National Vessel Documentation Center
US Coast Guard News – 2026

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Currently, U.S. Coast Guard processing times are around three months, still a significant improvement from years past. The Coast Guard has further streamlined processing by way of their new and improved online store system. In order to be as user friendly as possible, USCG NVDC has moved to a completely online platform to process Certificates, Renewals, Changes, etc. However, be sure once you receive your document to carefully review everything—yes, even the spelling of your name!

Hull numbers should also be reviewed carefully and confirmed for accuracy. Whether you're purchasing a new OR used vessel, or already own one, verifying the Hull Identification Number (HIN) on the boat is an important step. Compare what is affixed to the vessel with all ownership documents (including state) - This includes those tricky tenders too!

Just two weeks ago, the American Vessel Documentation Association gathered in Destin, Florida, to discuss industry news, NVDC updates, and emerging trends. The primary headline—and a recurring theme throughout the event—was the alarming rise of fraud, including wire fraud, vessel scams, and identity theft. A crucial trick of the trade to stay one step ahead is to always verbally verify details before sending funds or original documents. Additionally, when communicating via email, avoid using high-risk keywords like "wire" in subject lines or text to keep unauthorized eyes or off your transactions.

Second only to fraud, remote online notarization and e- notaries were another major point of discussion. While these tools offer convenience when in-person signing isn’t possible, industry consensus on their viability remains mixed. When executed properly with the right safeguards, the Coast Guard will often accept digital notarizations. However, state agencies are a different story—many still require traditional "wet ink" signatures and in-person notarization for title transfers, registrations, and tax payments. Before opting for a remote notary, always verify in advance that your final documents will be accepted by every agency involved.

Like anything worth doing, there may be a few waves along the way. That’s where we come in. Our goal is to guide, support, and keep you moving forward—so when you fire up the engines and hit the throttle, you’re ready to cruise with confidence and enjoy a smooth ride from the dock to open water.

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