

Currents

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Hot topics

- **Marine Electrical Systems course is now available (see article on this page)**
- **Enhanced USPS insurance covers BOC (see article on this page)**
- **Change of Watch brings new leadership to some Ed-Dept committees (page 2)**
- **Weather 2008 consolidates course to one manual and replaces modules (page 3)**
- **Chapman Award packages to be sent soon (see "Notes..." page 4)**

Inside this issue

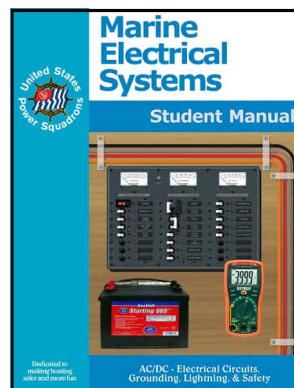
EdDept officers for 2009	2
Status of public boating courses	3
New Weather course	3
Having trouble with new ABC 3rd Ed. student software? See tip on page 3.	3
Notes for DEOs and SEOs)	4

Marine Electronics Powers Up

Electronic devices for the recreational boater have come a long way over the years. With the proliferation of inexpensive solid state integrated digital electronics and advanced sensors, sophisticated navigational devices and communications devices have become commonplace on our vessels.

USPS members need knowledge to take advantage of these advances. To meet this need, the Electromechanical Systems Committee (EMSCoM) has upgraded the three Marine Electronics modules into three new standalone "systems" courses: *Marine Electrical Systems*, *Marine Communications Systems*, and *Marine Electronic Systems for Navigation*.

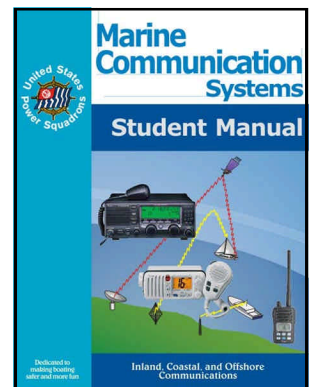
Marine Electrical Systems (MES) covers the properties of electricity and the practice of wiring your boat for both DC and shore power (AC). Galvanic and stray current corrosion are covered, as is lightning protection. The



student manual concludes with a chapter on troubleshooting and repairs, so students should feel comfortable maintaining most boat

wiring after passing this course. MES has completed beta testing and is available today.

Marine Communications Systems (MCS) covers eve-



rything you need to know about on-board communications.

It begins with a brief history

(Continued on page 4)

Boat Operator Certification Insurance

With the announcement of the USPS insurance program, a number of questions have been asked about how it covers the Boat Operator Certification (BOC) Program. We have been assured that we

have the best available insurance and it is very similar to other organizations teaching on the water (e.g., the US Sailing Association.).

Information about the new

insurance program can be found at the web link shown below. Specific questions should be directed to the Law Committee for comment.

With the USPS insurance

(Continued on page 3)

Link: <http://www.usps.org/x/x.pl/x/x.cgi?natsec/insurance.htm>

The 2009 Educational Department

The National Educational Department officers who will be serving you this year are listed below. For contact information, see the *2009 USPS Directory of Officers*, or go to the appropriate committee's page on the USPS web site, or look on the last page of *THE ENSIGN*[®].

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Certification—Cont.

(Continued from page 1)

policy in place, we have had a resurgence in member interest in becoming certifiers and advanced certifiers for the program.

If you wish to join us in helping members qualify for the various certification levels, beginning with Inland Navigator (IN), have your SEO/DEO submit your name and a brief resume of your boating experience to the BOC staff.

If you want to become certified at the first level, Inland Navigator, order your IN Kit and have your SEO contact a Regional Certifier, listed in the USPS Directory and on the Ed Dept web pages (see "Link" below) for instructions on how to make that happen.

The second BOC level, *Coastal Navigator*, is now available. A kit containing the material for certification will be

in stock shortly. Watch for the kit in the USPS *Materials Catalog*.

Candidates for Coastal Navigator, in addition to meeting specific educational requirements, must demonstrate on-the-water navigation skills. It's an on-water application of what you learned in Piloting. Sure, it's a challenge! Are you up for it?

Link: http://www.usps.org/national/eddept/boc/main.htm#Regional_Certifiers

Weather 2008 Now Available

The mid-latitudes where we boat are a weather war zone where enormous air masses battle one another along fronts, and powerful storm systems travel across the continent, lakes and oceans. Mid-latitude weather includes the blizzards of winter, the tornadoes of spring and summer, and the hurricanes of summer and fall. Seasonal weather cycles produce temperature ranges from the hot and humid nineties, to subzero chills in winter.



present special challenges to us.

Wx08 is a general weather course benefiting those sitting in their living rooms as much as those standing at the helm.

For boaters, however, there are dangers even in the relatively benign conditions of mild weather. Wind, rain, fog, and waves

The *USPS Weather* course focuses on how weather systems form, behave, move, and interact with one another. The course also covers the sources of weather reports and forecasts on the Internet, including the National Weather Service's *JetStream - Online School for Weather*. The course provides guidance for anticipating weather conditions through onboard and on-shore observation.

(Continued on page 4)

Status of Public Boating Courses

America's Boating Course (3rd edition) This will be the only public boating course we teach. The ABC trademark is now the exclusive property of USPS. The partnership with the USCG Auxiliary has been concluded.

The new course will replace **all** previous courses (*The Squadron Boating Course* and *Boat Smart* as well as the old ABC) and will be used on-line as well as in the classroom and at home.

The new material is very readable and has excellent graphics. It is designed to be taught in either of two ways:

- 1) as an 8-hour, 4-session (plus an exam session) course, or
- 2) in an extended format with 2 additional 2-hour sessions on chart reading and course plotting.

The Squadron Boating Course (2004) This course may be taught until supplies are exhausted.

Boat Smart (2006) This course has been out of stock for some time, but can be taught, if you have material left.

America's Boating Course This course may be taught until supplies are exhausted.

TIP: The student disc shipping with ABC (3rd edition) uses web based files. It has animations that require that Internet Explorer be the default browser and that certain security settings be chosen. In addition, the correct version of the Flash player must be installed. Be sure to carefully read the information on the back inside cover of the student manual and on the USPS Basic Public Education web page. The instructor CD is PowerPoint®.

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<http://www.usps.org/national/eddept>

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Download a PDF of *Currents* in color with links at:

<http://www.usps.org/national/eddept/misc/currents.htm>

Notes for DEOs & SEOs

Chapman Instructor Award Packets Arriving In March DEOs and SEOs - Watch your mail for your Chapman Award Packet. It will be mailed from Headquarters at the end of February and will arrive in your mailbox in early March. Every squadron should nominate their best instructor for this, the highest recognition USPS offers for our instructors.

Some Instructor Certifications Expiring

All members teaching public boating classes must be certified instructors. The certifications of many USPS certified instructors will expire this year and next.

DEOs: organize recertification seminars for the squadrons in your district.

SEOs: be sure to check the expiration date for all your certified instructors and encourage them to enroll in a recertification seminar, where appropriate. If there is no recertification seminar offered near you, schedule a seminar for your squadron.

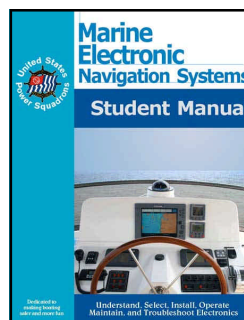
Marine Electronics—Cont.

(Continued from page 1)

of radio communications and an explanation of the various types of marine radios, focusing especially on the VHF-FM radio. FCC rules and licensing procedures are included, as are radio operating procedures. Options for long range communications for the offshore cruiser are covered. The course ends with a chapter on maintaining your radios. MCS is now undergoing beta testing and should be available for general

distribution in the spring.

Marine Electronic Navigation Systems (ENS) deals with the tools used in electronic navigation. Chart plotters, GPS, the Automatic Identification System, traditional electronics (radar, depth sounders, etc.), and vision aids such as Forward Looking Infrared Systems are covered. In addition, a chapter on networking will demystify the connection of all these devices that make electronic navigation so data rich. ENS has been



written and is now in the editing & formatting process. Availability is targeted for mid-year.

There is a lot of interest in this subject, so be sure to offer these courses in your squadron and use them to draw new members!

Weather 2008—Cont.

(Continued from page 3)

Course Materials

The new course returns to a one manual text with no modules. The graphics from *The Weather Book* were incorporated into the new USPS text.

Each student receives:

- a Student Manual - *USPS Weather* - an explanatory text with full color photographs and drawings covering weather in the United States and its coastal and inland waters;
- a set of three Daily Weather Maps -

learning aids with a complete explanation of map symbols designed to develop weather map reading and analysis skills; and

- NOAA's *National Weather Service Cloud Chart* - a reference to assist in identifying cloud types that are helpful indicators of approaching weather.

The manual's appendices include Regional Weather (summary descriptions of weather in the major boating areas of the United States), Glossary and Homework Answers.

Course Syllabus

The course is designed to be conducted over ten classroom sessions, including the exam. The manual has eight chapters that vary somewhat in length and difficulty. Except for the chapter on forecasting, each chapter can be covered in one 2-hour class session. Each Weather instructor will determine the pace of the course.

A complete description of the course and recommendations for instructors is provided in the Instructor's Manual, which comes with a CD with all the PowerPoint slides.