The Coast Guard amended its regulations regarding the numbering undocumented vessels, the Vessel Identification System and the Boating Accident Reporting Database. The final rule became effective on April 27, 2012 and states were given until January 1, 2017 to implement these changes into their Standard Numbering System.

The purpose of these changes is to improve information within and across the Standard Numbering System (SNS), Vessel Identification System (VIS), and the Boating Accident Reporting Database (BARD) by increasing data quality, aligning and modernizing database terminology, requiring verification of hull identification numbers, and requiring owners of numbered vessels to provide unique personal identification information. Validating this information and recording it in a consistent manner will significantly improve our ability to share and evaluate this information, thus helping to aid law enforcement and improve boater safety.

Following is a summary of the regulatory changes and a brief guide for assisting states in implementing these changes. There are four primary areas impacted by these changes:

**Terminology** – Aligning and updating the terminology used by SNS, VIS and BARD. These changes reflect recent developments in boating practices and technology, and leverage the Coast Guard’s ability to coordinate data from all three databases. Authorized terms are Primary Operation, Vessel Type, Hull Material, Propulsion Type, Engine Drive Type and Fuel.

**HIN’s** – The most significant change requires states to ensure that each SNS numbered vessel built since 1972, when HIN regulations first took effect, has or is assigned a valid HIN. State personnel will not be required to affix HIN’s to vessels themselves. Instead, each state may use methods of its choosing to verify that each vessel’s owner has affixed a valid primary HIN.

**PII (Personally Identifiable Information)** – States must collect unique personally identifiable information from SNS vessel owners. This information includes the owner’s tax I.D. Number, date of birth together with the driver’s license number, or date of birth with another unique number.

**Definitions** – The primary change in the definitions is “State of principal use” to “State of principal operation”. This is the language used since 1983 in the recreational boating statutes codified in Title 46 of the U.S. Code. The focus is on where the boat is operated a majority of the time and not on where it is moored or stored. Neither a vessel owner nor the vessel itself has to physically reside in the state where the vessel is numbered. Other definitions, most of which are unchanged, are included below.
Changes under 33 CFR Part 174

174.16 Issuing Authority must verify that the owner of a vessel that is issued a State assigned HIN has permanently affixed the assigned HIN to the vessel in compliance with 33 CFR Part 181, subpart C

174.17 Collect required owner identifiers. (Owner’s tax I.D Number, date of birth together with the driver’s license number, or date of birth with other unique number

174.17 Use authorized terms for Contents of Application for Certificate of Number:
- Primary Operation
- Vessel Type
- Hull Material
- Propulsion Type
- Engine Drive Type (New)
- Fuel

Revise or generate new forms

- CFR 174.17 Contents of Application for Certificate of Numbers Must Contain the Following Information:
  1. Name of owner
  2. Address of owner, including ZIP code
  3. Owner identifier, which must be the owner’s tax identification, date of birth together with a driver’s license number, or date of birth together with other unique number.
  4. State of principal operation
  5. Number previously issued by an issuing authority
  6. Application type. Authorized terms are:
     a. New number
     b. Renewal of number
     c. Transfer of ownership
  7. Primary operation. Authorized terms are:
     a. Charter fishing
     b. Commercial fishing
     c. Commercial passenger carrying
     d. Dealer or manufacturer demonstration
     e. Other commercial operation
     f. Pleasure
     g. Rent or lease
  8. Make and model of vessel
  9. Model year
  10. Hull identification number, if any
11. Overall length of vessel
12. Vessel type. Authorized terms are:
   a. Air boat
   b. Auxiliary sail
   c. Cabin motorboat
   d. Houseboat
   e. Inflatable boat
   f. Open motorboat
   g. Paddlecraft
   h. Personal watercraft
   i. Pontoon boat
   j. Rowboat
   k. Sail only
   l. Other
13. Hull material. Authorized terms are:
   a. Aluminum
   b. Fiberglass
   c. Plastic
   d. Rubber/vinyl/canvas
   e. Steel
   f. Wood
   g. Other
14. Propulsion type. Authorized terms are:
   a. Air thrust
   b. Manual
   c. Propeller
   d. Sail
   e. Water jet
   f. Other
15. Engine drive type. Authorized terms are:
   a. Inboard
   b. Outboard
   c. Pod drive
   d. Sterndrive
   e. Other
16. Fuel. Authorized terms are:
   a. Electric
   b. Diesel
   c. Gas
   d. Other
17. Signature of the owner
CFR 174.19 Contents of Certificate of Number must contain the following information and be approximately 2 ½ by 3 ½ inches per CFR §174.25.

1. Number issued to the vessel
2. Expiration date of the certificate
3. State of principal operation
4. Name of owner
5. Address of owner, including ZIP code
6. Primary operation (Authorized terms are: charter fishing, commercial fishing, commercial passenger carrying, dealer or manufacturer demonstration, other commercial operation, pleasure or rent or lease)
7. Hull identification number, if any
8. Make and model
9. Model year
10. Overall length of vessel
11. Vessel type (Authorized terms are: air boat, auxiliary sail, cabin motorboat, houseboat, inflatable boat, open motorboat, paddlecraft, personal watercraft, pontoon boat, rowboat, sail only, or other)
12. Hull material (Authorized terms are: aluminum, fiberglass, plastic, rubber/vinyl/canvass, steel, wood, or other)
13. Propulsion type (Authorized terms are: air thrust, manual, propeller, sail, water jet, or other)
14. Engine drive type (new term) (Authorized terms are: inboard, outboard, pod drive, sterndrive, or other)
15. Fuel (Authorized terms are: electric, diesel, gas, or other)

Database enhancements / changes

- Convert existing data to new authorized terms for:
  
  Vessel Type  
  Propulsion Type  
  Engine Drive Type  
  Hull Material  
  Fuel  
  
  Primary Operation  

- Change or modify programming for printing the new data on the certificate of number form.

- Record verification of state assigned HIN number.
174.3 Definitions:

*Airboat* means a vessel that is typically flat-bottomed and propelled by an aircraft-type propeller powered by an engine.

*Auxiliary sail* means a vessel with sail as its primary method of propulsion and mechanical propulsion as its secondary method.

*Cabin motorboat* means a vessel propelled by propulsion machinery and providing enclosed spaces inside its structure.

*Certificate of number* means the certificate required by 33 CFR 173.21.

*Charter fishing* means a vessel carrying a passenger(s) for hire who is (are) engaged in recreational fishing.

*Commercial fishing* means a vessel that commercially engages in the catching, taking, or harvesting of fish which, either in whole or in part, is intended to enter commerce through sale, barter, or trade.

*Houseboat* means a motorized vessel that is usually non-planing and designed primarily for multi-purpose accommodation spaces with low freeboard and little or no foredeck or cockpit.

*Hull identification number or HIN* means a number required by 33 CFR 181.23.

*Inboard,* in the context of an engine, means an engine mounted inside the confines of a vessel which powers a drive shaft that turns a water jet impeller or that runs through the bottom of the hull and is attached to a propeller at the other end.

*Inflatable boat* means a vessel that uses air-filled flexible fabric for buoyancy.

*Open motorboat* means a vessel equipped with propulsion machinery and having an open load carrying area that does not have a continuous deck to protect it from the entry of water.

*Operate* means use, navigate, or employ.

*Operator* means the person who is in control or in charge of a vessel while it is in operation.

*Outboard,* in the context of an engine, means an engine with propeller or water jet integrally attached, which is usually mounted at the stern of a vessel.

*Owner* means a person, other than a secured party, having property rights in or title to a vessel, including persons entitled to use or possess a vessel subject to a security interest in another person, but excluding lessees under a lease not intended as security.
Paddlecraft means a vessel powered only by its occupants, using a single or double bladed paddle as a lever without the aid of a fulcrum provided by oarlocks, thole pins, crutches, or similar arrangements.

Person means an individual, firm, partnership, corporation, company, association, joint-stock association, or governmental entity and includes a trustee, receiver, assignee, or similar representative of any of them.

Personal watercraft means a vessel propelled by a water-jet pump or other machinery as its primary source of motive power and designed to be operated by a person sitting, standing, or kneeling on the vessel, rather than sitting or standing within the vessel's hull.

Pod drive means an engine mounted in front of the transom of a vessel and attached through the bottom of the hull to a steerable propulsion unit.

Pontoon boat means a vessel with a broad, flat deck that is affixed on top of closed cylinders which are used for buoyancy, the basic design of which is usually implemented with two rows of floats as a catamaran or with three rows of floats as a trimaran.

Reporting authority means a State listed in 33 CFR part 173, Appendix A, as having a numbering system approved by the Coast Guard or the Coast Guard itself when a numbering system has not been approved.

Rowboat means an open vessel manually propelled by oars.

Sail only means a vessel propelled only by sails.

State means a State of the United States, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and any other territory or possession of the United States.

State of principal operation means the State in whose waters a vessel is or will be operated most during a calendar year.

Sterndrive means an engine, powering a propeller using shifts and gears, mounted in front of the transom of a vessel and attached through the transom to a drive unit that is similar to the lower unit of an outboard, which may also be known as an inboard-outdrive or an inboard-outboard.

Vessel means every description of watercraft or other artificial contrivance used, or capable of being used, as a means of transportation on water.