

GOVERNMENT AND PARTNER RELATIONS COMMITTEE

GUIDELINES FOR LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVES

USPS is committed to achieving amicable relations with public officials, regulatory agencies, safety and homeland security groups and volunteer organizations with an interest in boating education and safety. These relationships ultimately have a mutual benefit both to USPS and the boating community at large. Moreover, these relationships enhance USPS legislative comprehension by participation at the initial stage of the legislative process.

To carry out the legislative commitment, **The Government and Partner Relations Committee** (GPRCom) was established; referred to as Committee in this document. Within the Committee three legislative Regions were designated, each with a Team Leader. Legislative Regions and State Legislative Representatives (SLR) can be found on the GPRCom website. Team Leaders together with the SLR maintain vigilance of pending legislation within their jurisdiction that may have potential impact on boating safety in general and specifically USPS programs. Together the team leaders serve as a conduit through which legislative matters flow from their respective States to the Committee. In this connection, Team Leaders must inform the Committee of contacts made and suggested participation.

Region Team Leaders are appointed by the Chairperson of the Committee. SLRs are appointed by the Region Team Leader in consultation with the District

Commanders (D/Cs). The ideal selectee for the State Legislative Representative position should possess the following qualifications:

- Understanding of the State's legislative system and willingness to seek out and develop working relationships with legislators and their staffs
- Live within the State represented and in reasonable proximity of the state capitol
- e-mail and internet access and basic computer skills
- A self-starter requiring minimum supervision
- Understanding the structure of USPS
- Willing to commit to the time required to get the job done

To be successful as a State Legislative Representative and Team Leader one must be a) proactive concerning the status of planned, proposed, pending legislation, b) be highly visible and easily accessible resource for USPS and c) have a good understanding of USPS policies, programs, and organization. The State Legislative Representative's primary responsibility is to maintain contact with Public Elected Officials and their staffs; hence, they should have good knowledge of: who those officials are, what they do and how to contact them. In addition contact should be maintained with the U. S. Coast Guard Auxiliary (CGAUX) and the USPS State Educational Liaison associated with State Boating Law Administrators for the purpose of identifying and coordinating similar legislative activities.

SLRs are authorized to communicate with members of State Legislatures and their staffs for the express purpose of obtaining information on proposed, pending and passed legislation concerning recreational boating and safety. Information

obtained will be forwarded to the Region Team Leader who, in turn, reports to the Staff Commander (Stf/C) and the Chairperson of the Committee. If it is determined that the best interest of USPS would be served by personal testimony, such testimony will be strictly limited to boating education and safety.

Appearances to testify at state or local legislative hearings shall not be viewed as partisan opportunities to promote or seek defeat of legislation but rather as opportunities to educate others and identify and articulate the facts surrounding the issue. The offering of opinions, conjecture, or speculation, whether requested or not, shall be strictly avoided. When meeting with a legislator in person:

- Be sure to make an appointment
- If the legislator is unable to meet with you but a staff person is available, meet with him/her
- Be aware of “hot” issues
- Typically, meetings are fairly short so be direct and clear about your issue
- Follow up the visit with a thank you letter addressed to the Legislator and/or the staff person with whom you met.

When making a telephone call: state your name and why you are calling; tell the person that you are a constituent and a recreational boater and there is an issue that you are calling to address. Only identify yourself as a member of USPS legislative program when your contact has been approved by the Chairperson of the Committee.

SLRs should maintain an *ad hoc* list of USPS members who are willing to represent USPS and testify before state legislative committees when requested. Prior approval of a member’s appearance must be obtained from the Chairperson

of the Committee. Following the appearance, a full report is to be submitted to the Committee.

It is paramount that legislative information flow quickly and that it be timely. Quarterly reports are required from Region Team Leaders that sum up activity or to provide a heads up on future planned and contemplated legislation. Quarterly Report Form is attached (Appendix A). When a specific piece of proposed or actual legislation is reported on, the following information is required:

- Date of report
- Potential legislation or status update
- House or Senate bill number, name and title
- Whom the bill is sponsored by in the House or Senate
- A brief summary of the legislation

If the legislative situation warrants, a special report shall be submitted to the Region Team Leader, the Stf/C and the Chairperson of the Committee at any time by most expeditious means.

The Legislative process is an ever evolving activity. USPS members at all levels must be continuously aware of legislation that has the potential of impacting recreational boating. This guidance is a basic action plan for use by USPS members whose primary duties and responsibilities require interaction with the legislative process. It is expected that USPS Legislative Team Leaders, State Legislative Representatives and interested USPS Members will become familiar with these guidelines to facilitate the passage of legislation that promotes safe boating through boating education.

Nothing in this guidance is to be construed as a prohibition of an individual member testifying as an individual on his/her own behalf and not representing USPS.

Appendices

- A. Quarterly Report Form
- B. Legislative Correspondence
- C. Resources

Appendix A

Legislative Report

Region _____ Team Leader _____ Date _____

States	Life Jacket Requirement	Education Requirement	Pending Legislation/Other

Notes/Comments _____

Appendix B

Addressing Correspondence

To a U.S Senator:

The Honorable (Name)
U. S. Senate
Washington, DC 20501

To U. S Representative

The Honorable (Name)
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

To a State Senator

The Honorable (Name)
_____ State Senate
City, State, Zip Code

To the House of Delegates (or Representatives)

The Honorable (Name)
House of _____ (insert Delegates/Representatives as appropriate)
City, State, Zip Code

Appendix C

Resources

www.congress.org

Capitol Advantage maintains this website as a public service

www.USA.gov

Contains legislative contact information and a variety of references to additional government data and services

www.nasbla.org

For State Boating Law Administrators and related Boating Education information

www.legislative.auxnaco.org

The National Legislative Liaison Committee of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary