

**Subject:** BoatUS Warns Boaters to be Wary of Letters Arriving Offering Renewal of USCG Documentation  
**From:** "BoatUS News" <SCroft@BoatUS.com>  
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**To:** wade@eldean.com

NEWS From BoatUS



Boat Owners Association of The United States  
5323 Port Royal Road, Springfield, VA 22151  
Read this press release online at: <https://bit.ly/3HnnOJc>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Contact: D. Scott Croft, 703-461-2864, [SCroft@BoatUS.com](mailto:SCroft@BoatUS.com)

Photo Available at: <https://www.boatus.com/news-room//Images/Releases/PubAff Alert USCG Documentation photo 1 17 24.png>



Photo Caption: BoatUS is advising boaters to be alert when renewing U.S. Coast Guard documentation (credit: BDOoutdoors.com)

### **BoatUS: Be Vigilant When Renewing Your Boat's US Coast Guard Vessel Documentation**

*Official-looking vessel documentation renewal notices  
can lead to confusion and higher costs*

SPRINGFIELD, Va., Jan. 18, 2024 – Boat Owners Association of The United States ([BoatUS](https://www.boatus.com)) is advising boaters with vessels that have a [U.S. Coast Guard Certificate of Documentation](#) to be wary of any letter arriving by U.S. mail offering renewal.

BoatUS advises that while the Coast Guard does send official annual renewal notices by U.S. mail, other notices being received by BoatUS members are not from the Coast Guard but rather third-party companies whose name or return addresses may appear similar to that of the official U.S. Coast Guard National Vessel Documentation Center (NVDC).

Members have complained that these letters direct them to websites that may be mistaken for the actual Coast Guard NVDC located in Falling Waters, West Virginia, and appear to show a significant increase in the annual fee to renew Coast Guard documentation.

A 2017 [Coast Guard bulletin](#) says in part:

“The NVDC is aware that there are commercial entities that offer to manage the certification/renewal process on behalf of vessel owners for a fee. The Coast Guard does not endorse any of these companies, and the companies do not operate on behalf of the Coast Guard in any way. Any fees charged or agreements offered by such companies are in no way associated with the NVDC certification process. In addition, these companies are not authorized to issue any form of documentation, including travel letters and/or permits that authorize operation of ANY vessel. Customer complaints can be made through the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC)

website at <https://www.ftc.gov/>.”

While third-party companies may legitimately provide services to assist with vessel documentation renewals, the Coast Guard’s own renewal process is simple for most vessels and the price, \$26 annually, is often much lower than what third-party services may charge.

To renew, go to the [U.S. Coast Guard National Documentation Center website](#) and click on “instructions and forms,” then “Certificate of Documentation Application for Renewal.” The Coast Guard NVDC also offers renewal options up to five years for recreational vessels.

To be documented, a vessel must measure at least 5 net tons (10,000 lbs.) and, except for certain oil-spill response vessels, owned by a U.S. citizen. About what size is that? Vessels at least 27 feet long generally meet the minimum weight requirement.

BoatUS also advises boaters who may have received mail that they believe is misleading or deceptive to contact the U.S. Postal Inspection Service at 877-876-2455 or through its website <https://postalinspectors.uspis.gov>.

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Suggested social media post:

.@BoatUS warns boaters to be wary of letters arriving offering renewal of @USCG documentation. Here’s what you need to know to avoid unnecessary fees <https://bit.ly/3HnnOJc>

About Boat Owners Association of The United States (BoatUS):

Celebrating more than 55 years, BoatUS is the nation’s largest advocacy, services and safety group with nearly 800,000 dues-paying members. BoatUS is the boat owners’ voice on Capitol Hill, fighting for their rights. The TowBoatUS® fleet is available 24/7 to assist our members on the water when boats break down or run aground with some 600 vessels and 300-plus locations across North America, bringing our members safely back to the launch ramp, marina or dock. On the road, we are The Boat Owners Auto Club™, helping ensure roadside trailer and tow vehicle breakdowns won’t slow you down. BoatUS offers GEICO boat insurance policies that give boat owners affordable, specialized coverage and the superior service they need. Award-winning *BoatUS Magazine* is the largest circulation recreational marine publication in the U.S. with engaging content that speaks to the passion for boat ownership, while our 501(c)(3) nonprofit BoatUS Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water offers the nation’s only free online boating safety course and many other programs that keep boaters safe and our waters clean. Visit [BoatUS.com](http://BoatUS.com).

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Boat Owners Association of The U.S. Public Affairs, 5323 Port Royal Rd, Springfield, VA 22151 United States