



Vessel Identification, Registration & Titling (VIRT)
Final Report to NASBLA Executive Board
Charge Activity Status,
Next Cycle Recommendations

Date: August 6, 2018 Darren Rider (TN) Chair

NASBLA Vessel Identification & Titling Charter

The VIRT Committee recognizes that accurate vessel information is the backbone of recreational boating safety data. The VIRT Committee works to advance boating safety by analyzing and advocating for thorough precise vessel identification throughout a vessel's chain of ownership from the hull numbering to registration to titling.

These tasks will be addressed through the work of two subcommittees: Vessel Registration & Titling and Vessel Identification System (VIS)

VIRT Committee members are assembled into one of the two subcommittees. Subcommittee chairs are assigned to monitor each of the charges that have been assigned to the committee to monitor activity and progress. Remaining committee members are each assigned one to two charges each.

2012 – 2018 Vision Statement: *Due for 5 year revision in the 2019 committee cycle*

1. Have a universal Title Act in place based on the work of NCCUSL with an objective of 10% of the states or territories adopting [some form of] the Title Act into their vessel title laws.
2. Work with non-title states and territories in the adoption of vessel titling with a goal of adding more states and/or territories onto the list of those that title vessels.
3. Assist states with planning for implementation of required changes to Standard Numbering System, Vessel Identification System, and Boating Accident Reporting Database.
4. Encourage adequate resources and support be directed to National Vessel Documentation Center for notification to the states to occur. Increase awareness of the issue to the recreational boating professional's community.
5. Review the process of VIS, from becoming a member to the overall usage of the program, and make recommendations to strengthen its value as a resource to the states. Obtain a goal of adding 5 to 10 more states to the membership in 5 years.

VIRT_N&T_2018-1

Encourage adequate resources and support be directed to National Vessel Documentation Center (NVDC) for notification to the states to occur. Increase awareness of the issue to the recreational boating professionals' community.

Needs Statement: The NVDC has never notified states when a recreational vessel has been federally documented because of lack of federal funding and personnel. This is an effort to ensure consistency between States and the NVDC that notification to states be done by the NVDC when a recreational vessel is documented. (Ref: NASBLA Strategic & Implementation Plan Strategy 1.2.1)

- ✓ **Deliverables:** Government Accounting Office (GAO) published their findings in September, 2017. Basically, the findings were the NVCD is short on staff and has budgetary issues. To address the back log of Documentations, overtime was going to be implemented to process Recreational Documentations in the short term. Long term solution was to have the NVCD receive more money in their budget and to hire additional personnel. To date, this has not happened.
- ✓ **Implementation:** NVDC would notify States when a vessel is documented.
- ✓ **Measures of Effectiveness:** Recreational vessels that are documented would not be titled in a State at the same time being Federally Documented.
- ✓ **Current status:** Work completed on this charge for this year.
- ✓ **Next cycle recommendation:** Charge should be carried over for next year with the understanding there will probably be no movement on this charge because of personnel and budget issues with the NVCD. VIRT feels if this charge is dropped, the NVDC & USCG will not see it as a high priority. The NVDC & USCG is very aware of what the VIRT Committee is asking for. This charge is one the VIRT Committee has been working on for a number of years to get the NVCD to notify states when a vessel is documented. This has been and will continue to be a high priority for VIRT.

VIRT_N&T_2018-2

Assist the states and work with NCCUSL through their Enactment Committee, with promoting and supporting adoption of the Uniform Certificate of Title for Vessels Act. Review resources on the NCCUSL website and suggest updates as needed. Identify new support materials needed and produce as necessary. Increase access and visibility of the NCCUSL website and all available resources for NASBLA members.

Needs Statement: There are still a number of states that do not require the titling of any types of recreational vessels. The UCOTVA is a means that states can use to adopt or redefine titling laws across the U.S. with support of NASBLA and have consistency across the board. (Ref: NASBLA Strategic & Implementation Plan Strategy 1.2.1 & 2.1.1)

- ✓ **Deliverables:** Contact list for UCOTVA updated and posted to NASBLA Connect and VIRT Web page. Katlin Wolff (Uniformed Law Commissioners) and Caroline Mantel (Boat History Report) will be holding a breakout session at the conference in September.
- ✓ **Implementation:** States would be adopting UCOTVA.
- ✓ **Measures of Effectiveness:** As States adopt UCOTVA, it would be the start of a nationwide consistent way of titling recreational vessels.
- ✓ **Current status:** Hawaii adopted, effective date was July 1, 2018. Alaska also has a titling bill (not UCOTVA compliant) on the Governor's desk. Other states that have shown interest this year include New Jersey, Arkansas, Texas, Alabama and Tennessee. Georgia will try one more time to pass UCOTVA.
- ✓ **Next cycle recommendation:** Charge should be carried over for next year. This charge is one the VIRT Committee has been working on for years with NCCUSL. This has been and will continue to be a high priority for VIRT.

VIRT_N&T_2018-3

Expand the use and development of educational products to inform states and their agents about HIN Validation. Promote the use of the “HIN Verification & Validation” PowerPoint presentation, developed in 2014 as a “Registration & Titling 101” educational product targeted to frontline registration and titling people.

Develop resources to assist states in setting up a HIN Validation system to prepare for the implementation of the regulatory changes in the Standard Numbering System, Vessel Identification System, and Boating Accident Report Database. Final Rule issued March 28, 2012. Deadline for states to begin HIN Validation was January 1, 2017.

Needs Statement: Consistency of how HINS are to be issued and verified by States and manufacturers across the U.S. has been a major issue for many years. There are too many HINS that are issued that are issued improperly or recorded improperly. (Ref: U.S. Coast Guard RBS Initiative #2 & NASBLA Strategic & Implementation Plan Strategy 1.5.2)

- ✓ **Deliverables:** HIN Power Point that was developed in 2016 has been reformatted to provide a better flow to it.
- ✓ **Implementation:** The NASBLA VIRT Committee in conjunction with the Coast Guard will continue to promote the HIN Power Point that has been developed via Conference Presentations, NASBLA Connect, BLA Workshops, NASBLA Leadership Academies and sending out the HIN Power Point and any revisions to each BLA and Registration & Titling Contacts each year.
- ✓ **Measures of Effectiveness:** Less HINS being discovered that have been issued improperly and more HINS that have been verified would be found to be correct as States verify HINS.
- ✓ **Current status:** Still waiting on the Coast Guard for advice on what format to be used when a state issues a state assigned HIN. Caroline Mantel reports that Vann Burgess is checking to see if the state assigned HIN format that was developed by the Coast Guard in 2016 for the Powerpoint is the correct format (Vann indicated if you know the year of the vessel, it should be listed in the last two digits versus the year issued) after the VIRT Committee made an inquiry where in the CFR it states what HIN format must be used when a state issues a state assigned HIN. Caroline had this conversation with Vann Burgess at the NBSAC meeting in Portland, Oregon. VIRT Committee made the inquiry based on a few states that indicated they will not follow the format that was developed in the PowerPoint. Once, finalized, it will be sent to Executive Board for their review then posted on NASBLA Connect, the VIRT Web page and sent out to all BLA's and R & T contacts once Executive Board approves it.
- ✓ **Next cycle recommendation:** Charge should be carried over for next year. This charge is one the VIRT Committee has also been working on for a number of years. This has been and will continue to be a high priority for VIRT especially with the Federal changes that went into effect 1/1/17.

VIRT_N&T_2018-4

Develop online community through NASBLA Connect to expand and facilitate discussions about recreational boating numbering and titling issues and resolutions with agencies and personnel involved in this field of work. Annually appoint from VIRT a member who will coordinate with NASBLA staff details associated with and management of the community.

Needs Statement: A centralized area is needed for any discussions and information regarding registration & titling issues for recreational vessels. NASBLA Connect is the ideal area to store information and discussions topics regarding registration & titling. (Ref: NASBLA Strategic & Implementation Plan Strategy 1.5.2)

- ✓ **Deliverables:** VIS survey and Performance Measurement Matrix survey will be posted even though not all states have responded. Registration Fees Survey to be posted. Best Practices Documented (States to notify one another when a vessel is registered in their state, VIRT_N&T_2918-4) has been posted.
- ✓ **Implementation:** As topics/discussions are developed, posting these to NASBLA Connect for references and discussions.
- ✓ **Measures of Effectiveness:** NASBLA to check to see how many discussions and site contacts there are on NASBLA Connect under Committee Topics.
- ✓ **Current status:** Current results of this year's surveys (R & T, VIS and Performance Measurement Matrix and Best Practices Documented (States to notify one another when a vessel is registered in their state, VIRT_N&T_2918-4) have been posted. More work on these for next year since a number of states did not respond. . Best Practices Documented (States to notify one another when a vessel is registered in their state, VIRT_N&T_2918-4) has been posted.
- ✓ **Next cycle recommendation:** Charge should be carried over for next year. Committee feels that NASBLA Connect can be a very valuable resource for States to get information and for topics of discussions in the future. Should be an ongoing charge in the future as updates will need to be completed and posted as necessary. In an effort to expand where VIRT Information can be found, committee is recommending this charge to include looking into posting information on the Dash Board Project and to have a small work group work with Pam Dillon to see what can be done. In addition, in an effort to expand how VIRT information can be distributed, VIRT will be developing a "VIRT Newsletter" under this charge to send out a semi-annual newsletter to all BLA's, R & T contacts and other organizations.

VIRT_N&T_2018-5

Develop an online reference where states can go to find current registration fees, including titling fees. This should also include documented vessel fees for each state.

Needs Statement: A standardized area for reference material is needed by states to assist them with inquiries by superiors and law makers regarding registration/titling fees, etc. for comparisons between states. (Ref: NASBLA Strategic & Implementation Plan Strategy 1.5.2)

- ✓ **Deliverables:** Committee still trying to get some states to complete so information will be missing from those states that have not responded. Darren rider talked at the Spring BLA Workshop to emphasize the importance of completing the survey.
- ✓ **Implementation:** Will be posted on NASBLA Connect and the VIRT Web page. Any revisions after that will be updated and posted on NASBLA Connect and the VIRT Web page on an annual basis.
- ✓ **Measures of Effectiveness:** NASBLA to check how many "hits" is received on NASBLA Connect in looking for this type of information.
- ✓ **Current status:** Will post what results the committee has received to NASBLA Connect and will continue to work with the states that have not responded next year to capture their information. As of today's date, we are still trying to figure out what the best method will be to post the information.
- ✓ **Next cycle recommendation:** Charge should be carried over for next year. This should be an ongoing charge for the VIRT Committee. Updates to the state contacts as well as any updates to the information will need to be completed each year for sure. Committee has discussed that a survey should be sent out each year on this to collect any updates or additional information.

VIRT_N&T_2018-6

Revise the draft of VIRT NASBLA “Best Practices Document” that indicates states should notify other states when a vessel is registered if it has been previously registered on another state.

Needs Statement: This is a national issue. If a state does not notify another state when a vessel is registered and it has been registered in another state previously, change of ownership issues arise immediately with not only the registration but also with the title if a title state is involved. (Ref: NASBLA Strategic & Implementation Plan Strategy 1.5.2)

- ✓ **Deliverables:** VIRT Surveys in the past indicated that only fourteen (14) states currently do this. Develop a “Best Practice Document” for states to use for program uniformity. Get Executive Board approval. Send this “Best Practice Document” to all BLA’s and R & T contacts and post on NASBLA Connect and the NASBLA VIRT Web page.
- ✓ **Implementation:** Get Executive Board approval. Send this “Best Practice Document” to all BLA’s and R & T contacts and post on NASBLA Connect and the NASBLA VIRT Web page. Any revisions after that will be updated and posted on NASBLA Connect and the VIRT Web page on an annual basis.
- ✓ **Measures of Effectiveness:** Hope to see an increase in states notifying one another when a vessel is documented. Include this on future surveys for measurement.
- ✓ **Current status:** Has been posted on NASBLA Connect and the VIRT WEB page and send out to all BLA’s and R & T contacts.
- ✓ **Next cycle recommendation:** Charge completed. Will include measurement in future surveys.

VIRT_N&T_2018-7

Legacy HIN Documentation & Best Practice

Needs Statement: This is a national issue. First collect & analyze policy each state implements for “Legacy HIN” in regards to documenting HIN within state registration databases, as well as placement of “secondary” or state assigned HINS (i.e. is state assigned HIN placed over, or in addition to legacy to Legacy HIN on vessel). Create a “Best Practice Document” for states to use as a guideline going forward. Additionally come up with a way to include the legacy HIN on interstate documents to ensure the original HIN is not lost and is available for agencies/individuals investigating the history of the vessel (i.e. L/E, insurance companies, potential owners, etc.). This is important to ensure the history of the vessel is not lost and to help prevent stolen vessels being registered across state borders. (Ref: NASBLA Strategic & Implementation Plan Strategy 1.5.2)

- ✓ **Deliverables:** VIRT will create a survey to find out the current state policies. VIRT will also follow up with the USCG to find out what the official USCG guidelines is, then create a “Best Practice Document”.
- ✓ **Implementation:** Get Executive Board approval. Send this “Best Practice Document” to all BLA’s and R & T contacts and post on NASBLA Connect and the NASBLA VIRT Web page. Any revisions after that will be updated and posted on NASBLA Connect and the VIRT Web page on an annual basis.
- ✓ **Measures of Effectiveness:**
- ✓ **Current status:** A survey was sent out to all states. Only received 26 responses back. General consensus is that states do not share information and Legacy HIN is not captured in state databases. USCG has indicated they were not aware of this issue. VIRT inquired with Vann Burgess if this could be included in VIS, as of today’s date, we have not heard back from the USCG. VIRT feels the HIN PowerPoint needs to be finalized (Waiting on CG to provide information (Charge VIRT_N&T_2018-3) and CG needs to advise VIRT on how best to move forward with Legacy HINS.
- ✓ **Next cycle recommendation:** Charge should be carried over for next year. This charge will require a lot more work over the next few years in order to implement and come up with a “Best Practice Document”.

VIRT_VIS_2018-1

Provide support for states participating in VIS. Identify and address barriers to participation for non-participating states. Identify a most wanted list of states the committee would like to focus on getting enrolled in VIS.

Needs Statement: VIS is a Federal Coast Guard program where states that participate can access vessel information from all States and U.S. Territories that are submitting registration data. This is essential tool states can use when it comes to law enforcement, stolen vessels and vessels transferring from one state to another. (Ref: NASBLA Strategic & Implementation Plan Strategy 1.2.1)

- ✓ **Deliverables:** Maine is now a member of VIS. VIS Map updated by Ron Sarver and has been posted. Maine to be recognized at the conference business meeting.
- ✓ **Implementation:** A State notifies the Coast Guard they would like to participate and then a MOU must be signed with the Coast Guard and then access is granted. Goal is to have all States and U.S. Territories signed up.
- ✓ **Measures of Effectiveness:** As a state comes on board, increased participation into VIS.
- ✓ **Current status:** Maine came on board this year. Looking at Arkansas, Indiana and New Hampshire for 2019 as possibilities.
- ✓ **Next cycle recommendation:** Charge should be carried over for next year. This should be another ongoing charge for VIRT. This is another area where VIRT will be needed for the foreseeable future.

VIRT_VIS_2018-2

Working with the Numbering & Titling Subcommittee, identify a minimum of two performance metrics states can use to evaluate registration and titling programs. Assess individual state performance based on these metrics. Work with states not using “best practices” to increase their performance measurement on these metrics by implementing the identified best practices.

Needs Statement: Goal is to have consistency from state to state in how each State & Territory handles registration & titling information. This this is an effort to establish consistency between states & territories and use best practice metrics across the board. (Ref: NASBLA Strategic & Implementation Plan Strategy 2.4.2)

- ✓ **Deliverables:** Survey sent out to states that had not responded. Additional phone calls and emails sent to the states that have not responded. Darren Rider talked at the Spring BLA Workshop to emphasize the importance of completing the survey. Committee still trying to get some states to complete so information will be missing from those states that have not responded.
- ✓ **Implementation:** Results will be posted on NASBLA Connect & the VIRT Web page and sent out to all BLA’s and State R & T contacts with the hope of implementing the identified best practice metrics to be implemented to achieve consistency across the board.
- ✓ **Measures of Effectiveness:** Increase in the number of states using the “Best Practices Metrics” to achieve consistency across the board.
- ✓ **Current status:** Will continue to work the states and territories that have not responded. Will developed a list of states that are not using the best practices in order of hoping to increase their performance measurements.
- ✓ **Next cycle recommendation:** Due to the lack of responses from states, this charge needs to be carried over for next year. It is imperative for the committee to get all states to respond so we have a true picture in order to evaluate registration and titling programs.

VIRT_VIS_2018-3

Working with the Numbering & Titling Subcommittee, review measures of statistics and program uniformity for other government programs. Identify a minimum of two measures of program uniformity for states in registering and titling vessels. Assess states based on these measures of program uniformity. Work with states not using “best practices” to increase program uniformity between the states.

Needs Statement: Goal is to have consistency from state to state in how each State & Territory handles registration & titling information. This is an effort to establish consistency between states & territories and use best practice metrics across the board. (Ref: NASBLA Strategic & Implementation Plan Strategy 2.5.1)

- ✓ **Deliverables:** Survey sent out to states that had not responded. Additional phone calls and emails sent to the states that have not responded. Darren Rider talked at the Spring BLA Workshop to emphasize the importance of completing the survey. Committee still trying to get some states to complete so information will be missing from those states that have not responded. Two Best Practice Documents identified this year are:
 1. “Best Practices Document” that indicates states should notify other states when a vessel is registered if it has been previously registered on another state. This was VIRT_N&T_2018-6 which has been completed.
 2. HIN PowerPoint Revision. Revisions have been completed, however, we are still waiting on CG to provide guide lines for state assigned HINS before we can finalize (this would include Executive Board approval, posting on NASBLA Connect & the VIRT Web page and sending it out to all BLA’s and R & T contacts).
- ✓ **Implementation:** Surveys being conducted, results will be posted on NASBLA Connect and sent out to all BLA’s and State R & T contacts with the hope of implementing the identified best practice metrics to be implemented to achieve consistency across the board.
- ✓ **Measures of Effectiveness:** Increase in the number of states using the “Best Practices Metrics” to achieve consistency across the board.
- ✓ **Current status:** Will continue to work the states and territories that have not responded. Will developed a list of states that are not using the best practices in order of hoping to increase their performance measurements. Committee will be developing performance measurements for states to use next year.
- ✓ **Next cycle recommendation:** Due to the lack of responses from states, this charge needs to be carried over for next year. It is imperative for the committee to get all states to respond so we have a true picture in order to evaluate registration and titling programs.

VIRT_VIS_2018-4

Develop a recommended new form for the “Report of Certificate of Numbers Issued to Boats” that would comply with the implementation of the regulatory changes in the Standard Numbering System, Vessel Identification System, and Boating Accident Report Database, effective January 1, 2017. Provide form to the USCG to get approval that the form is compliant. If form is designated compliant, turn the form into a model procedure for the states.

Needs Statement: USCG requires an annual “Report of Certificate of Numbers Issued to Boats.” Currently right now the Coast Guard is allowing 4-5 forms to be submitted. This is an effort to standardize the report into one form that all states will use to report annually. (Ref: NASBLA Strategic & Implementation Plan Strategy 1.2.1 & U.S. Coast Guard RBS Initiative #2)

- ✓ **Deliverables:** Coast Guard reached out to the VIRT Committee in an effort to move this forward prior to the VIRT Mtg. in Lexington.
- ✓ **Implementation:** Once the form is finalized, the Coast Guard will advise all state and territories of when the form will be required to be used.
- ✓ **Measures of Effectiveness:** Standardized form to be used to submit annual report to the Coast Guard’
- ✓ **Current Status:** VIRT Committee met with Coast Guard in Lexington, KY at the VIRT Committee Meeting and agreed to move forward on the CGHQ-3923 form with some minor revisions. Conference call was held 4/26/18 to discuss. Discussion was held again on VIRT Conference call on 5/2/18 and a final conference call on 5/14/18 to discuss and make final recommendations. Deb Gona will provide definitions from the CFR to help the Coast Guard develop a guidance document to be used to complete the Application for Number and the CGHQ-3923 form. VIRT will disseminate guidelines and post on NASBLA Web and NASBLA Connect for states to reference. No guidance has ever been sent out by the Coast Guard on how to complete either one of these. Inflatable will be included on both non-motorized and motorized sections. As of today’s date, still waiting on a final proposed form from the Coast Guard.
- ✓ **Next cycle recommendation:** Charge should be carried over for next year. VIRT will need to work with the states on the transition of the new form once it is approved by the Coast Guard.

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NEW CHARGE SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT COMMITTEE YEAR:

Title of Proposed Charge: Require Serifs on HIN's

Caroline Mantel

- ✓ **Need:** This is a national issue across law enforcement, USCG, registration and titling agents, insurance, financial institutions, marine investigators, etc... Although the 1/I and 0/O should not be an issue due to the Federal requirement in 33CFR181.25, it is still a common issue as the numbers 1 and 0 are stamped exactly the same as the letters I and O for many manufacturers. Additionally, the following are commonly mistaken: 8/B, 0/O, 00/CDG, and 1/I. The primary issue is that HIN's are being recorded incorrectly and differently across different platforms (i.e. documentation vs registration, accident reports, etc...), and thus each person that touches a HIN could possibly interpret it as something completely different than the previous record, as there is no regulation that mandates the use of serifs
- ✓ **Resources:** VIRT has discussed with ABYC and NMMA to ensure they would support a Best Practice Document as a recommendation for manufacturers to follow to eliminate confusion or altered HIN's.
- ✓ **Product:** Approval by Executive Board of a Best Practices document that would suggest that manufacturers use a style that includes serifs or some other specific feature that would make discerning an 8/B, 0/O, 00/CDG, and 1/I quick and easy.
- ✓ **Linkage:** **NASBLA Strategic & Implementation Plan**, Strategy 1.5.2 - Develop policy positions, resolutions, model acts and other advocacy tools on issues that gain association member consensus.