be of benefit to the States regardless of any Coast Guard action/inaction regarding the project recommendations. This activity will continue, but the scope of work on this charge will not be finalized until the Executive Board, NASBLA membership, and this committee have a clearer picture of what the Coast Guard intends to do regarding the implementation of key elements of the recommendations (e.g., the reporting decision matrix).

ERAC IR&A 2021-2 --- [Coordinate NASBLA ERAC/State participation in the Reporting System Design component of Phase Two of the USCG/STATES/NASBLA ERAC recreational boating incident reporting policy project](#). Collaborate with the project stakeholders in setting the expectations and functionalities of a reporting system that will replace the current Boating Accident Report Database (BARD) and be responsive to the project's consensus recommendations to the U.S. Coast Guard. (NASBLA Goal 5, Obj. 5.1, Strategy 5.1.5) (RBS Initiative 2, CoA 5, milestone 13; and Initiative 3).

Carry over this online reporting system design charge, but with modifications to scope of work for 2022: Based on recent discussions with the CG-BSX Division Chief, it sounds like the revamp/overhaul of the BARD system – despite (or perhaps because of) efforts to involve other Coast Guard IT units in advance planning – is in question, at least for the foreseeable future. As this is unacceptable on several levels, the Executive Board may wish to consider alternatives to the BARD status quo; ERAC (and members of the "phase two" workgroup that had already volunteered for service in February 2020) will need to be part of any information gathering/fact finding effort. The final charge language will be developed on that basis to ensure that this activity remains on the "front burner." [Of note: there is some urgency to this as the Coast Guard's BAR form / collection will formally expire 07/31/2022.]

ERAC IR&A 2021-3 --- Continue pilot program and refine best practices for collecting and evaluating human factors data. Analyze the results of a pilot program involving states applying aspects of the [human performance investigation guidance](#) and [supplemental report form](#) (ERAC products v. 2016) to fatal incident investigations in their jurisdictions. Evaluate the collected data, resolve data collection issues, and refine the guidance and form as needed. Determine how best to apply the form for use by the current pilot and additional states. (NASBLA Goals 3 and 5, Obj. 5.1, Strategy 5.1.5) (RBS Initiatives 2 and 3).

Carry over this human factors charge, but with modifications to scope of work for 2022: The primary activity associated with this charge is in Florida as the ERAC Chair has been working to implement collection and analysis of human factors data (especially regarding distractions) on fatalities in that state. The pandemic- and charge team members' agency workload-related issues have been obstacles to product development in this cycle; nevertheless, this activity is critical to further understanding human behaviors in recreational boating incidents and will continue (with possible replication in additional states, depending on the success of the Florida experience).

KNOWLEDGE & CONTENT MANAGEMENT

ERAC K&CM 2021-1 --- Strategically enhance and evaluate the effectiveness of current NASBLA Lighthouse platform and its contents (in a larger context, seek to enhance access to and use of current and future committee products). Evaluate the current "reach" of the NASBLA Lighthouse, over time and as compared to other NASBLA knowledge and learning tools, and evaluate the various online tools available through NASBLA for sharing existing and anticipated committee products, including the pros and cons of each option. Tasks should include: completion of an inventory of existing and anticipated committee products; consideration and completion of additional work on enhancing the user-friendliness of products through cheat sheets, webinars, how-to videos and other means; and, based on the charge team's work regarding available NASBLA tools, determination of the best channels by which to share or post products for wider use. Continue to evaluate the "reach" of materials under the new schema, including gathering feedback from users to better refine strategies moving forward. When complete, this activity can be reclassified as an ongoing committee function, possibly with a standing workgroup to facilitate additional marketing, distribution and housing of committee materials going forward. (NASBLA Goal 5) (RBS Initiative 2).

Carry over this Lighthouse/committee product-information sharing charge, with modifications as needed to scope of work for 2022: This charge was well underway in the transitional period between the 2020 and 2021 cycles, with an extensive inventory of existing, online committee products and resources produced for the team's evaluation. However, work on this charge was also dependent on the status/progress of other, higher-priority committee activities (e.g., best practices). The pandemic and charge team members' agency workload-related issues also presented obstacles to charge progress. In the interim, to ensure that website visitors did not encounter outdated information, ERAC staff continued to maintain and, in some cases, significantly update the Lighthouse and other committee-affiliated webpages. This charge – with modifications to reflect work already completed – will be carried over into the new cycle and be conducted in coordination with the other, related ERAC charge work.

RBS STATISTICS & RESEARCH

ERAC S&R 2021-1 --- Evaluate the results from the 2018 National Recreational Boating Safety Participation and Exposure Surveys (NRBSS). Review and assess the published findings, raw data, and methods associated with the 2018 version of the NRBSS, with a special focus on the Exposure Survey. Develop product(s) that can assist the States in practical application of the data to their RBS programs. Determine whether the data can be used to reinstate previous ERAC efforts, such as evaluating the use of exposure hours as the denominator for calculating fatality rates and assessing the impact of out-of-state boaters on a State's injury and fatality rates. (NASBLA Goal 5, Obj. 5.1 and 5.2; and Goal 2) (RBS Initiative 3).

Carry over this NRBSS charge, with significant modifications to the scope of work for 2022:

The 2021 charge got off to a wobbly start with the delay in Coast Guard release of the two survey reports (published December 2020), transition in primary CG-BSX staff to the survey project (from Vann Burgess to Jonathan Hsieh), and inability of either the charge team or CG-BSX to readily access the raw data files from the grantee for analysis. However, the team has been reviewing the methodology report, conducted calls, identified questions and received answers (as possible) working in close concert with Mr. Hsieh. That said, what seemed at the time to be a workable plan to complete the review of the methodology, dive into the findings, conduct webinars to inform the states on the applicability and implications of the data for their jurisdictions AND gather stakeholder input toward the next iteration of the NRBSS was put on hold, with good reason. Given the issues associated with the 2018 effort, per Mr. Hsieh, CG-BSX has been actively considering possible changes to the development and administration of the next NRBSS surveys—that is, 1) employing an OMB approval route that would involve greater transparency and opportunity for public comment on the content of the surveys; and in a related vein, 2) reverting to a contractual arrangement with the selected survey vendor, a move that would give the Coast Guard additional control over the administration of the survey and access to the resulting data. While this would not impact the team's efforts toward better understanding of the 2018 survey findings, it would positively impact the extent to which NASBLA/ERAC and its membership could provide input to the content of the next round of NRBSS participation and exposure surveys, an activity codified in the latest [USCG/NASBLA MOU](#). As such, this charge – with modifications to reflect work already completed, work still to be conducted, and any changes to the next iteration-- will be carried into the new cycle.

NEW ERAC CHARGE for 2022 --- Investigate Factors Associated with the 2020 Increases in Recreational Boating Incidents, Fatalities, and Injuries. Conduct a deep dive into the factors associated with the increases in recreational boating incidents, fatalities and injuries reported during 2020 (and continuing 2021 months of the pandemic). Review statistics and risk factors associated with other recreational activities and transportation modes during the pandemic. Collaborate with other NASBLA policy committees on this topic to avoid duplication of data requests and effort.

The quantitative data released in the national Recreational Boating Statistics for 2020 seem to verify the anecdotal information that was described in various forums throughout the pandemic year—both in terms of increases in boating activity and increases in incidents.

However, that release also has prompted some preliminary (what might be characterized as “knee jerk”) reactions—some of which may be borne out with further analysis of the data; others of which may ultimately be dismissed. The scope of work for this new charge will be developed in conjunction with other NASBLA policy committees – notably Paddlesports and Education/Outreach—that are likely to have an interest in exploring the contributing factors in greater detail.

OTHER ACTIVITIES – MONITORING and LIAISON WORK

ONGOING COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS

Monitoring and giving input to USCG policy / regulatory proposals and actions: ERAC will continue to monitor, research as needed, and provide feedback to U.S. Coast Guard policy initiatives and regulatory proposals in areas related to the committee’s charter, whether published in the Federal Register or issued through other official mechanisms. The committee will inform the States and encourage them to provide feedback, and will coordinate NASBLA’s organizational responses to such proposals using the NASBLA website and NASBLA Connect discussion forums to provide resources and promote open discussion among the States. (NASBLA Goals 4 and 5) (RBS Initiative 2, CoA, milestone 13)

Issues and trends monitoring and disposition: The Triage is a committee procedure intended for the year-round capture and timely disposition of issues and topics that come to ERAC from internal and external sources. The [NASBLA ERAC Procedure v01092015](#) is used to assign the triage team, process the issues, and recommend an appropriate course of action—whether that be a request to the NASBLA Executive Board to approve a formal charge, a communication to the states on a matter of immediate concern, continued monitoring, or some other action (including “no” action in the near term). Per the established procedure, the team is to be comprised of the ERAC Chair, Vice Chair, Board Liaison, and two at-large Committee Members assigned at the beginning of each cycle.

LIAISON WORK

Liaison/collaborate with the VIRT Committee on its new charge for 2022. The VIRT Committee proposed and the Executive Board approved the following new charge: “Vessel Type Definitions: While vessel type definitions are in federal law, there is inconsistency of classifying a vessel properly on the Application for the Certificate of Registration. A possible solution would be for VIRT to provide examples of each description to all states/territories” ERAC will collaborate with VIRT to ensure that the work-to-date on [vessel sub-types](#) is factored into this new effort.