

INTRODUCTION

This handbook was compiled to assist new VOCs and NOAA Corps Officers rotating into VOC billets. It is intended to be used as a Quick Start guide and is not a comprehensive guide to all VOC responsibilities. This is a living document. If you have suggestions for improvement or updating, contact the SBP XO.

HISTORY OF SMALL BOAT PROGRAM

Between 2002 and 2003 the NOAA small boat fleet experienced several preventable accidents that brought NOAA-operations under scrutiny. In response, RADM Fields convened a meeting and requested that each line office and OMAO send representatives. During the meeting, delegates identified the need for a dedicated NOAA small boat safety organization, which had the authority to create fleet-wide standards and procedures.

The newly formed Small Boat Safety Board (SBSB) was staffed by Line Office Small Boat Officers (LOSBOs), with a non-voting NOAA Corps Officer as Coordinator. One of the first SBSB tasks was to craft the Small Boat Standards & Procedures Manual (SBSPM), and create the role of Vessel Operations Coordinator.

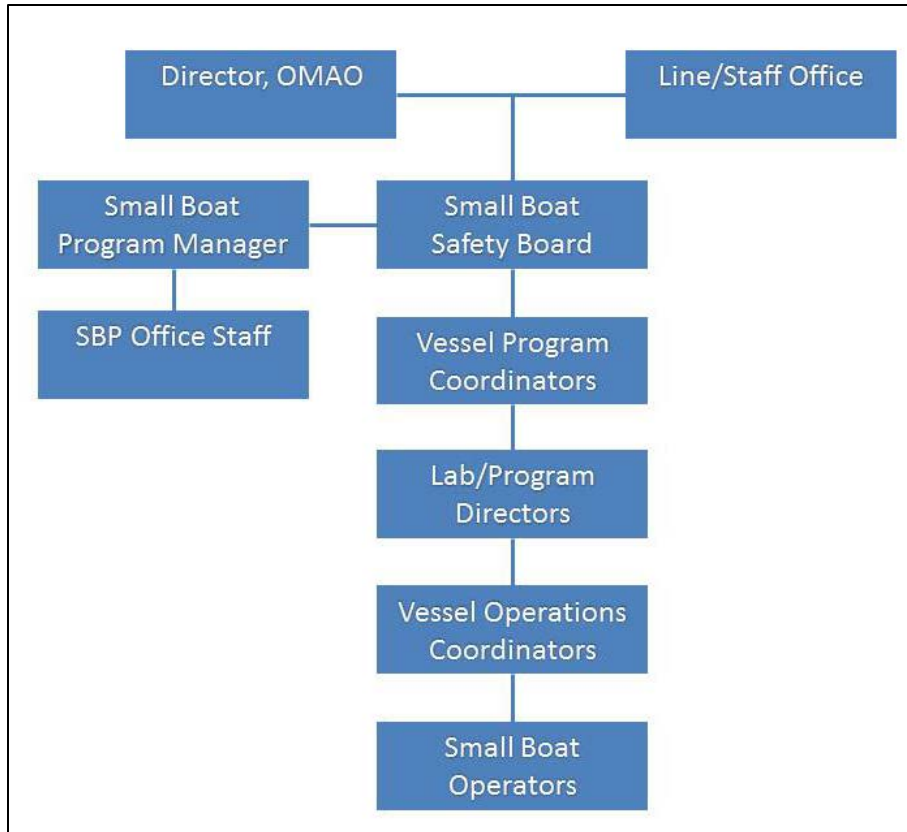
In 2009 the SBSB determined that the NOAA small boat fleet would be better served to develop in-house expertise instead of relying on outside contractors to conduct annual inspections. The solution was to create the Small Boat Program Office, which could offer in-house inspection and engineering support. The previously non-voting Coordinator position was changed to the vote-holding Small Boat Program Manager position, and an Executive Officer was brought aboard.

Finally, in 2015 the SBSB created the role of the Vessel Programs Coordinator (VPC) to help coordinate regional operations and to assist the LOSBO.

ORGANIZATION OF THE SMALL BOAT PROGRAM

As the history section implies, the Small Boat Program has improved and expanded over time. As a result, it's not a strictly hierarchical organization. The SBSB and the Program Office work closely together. The relationship between VPC and VOC and Operators should also work closely together, and communicate frequently.

In general the organization is:



FIRST STEPS

1. Introduce yourself to the LOSBO and VPC and ask for their expectations.
 - a. You can find your LOSBO using the [Personnel](#) page of the SBP website.
 - b. You can find your VPC using the [LOSBO, VPC, VOC contact info](#) Google sheet.
2. Read the Small Boat Standards & Procedures Manual (latest version is available on [SBP website](#)). Understanding the policies is the foundation of being a VOC.
 - a. Make sure you are familiar with the following sections. The polices in the other sections can be looked up when need arises, but these chapters should be known absolutely:
 - i. Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities
 - ii. Section 3: General Policies
 - iii. Section 5: Procedures for Risk Analysis
 - iv. Section 8: Mission Planning
 - v. Section 9: Stability, Design and Construction Considerations
 - vi. Section 10: Lifesaving Equipment and Small Boat Equipment Requirement
 - b. Check if your unit or region has a supplemental Standard and Procedures manual or any additional site specific procedures

3. Send a courtesy email to the Small Boat Program Manager and Small Boat Executive Officer, announcing the VOC change. Your name will then be added to email distribution list, and VOC tracking spreadsheets, and your predecessors name can be removed.
4. Request a login to the [Vessel Inventory Management](#)-database and [Vessel Operations Program](#) (VOP, 'online floatplan'):
 - a. VIM is used to track small boat inventory for all NOAA line offices
 - b. VOP is used as the online floatplan. All line offices are encouraged to use VOP, which significantly improves the ease of metrics tracking.
 - c. Email sbp.xo@noaa.gov to request access to both programs
 - i. You should also receive an SOP for VIM
 - d. Once logged in, ensure the inventory listed matches your local inventory
 - e. For assistance, reach out to sbp.xo@noaa.gov.
 - f. Review the facilities standard operating procedure (SOP).

ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES AS VOC

The primary role of the VOC is to ensure each small boat and operator are adhering to the policy and training requirements required in the SBSPM. A comprehensive list of responsibilities and authorities are in Section 2.02.d "Roles and Responsibilities."

TRAINING & AUTHORIZED OPERATORS

1. General information on who is authorized to operate NOAA small boats is on the [Training](#) page of the SBP website, and Section 6 "Operator Qualification, Evaluation and Designation" in the SBSPM.
2. Once all training requirements have been completed, the VOC must sign and retain a copy of the [NF-57-19-04 "Small Boat Operator & Crewmember Authorization Form."](#)
3. As an incoming VOC, it's due diligence to physically view the NF-57-19-04 for each Operator, before letting them get underway. If the form cannot be verified, the Operator must not get underway.
4. The VOC must review, and resign, all NF-57-19-04s annually.

VESSEL REGISTERING (new & corrections to existing)

1. General information on registering new boats is on the [Boat Procurement & Disposal](#) page of the SBP website, and Section 13 "Visual Identification and Registration" of the SBSPM.
2. Use the [NF-57-19-03 "NOAA Small Boat Hull Registration Number Request"](#) to request a hull number for a new boat and submit to sbp.xo@noaa.gov
3. If you find an error in an existing registration, contact sbp.xo@noaa.gov.

METRICS

The Small Boat Safety Board is currently collecting metrics at the close of each fiscal year. You should be ready to provide operational metrics by 31 October each FY.

INSPECTION

1. General information on inspection of small boats can be found on the [Inspection](#) and [Inspection Reporting](#) pages of the SBP website, and Section 14 “Inspection Requirements” of the SBSPM.
2. All small boats must be inspected every year.
3. Inspections come in 2 types:
 - a. Annual Small Boat Evaluation (ASBE) - Must be done by the VOC, or someone the VOC designates
 - b. Small Boat Examination (SBEX) - Must be done by an approved SBP Inspector, or a qualified marine surveyor.
4. The type of inspection required each year depends on the size of the boat
 - a. Class A = ASBE, SBEX not required
 - b. Class I = ASBE annually years 1 & 2, and SBEX year 3
 - c. Class II = ASBE annually year 1, and SBEX year 2
 - d. Class III = Annual SBEX conducted by the NOAA SBP Inspector
 - e. SRV = Annual SBEX conducted by the NOAA SBP Inspector
5. Non-inspected boats must be placed on the Inactive list and are not to operate until all inspections are current.
6. Inspections are submitted using VIM. Make sure to update the inspection date and attach a copy of the SBEX or ASBE.
7. Contact the SBP Inspection Coordinator or SBP Engineering Coordinator with any questions
 - a. Inspector contact information can be found on the [Personnel](#) page of the SBP website.

FUNDING & BUDGET

Funding for small boats varies widely between line offices, and between different programs in the same line office. General advice is to understand how the federal budget functions, and seek a comprehensive brief from your Program about how each small boat is funded.

PROCUREMENT & STATEMENTS OF WORK (SOW)

If assistance is needed when writing Statements of Work, reach out to the SBP Inspection Coordinator, and SBP Engineering Coordinator.

ACCOUNTABLE PROPERTY

1. An overview of how NOAA tracks accountable property is available on the [NOAA Personal Property Management Branch homepage](#).
2. A quick summary on Accountable Property:
 - a. All computers are accountable and must have a CD number, no matter the cost
 - i. Mice and keyboards do not need CD numbers

- b. Any object considered Sensitive Property is accountable and must have a CD number. PPM lists all Sensitive Property on the [Accountable Property & Object Classes webpage](#).
 - c. If it's not a computer, and not sensitive, and costs < \$5000, it does not need a CD number
 - d. If it's not a computer, and not sensitive, but costs ≥ \$5000, it must have a CD number.
3. However, NOAA Small boats have some extra rules, due to fuel card requirements and trailer licensing
- a. Non-motorized craft, costing < \$5000 **do not** need a CD number
 - b. Non-motorized craft costing ≥ \$5000 **must have** a CD number
 - c. Hulls (sold without an engine)
 - i. costing < \$5000 **do not** need a CD number
 - ii. costing ≥ \$5000 **must have** a CD number
 - d. Hull sold bundled with trailer and/or outboard engine
 - i. Hull **must have** a CD number (to get fuel card)
 - ii. Trailer **must have** need CD number (so license plate can be assigned)
 - iii. Engine:
 - 1. < \$5000 when sold alone, AND will not be removed from hull
 - a. **does not** need CD number
 - 2. < \$5000 when sold alone, BUT will be moved between hulls
 - a. **must have** a CD number
 - 3. ≥ \$5000 sold alone, **must have** a CD number
 - e. Craft with inboard engine, collectively costing < \$5000:
 - i. Hull **must have** a CD number (to get fuel card)
 - f. Craft sold with inboard engine, collectively costing ≥ \$5000
 - i. Hull **must have** a CD number (for accountability, and to get fuel card)
 - ii. Engine **does not** need separate CD number
 - g. Outboard engines
 - i. < \$5000 AND will not be removed from primary hull, **do not** need a CD number
 - ii. < \$5000 sold alone, BUT will be moved between hulls, **must have** a CD number
 - iii. ≥ \$5000 **must have** CD number
4. Excessing boats
- a. Contact your PPMB Line Office Rep, and inform them a boat needs disposal
 - b. The LOR will send back checklist
 - i. Complete all items on the checklist
 - ii. Send to Sheila Hensley
 - c. Remove all NOAA identification numbers and NOAA decals from the hull
 - i. Take pictures as proof
 - ii. Send pictures to Sheila Hensley
 - d. Write a memo, describing the condition of the boat. Include all positive attributes of the boat, all negative attributes, and when the boat was last run.
 - i. Submit memo to Sheila Hensley

- e. It's helpful, but not mandatory, to include a letter from the SBP inspector, stating why the boat is no longer suitable for operations
 - i. If including, send to Sheila Hensley
- f. Once Sheila Hensley has the full package the boat will be:
 - i. Cleared for destruction (fiberglass) or recycling (all other hull materials)
 - ii. Listed on GSA
- g. While on GSA, the boat must be retained at the Lab
 - i. If GSA cannot sell the boat after up to 3 rounds of advertising, it will be cleared for destruction/recycling.

INCIDENTS & ACCIDENTS

1. The definition of Accident, Incident, and Near miss found in Section 17 "Accident and Incident Reporting" of the SBSPM are developed by NOAA's Office of Environmental, Safety, and Sustainability (NESSO).
 - a. The type of harm caused by the accident/incident is then broken down into type of damage - Property Damage, Bodily Harm, or Environmental Harm and Hazardous Release.
 - b. Then defined by the seriousness of the harm
2. All incidents must be reported via NOAA's Office of Environmental, Safety, and Sustainability (NESSO, also known as SECO) [secure site](#).
 - a. Log into the secure site using your email credentials (without @noaa.gov)
 - b. The Report an Accident link is on the lower right, under Report Accidents and Hazards.
3. Per the SBSPM, VOCs will only be involved in reporting and investigating the less serious accidents/incidents: near miss, Class D, and Class C.
4. For Class A and B accidents/incidents, the VOC's responsibility is to make sure immediate reporting happens properly.
5. Section 17 also defines Casualty, Damage and Conditions Found
 - a. This category catches damage that happens due to time, mechanical failure, or routine operations. Examples are: finding holes due to corrosion; or a pump seizing due to poor maintenance.
 - b. Such damage hasn't happened occurred from accident, but is still outside normal wear.
 - c. These reports should go to VPC or LOSBO

LISTING OF IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

1. [LOSBO, VPC, VOC contact Info](#) – google spreadsheet of all current LOSBOS, VPCs, and VOCs. Updated by SBP XO.
2. Metrics spreadsheet – updated yearly, and sent by SBP XO