Waterway Watch is the program developed by the US Coast Guard Auxiliary as a part of Operation Patriot Readiness III to promote public awareness of how they may become involved in Maritime Domain Awareness and Homeland Security.

The objective of this program is to have the public be observant and provide information to the National Response Center at the number shown - 1-877-24-WATCH

The role of the National Response Center will be discussed in a few minutes
9-11-2001 and the terrorists’ attacks on America alerted all our citizens to the fact that we are vulnerable.

While those involved in monitoring terrorism and the World Trade Center bombing of 1993 should have heightened our awareness of how terrorists might try to hurt us, the attacks of 2001 surely changed the way that America views the rest of the world.

At a cost of nearly 3,000 lives, we learned that we need to care about our country and participate in our nation’s defense against those who would harm us. It also taught us that we need to be ever vigilant and that we, as Americans, are the first line of defense against terrorism.
In the United States today there are over 12,000,000 registered and documented vessels and additionally, more than 20,000,000 vessels that do not require registration or documentation.

Best estimates are that over 70,000,000 individuals in this country are either boaters or in some way involved in the Waterway community.

This constitutes an impressive force of eyes and ears, all of whom are true patriots and do not wish to see a repeat of 9-11 or other events that have threatened our country.

Therefore, we ask you, those of you who are most familiar with what is normal on our waterways, to become an adjunct to protecting the nation’s security in the same way that local neighborhood watches protect your home.
The United States Coast Guard has over 100 Marine Safety Offices, Marine Safety Detachments and Marine Safety Units among the 17 Coast Guard Districts. In each Marine Safety Office area of responsibility there is a Captain of the Port in Command.

In some of these Offices, Units and Detachments there have been established local Homeland Security/Maritime Domain Awareness initiatives...some of which are shown here.

Where no plan has been developed, the Auxiliary will work with the Captain of the Port in order to help establish Waterway Watch in that COTP’s area of responsibility.

As the lead volunteer agency of the Department of Homeland Security, the US Coast Guard Auxiliary is uniquely positioned to handle the public outreach aspects of Maritime Domain Awareness for our active duty colleagues at a time with the US Coast Guard is stretched to its limits.
This is a simplified diagram of how information provided by the public and the Waterway community will flow.

If you observe an emergency of any sort, you of course will call your local 911 system or emergency notification system. If you’re afloat, you would contact the US Coast Guard on Marine Channel 16.

If you observe suspicious activity like we will describe shortly you want to call the 1-877-24-WATCH number that goes into the National Response Center. The National Response Center is a multi-agency facility managed by the US Coast Guard that historically has been responsible for handling oil and hazardous materials spills in the maritime environment. After 9-11 their mission was greatly expanded. When you report what you believe may be suspicious activity, your information is preliminarily analyzed by the National Response Center and then passed along to the appropriate Federal or local agency.

If you can photograph or video tape involved people without being observed or exposing yourself to any increased danger…please do so.

It’s important to note that even when you do your part and report what you believe to be suspicious activity, you’ll likely never know whether or not any action was taken. The center receives thousands of calls and there’s simply no ability to provide public feedback. Just remember that reporting what’s suspicious to you is doing your part as a concerned citizen.
WHAT TO DO…

• Observe and report
  – NEVER approach someone who may present a risk to you personally
• You know what’s normal and what’s not
  – Provide details…description of
    • Individuals
    • Vessel or vessels
    • Activity
  – Take notes

1-877-24-WATCH

Most important – DO NOT GET INVOLVED YOURSELF. That sort of thing needs to be left to the professionals whether they’re local or Federal.

All we ask is that you keep your eyes and ears open.

Since you live, work or boat on our waterways, you know the difference between what’s normal and what’s out of place.

If you see something that you don’t think is normal or just doesn’t look right we’d like you to take notes and let the National Response Center know where you made the observation or heard what wasn’t appropriate. The sort of details that will be helpful include a description of the individuals, the vessel or vehicle involved and what sort of activity was taking place. Simply pass that information along to 1-877-24-WATCH.
The agencies involved include not only the Department of Homeland Security and the US Coast Guard Forces but may also involve the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the National Security Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the US Justice Department and others. All Federal Agencies involved in law enforcement and protecting our nation are interested in Maritime Domain Awareness and Homeland Security and analyze and share information in an effort to “connect the dots” and protect the United States and its citizens.
Some of the things you want to watch for include:

- Individuals loitering around boats or waterfront facilities with no apparent reason or purpose in being there. Whether those individuals are a threat to national security or potential criminals needs to be left to law enforcement agencies but it’s the observation or the potential perpetrator’s knowledge that someone may be watching that may prove to be an effective deterrent.

- Anyone trying to forcibly access a boat or trying to get into a boat that you know does not belong to them needs to be reported. The purpose may be to steal the boat for nefarious purposes or may simply be to rob the contents of the boat…either way, the law enforcement authorities need to be notified. If you observe an action such as this, it’s probably best to call 911 or the US Coast Guard on Marine Channel 16 in order to mobilize a rapid response. If you call the National Response Center on 1-877-24-WATCH, the call taker will probably route the call back to your local law enforcement authorities or the US Coast Guard station nearest your location.

- Those who are in the business of renting boats to the public need to be wary of individuals trying to rent a vessel of any sort when they’re obviously unfamiliar with boats and boating…we know that the 9-11 terrorists took flying lessons and rented aircraft in a manner that wasn’t consistent with their backgrounds and experience.
WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Any person who appears to be “casing” a boat or waterfront facility
- Anyone photographing, sketching or videotaping waterfront facilities without apparent purpose
- Anyone who appears too eager to use boating “lingo”
- Boaters who appear under the control of another party

1-877-24-WATCH

- Keep your eyes open for individuals who don’t belong where you boat if they appear to be “casing” a boat or waterfront facility.
- If you see someone taking unusual photographs, videotaping or sketching waterfront facilities, boats or major infrastructure elements, take note of that activity and report it to the National Response Center at 1-877-24-WATCH. While the activity may prove to be innocent, this sort of observation by the first mate on a Miami tour boat led to the deportation of an individual whose intentions were, in the final analysis, proven to be a threat to our nation. This individual, when approached by an undercover operative after he was first observed in his suspicious activity, wanted to buy sufficient C-4 explosive to “blow up a mountain”. Whether he was a terrorist or just unbalanced, he was obviously a threat and a Waterway citizen started the process that brought him to the attention of law enforcement authorities.
- Anyone who is over anxious to utilize the language of boating may be someone worth noting. While boaters have a language all their own, experienced boaters can recognize the difference between normal boating banter and a forced effort to sound like one is familiar with boating.
- Any time you observe a boater who appears to be forcibly under the control of another party, you’re likely observing a crime taking place. First call 911 or the US Coast Guard and let them investigate the situation.
WHAT TO WATCH FOR

• Boaters or others on the waterfront who seem to make an obvious effort to avoid contact with others
• Boats with unusual or obviously inappropriate modifications
• Cargo or loads that may be explosives, chemical containers or weapons
• Diving or boating activity near dams, hydroelectric facilities or nuclear plants

• If you see a boater who appears to make it a point to avoid contact with others or who is attempting to conceal his/her identity is a case that should be reported to the National Response Center.

• Boats that have unusual modifications that don’t appear appropriate for the type of vessel should be noted. Any modification of a boat that appears temporary or may be an attempt to weaponize as vessel are important and require professional law enforcement investigation.

• If you observe chemicals, explosives or weapons being loaded onto a vessel that does not normally carry such loads, i.e., a pleasure craft. Call the National Response Center at 1-877-24-WATCH and inform them of your observations.

• Any time you see individuals involved in SCUBA or other diving activities near dams, locks, hydroelectric facilities or nuclear power generating facilities, report your observations to the National Response Center at 1-877-24-WATCH. These vital elements of our nation’s infrastructure and intelligence experts tell us that these are some of the targets that terrorists might want to attack.
WHAT TO WATCH FOR

• Any boater dumping liquid or solid materials overboard in reservoirs
• Any boater dropping unusual objects overboard near naval vessels, critical infrastructure installations, hydro- or nuclear power plants or dams.
• Any suspicious activity that to you, appears out of the ordinary.

1-877-24-WATCH

• If you boat in a fresh water area that provides drinking water and see someone dumping solid or liquid materials overboard, take notes describing the individuals, the boat and what you saw. The same would be true of this type of activity taking place near a salt water desalination facility. Terrorists are just as likely to utilize chemical or biologic agents as they are to use explosives.

• Anything in the way of an unusual or odd object being dumped into the water near naval vessels or elements of critical infrastructure should also be noted and reported to the National Response Center at 1-877-24-WATCH. Similarly, as we’ve already mentioned, diving activities in these areas should also be viewed as suspicious.

• Anything that you observe in the Waterway community that to you doesn’t look “quite right” should be reported to the National Response Center at 1-877-24-WATCH. That’s the place where information is initially analyzed and then passed along to those who “connect the dots”…if it’s a threat to our national security, it will likely get the attention of local and Federal law enforcement agencies and you will have done your part simply because something you observed looked out of the ordinary.
So, what can you do to help?

• If you observe anything on the waterways that requires immediate assistance call 911 immediately. If you see something that doesn't require the immediate involvement of law enforcement or other emergency services personnel, call 1-877-24-WATCH and tell them what you've observed.

• Display your Waterway Watch sticker on your boat or waterside business. Not only does it tell everyone that you're a part of protecting the nation from terrorism but will serve as a warning to not only terrorists but criminals that you are watching the waterway.

• Become familiar with the information provided in the Waterway Watch brochure and follow the instructions given when you see any suspicious activity or take immediate action to alert local public safety authorities if there is an emergency.

• Tell others about Waterway Watch and ask them to become a part of the eyes and ears that will protect our nation from terrorism. With over 70,000,000 people in some way involved in the Waterway community, we can have greater than 1 in 5 citizens protecting our country from terrorism that might come from the maritime domain.
In summary:

- If you see something that’s an obvious emergency – fire, accident, vessel in distress, injury – call 911 or your local emergency number or if you’re afloat call the United States Coast Guard on Marine channel 16.
- If you see suspicious activity:
  - Take notes
    - Where did you see the event or activity taking place? If you’re afloat, determine your latitude and longitude or a nearby landmark
    - When did the event or activity take place?
    - How many individuals involved…descriptions if possible
    - What did you see happening…why are you going to call 1-877-24-WATCH?
  - Take photographs or video if you can do so without risk to yourself and you have the equipment with you
  - Report what you’ve see to the National Response Center at 1-877-24-WATCH or, if you do not have telephone access on the water, contact your nearest US Coast Guard unit by VHF marine radio.
Remember that every citizen is a part of protection our nation from future terrorist attacks.

Become an active participant in Waterway Watch…there are no dues, no meetings to attend, no unnecessary incoming phone calls. All we ask is that you keep your eyes and ears open while on our nation’s waterways and join us in protecting our country through Waterway Watch.

Thank you for your time and attention.