



by Captain Stan Glatzer

## Non-Recreational Boating, Chart work-Meaning of Letters, Drinking Seawater

**Question:** I would like to use my boat in a way not for recreation. Do I need a Captain's license? My family uses the boat for overnights at the beach and water tubing and skiing.

Cecil, Norwich

**Answer:** A Captain's license is required if you intend to utilize your boat commercially accepting passengers for a fee. You do not mention the size of your vessel so I cannot give you all the particulars involving the requirement for other commercial ventures

such as towing, fishing, etc.

I assume from your present use that you have a sedan-type cruiser. My suggestion to any serious boater who wishes to improve his/her skipper skills and maximize enjoyment on the water, while serving the community, is to look into becoming a U.S. Coast Guard Auxilairist.

The activities available for service are exciting, rewarding, and definitely educational. In the reverse order, educationally you have available to you the best navigational and piloting classes at no cost. Boat handling and line handling are practiced constantly. A better group of comrades for learning boat maintenance is hard to find.

Being an active part of the U.S. Coast Guard's team, you attain great satisfaction whenever patrolling under Coast Guard orders and especially when partaking in an assist to a boater either stranded or possibly in a distress situation, both exciting and rewarding experiences. Under the Homeland Security Department's authorization, you may be assigned to patrol the coastline of creeks and back bay areas as the eyes of the nation, exhibiting vigilance for protection of our shores from outside sources or threats to our environment.

Off the water you can participate in various family activities e.g. dinner dances and barbecues. Seminars throughout the country are held to advance your expertise in leadership. You can assist at your local Coast Guard Station in a number of ways and instruct other recreational boaters in your neighborhood in

proper nautical procedures.

I have been associated with the Auxiliary for twenty-seven years and can truly say that much of what I know as a Skipper is the result of that association.

**Question:** When I read my paper chart I see letters in italic capitals scattered around in the water areas. I know that the numbers are supposed to be the water depth at mean low tide but what do the letters stand for?

Jocelyn, Warwick

**Answer:** First let me congratulate you on the seamanship quality you exemplify by using a paper chart. No doubt you have taken a Boating Safety course and understand the importance of having a backup navigational method if the batteries on your GPS chart plotter die. The majority of new and some old recreational boaters are relying on their electronic systems entirely and find that their brains die when the batteries do.

As to the first statement you make that the numbers in the water symbolize the depth of the water at mean low tide, this is correct on certain charts, but you must read the legend on the chart to see if other criteria are used. In some areas of the U.S. where there is only one high and one low tide each day or where there is a tide that reads high-higher/low-lower, the numbers may signify the depth at the lower of the two lows. There are countries where the depth is

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