

Vessel Operations Coordinators Guide Book

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VESSEL OPERATIONS COORDINATORS: GUIDE BOOK

Prepared by the NOAA Small Boat Program

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Introduction

This guide book was created to assist new Vessel Operations Coordinators (VOC) and NOAA Corps Officers rotating into VOC billets. It's intended to be used as a quick starter guide and is not a comprehensive guide to all VOC responsibilities. This is a living document and can be updated as needed by the Small Boat Program Office. If you have suggestions for improvement or updating please contact the Small Boat Program Executive Officer and the Small Boat Program Manager.

History of the 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 requested that each line office meet including sending OMAO representatives to convene. 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 the Coordinator. One of the first SBSB tasks was to establish the Small Boat Standards & Procedures Manual (SBSPM) and create the role of Vessel Operations Coordinator (VOC).

In 2009 the SBSB determined 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, along with an Executive Officer was brought aboard.

Additionally adding positions in 2015 and 2018 the SBSB created the role of the Vessel Programs Coordinator (VPC) in 2015, which helps coordinate regional operations and assist the LOSBO. In 2018 a full time Training Coordinator was added to the Small Boat Program to assist and Coordinate daily SBP Operational Training.

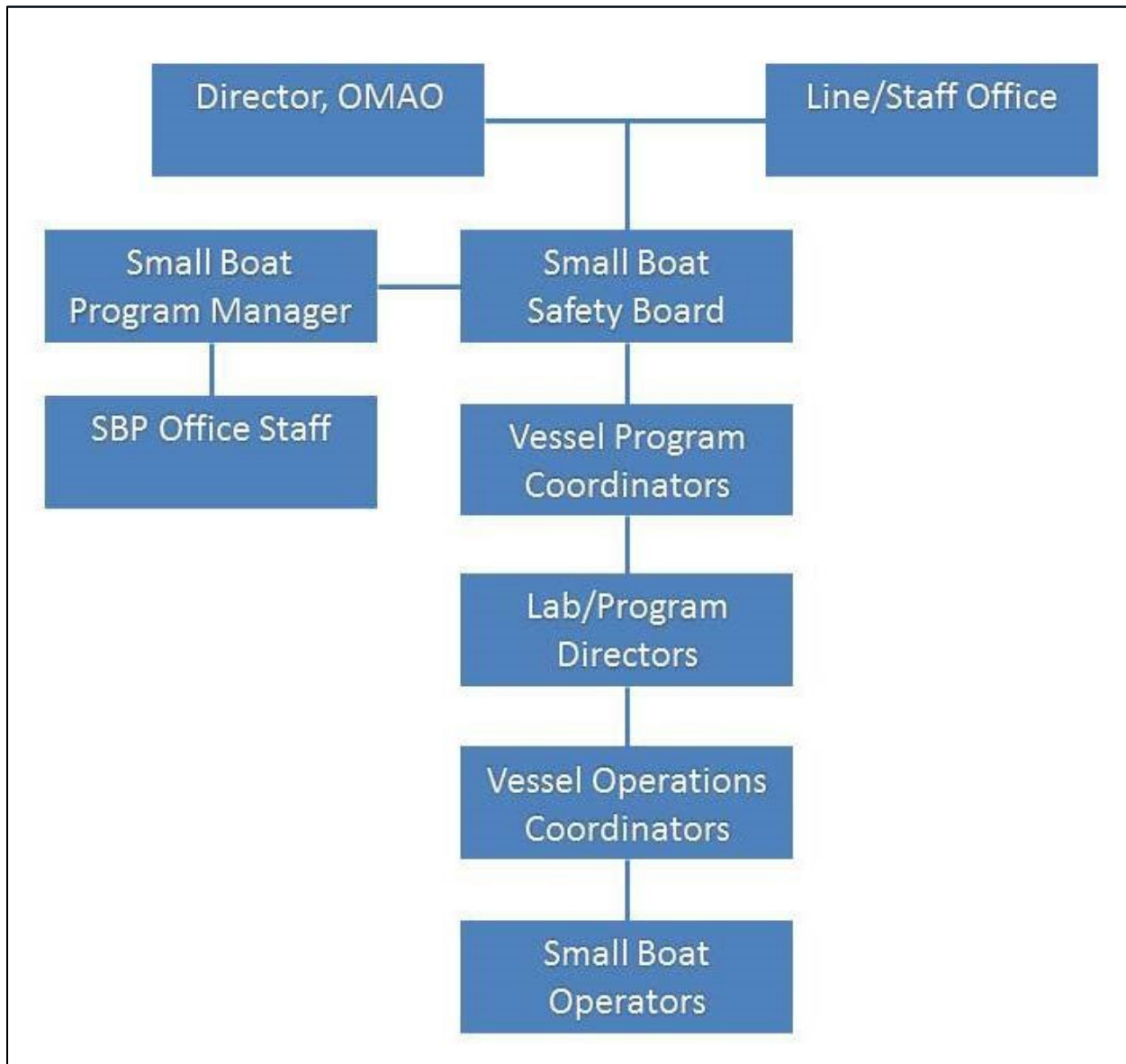
Organization of the Small Boat Program

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 Small Boat Program Office work closely together to discuss small boat related issues.

The relationship between VPC's, VOC's and Operators should work closely together while communicating frequently.

In general, the Organization is laid out accordingly.

Organizational Flow Chart



First Steps

- Introduce yourself to the LOSBO and VPC, discuss expectations.
 - You can find your LOSBO using the [Personnel](#) page of the SBP website.
 - You can find your VPC using the [LOSBO, VPC, VOC contact info](#) Google sheet.
- Locate the (SBS&PM) Small Boat Standards & Procedures Manual (latest version is available on [SBP website](#)). Understanding the policies is the foundation of being a VOC.
 - Make sure you are familiar with all 19 sections with in the SBS&PM as it is important to your duties as a VOC. The polices listed below should be known absolutely:
 - Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities
 - Section 3: General Policies
 - Section 5: Procedures for Risk Analysis
 - Section 6: Training Requirements
 - Section 8: Mission Planning
 - Section 10: Lifesaving Equipment and Small Boat Equipment Requirement
- Check if your unit, region or line office has a supplemental Standard and Procedures manual or any additional site specific procedures.
- Send a courtesy email to the Small Boat Program Manager (SBPM) and Small Boat Executive Officer (SBPXO), announcing the VOC change. Your name will be added to email distribution list and VOC tracking spreadsheets that you can access via this Guidebook.
- Request a login from the (SBPXO) at sbp.xo@noaa.gov or your LOSBO to be added to the [Vessel Inventory Management](#)-database and [Vessel Operations Program](#) (VOP, online float plan)
 - VIM is used to track small boat inventory for all NOAA line offices
 - VOP is used as the online float plan.
 - All line offices are encouraged to use VOP, which significantly improves the ease of metrics tracking.
 - Once logged in, ensure the inventory listed matches your local inventory.
 - Review the facilities standard operating procedure (SOP).
 - For any questions contact your VPC, LOSBO or the current SBPXO.

Roles & Responsibilities as a VOC

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

Training & Authorized Operators

- General information on who is authorized to operate NOAA small boats is on the [Training](#) page of the SBP website Section 6 “Operator Qualification, Evaluation and Designation” in the SBS&PM.
- When 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.”](#) The NF-57-19-04 must be updated yearly and the Personal Qualification Standard for each Operator must be completed every three years.
- As an incoming VOC, you must review and ensure compliance on 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.
- The VOC must review and resign all NF-57-19-04s annually.
- Contact your VPC, LOSBO or the SBP Training Coordinator with any questions.

Vessel Registering (new & corrections to existing)

- 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 SBS&PM.
- 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
- If you find an error in an existing registration, contact the 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.

Inspections

- 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 SBS&PM.
- All small boats must be inspected yearly.
- Inspections come in 2 types:
 - Annual Small Boat Evaluation (ASBE) – Must be done by the VOC or designee.
 - Small Boat Examination (SBEX) - Must be done by an approved SBP Inspector or a qualified marine surveyor.
- The type of inspection required each year depends on the size of the boat.
 - Class A = ASBE annually, SBEX not required
 - Class I = ASBE annually and SBEX every 3 years
 - Class II = ASBE annually and SBEX every 2 years
 - Class III = Annual SBEX conducted by the NOAA SBP Inspector
 - SRV = Annual SBEX conducted by the NOAA SBP Inspector
- Non-inspected boats must be placed on the inactive list and are not to operate until all inspections are current.
- Inspections are submitted using VIM. Make sure to update the inspection date and attach a copy of the SBEX or ASBE.
- Contact the SBP Inspection Coordinator or SBP Engineering Coordinator with any questions.
- 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, Adding Alterations & Statements of work (SOW)

Prior to any procurement the Small Boat Pre-Acquisition Worksheet located on the SBP Website must be completed first. This work sheet must be submitted to your LOSBO, then routed to the Stability Working Group to ensure the platform will meet operational requirements.

For any alterations or statements of work, reach out to your LOSBO and the SBP Engineering Coordinator for assistance.

Accountable Property

- An overview of how NOAA tracks accountable property is available on the [NOAA Personal Property Management Branch homepage](#).
- A quick summary on Accountable Property:
 - PPM lists all Sensitive Property on the [Accountable Property & Object Classes webpage](#).
 - Any object considered Sensitive Property is accountable and must have a CD number.
 - All computers are accountable and must have a CD number, no matter the cost.
 - Mice and keyboards do not need CD numbers
 - If it's not a computer, and not sensitive, and costs < \$5000, it does not need a CD number.
 - If it's not a computer, not sensitive, but costs ≥ \$5000, it must have a CD number.
- However, NOAA Small boats have some extra rules, due to fuel card requirements and trailer licensing, NMFS's PM has determined all boats and trailers are to be barcoded.

- Excessing boats:
 - Contact your PPMB Line Office Rep, and inform them a boat needs disposal. The LOR will send back a link for guidance: https://www.pps.noaa.gov/forms_guides/guides_aids_tools/guides/Small%20Boat%20Vessel%20and%20Aircraft%20Disposal%20Procedures.pdf
 - Complete all items on the checklist
 - Remove all NOAA identification numbers, NOAA decals from the hull and take pictures as proof.
 - 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 operated.
 - Send checklist, pictures and description to Sheila Hensley
 - Include a letter from the SBP Inspector, stating why the boat is no longer seaworthy if wanting to recycle.
 - When Sheila has the full package, the boat will be listed on GSA.
 - While on GSA the boat must be retained at the Lab.

- If GSA cannot sell the boat it will be cleared for destruction/recycling.

Incidents & Accidents

- The definition of accident, incident and near miss found in Section 17 “Accident and Incident Reporting” of the SBS&PM are developed by NOAA’s Office of Environmental, Safety, and Sustainability (NESSO). The type of harm caused by the accident/incident is then broken down into type of damage - property damage, bodily harm, environmental harm and hazardous release, then defined by the seriousness of the harm

- All incidents must be reported via NOAA’s Office of Environmental, Safety, and Sustainability (NESSO, also known as SECO) here: <https://nsdesk.service-now.com/neaasafe>.
 - Log into the secure site using your email credentials (without @noaa.gov) The Report an Accident link is on the lower right, under Report Accidents and Hazards.

- Per the SBS&PM, VOCs will only be involved in reporting and investigating the less serious accidents/incidents: near miss, Class D, and Class C.
- For Class A and B accidents/incidents, the VOC's responsibility is to make sure immediate reporting happens properly.
- Section 17 also defines Casualty, Damage and Conditions found.
 - 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.
 - Such damage hasn't happened occurred from accident, but is still outside normal wear.
 - These reports should go to the VPC or LOSBO

Listing of Important Documents and Quick Links

- [LOSBO, VPC, VOC, Contact Info](#)
- [NOAA Small Boat Program Google Site](#)
- [Small Boat Program Website](#)
- [Standards and Procedures Manual](#)
- [Float Pan / Small Boat Inventory](#)
- [SBP Useful Links](#)