

AIS Prevention Compliance Observational Study Protocol and definitions – 2012 pilot

GOAL: The 2012 pilot observational study was motivated by the need for data on compliance rates for AIS prevention steps and laws. Previously, we have collected this data through self reports during in-person interviews by staff and volunteer inspectors. There is a risk this method leads compliance to be over-reported, and this pilot is an experiment to discover true compliance rates with inspection, removal, draining and bait disposal.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Pilot season

Since this season's observation study is a trial run, we expect many challenges to arise and many corrections needed at the end of summer to decide how (or whether) we can proceed for 2013.

The form has been designed to include all prevention steps, but in practice, inspectors may often not be able to observe compliance. ***A high incidence of "unknown" answers is expected and informative in itself***, whereas "yes" and "no" should be reported with high confidence.

Some measures, even if successful, will give only a minimum level of compliance (e.g. draining) where it is not possible to be sure of violations without an inspection. The results of this study can only infer what compliance rates *might* be, given the high rate of unknown responses and the limits of our observational ability.

Please keep track of your questions, comments and best practices. A meeting will be held in early fall to discuss season results and suggested changes. For questions and feedback, contact

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Set up

Based on the landing geography and your experience, attempt to find a location at the boat landings where you can easily observe boat trailers after they leave the water, but do not influence their behavior by obvious or confrontational inspection. Suggestions include: in a parked car, shoreline fishing, or reading/picnicking from nearby seating. Bring something (e.g. a book, lunch or fishing pole) to look otherwise occupied. If you are already recognizable for AIS education or enforcement at a given landing, consider exchanging locations with a partner.

At this time, only watercraft are being observed, not shore anglers.

Disclosure

If anyone inquires what you are doing, explain honestly that it is an observational study of boater behavior to improve AIS prevention strategies. *No identifying information is being collected or used for penalties!*

Intervention

If you observe a boater leaving the landing in violation of AIS laws, please intervene as appropriate. Please check the box for “contact made” and make note of all interventions in your comments section.

Reporting

Only one answer box, maximum, should be checked for each question. The form is marked by alternating white and shaded columns where each color block is a separate question.

All fields must be completed for each boat in order to assess compliance. Do not skip questions. However, the fields of “Non-motorized”, “Left without steps?”, and “Other Measures” should be left blank if the answer is “No”.

SWIMS will be set up for observational study data entry once the form is finalized. Instructions will be released through the AIS Coordinator’s listserv.

FORM INSTRUCTIONS

Main Activity

Fishing = poles or fishing-specific gear present, catch or bait present. Check the fishing box when signs are present even if other recreation took place.

Recreational boating = signs of fishing equipment absent

Other = Other (e.g. lake service provider, enforcement, research), or observer can not determine lake activity

Non-motorized

Check if the watercraft does *not* have a motor, or motor is present but not for primary use (e.g. canoe, kayak, sailboat). If a motor is present, leave column blank to answer No.

State of boat registration

WI = Wisconsin registration

Other = Other state, enter state abbreviation for records

Unknown = Could not observe

Left without steps?

If the boater leaves the landing *without performing any of the AIS prevention steps* under your observation, check this box. This may be applicable even if the boater stops to check/secure the boat and equipment, but does not inspect, remove, drain or dispose before leaving the landing.

Please continue to fill out appropriate fields even after checking this one, which in this case will be No, Unknown, or N/A.

Inspect

Yes = User looked *under* boat and trailer *and* walked around both sides to look

No = User did not look under boat hull or trailer and walk around both sides, even if “some” inspection took place

Unknown = Could not observe

Remove

All = Plants/animals initially visible on boat and equipment. User removes all visible to observer. *Or*, user removes plants/animals not visible to observer and leaves with no visible plants/animals remaining.

Some* = Plants/animals initially visible on boat and equipment. User removes some, but leaves landing with more visible to observer. *Violation occurred.*

No* = Plants/animals initially visible on boat and equipment. User does not remove any. *Violation occurred.*

Unknown = Could not confirm or deny compliance

N/A = Plants/animals are *NOT* initially visible on boat and equipment and user does not remove unseen plants/animals.

Drain boat

Yes = Boat/bilge/ballast water was drained. Observer saw boater remove plug or water was pumped out via bilge pump.

No* = Observer confirmed water in boat that was not drained before departure. *Violation occurred.*

Unknown = Could not confirm or deny compliance.

Drain livewell

Yes = Livewell present. Observer was able to distinguish between livewell and bilge water being drained. Livewell water was drained.

No* = Livewell present. Observer confirmed water is present in livewell and was not drained before departure. *Violation occurred.*

Unknown = Could not confirm or deny compliance and/or presence of livewell

N/A = Observer confirmed no livewell on boat

Drain cooler/bucket

Yes = Cooler, bucket or other potential fish container present and drained.

No* = Cooler, bucket or other potential fish container present. Observer confirmed water is present in container and was not drained before departure. *Violation occurred.*

Unknown = Could not confirm or deny compliance and/or presence of potential fish container

N/A = Observer confirmed no potential fish container present

Other measures

If other cleaning methods exist at boat launch, enter the correct code (or add in "other") and observe use. There will be a location for data entry of the different kinds available in SWIMS. For observations where no "other" measures are available or used, leave columns blank.

1. Hot water power washer – Observer confirmed power washer has hot water.
2. Cold water power washer – Observer confirmed power washer has cold water.
3. Cold water rinse – Observer confirmed water is not under pressure (eg. garden hose, hand pumped garden sprayer) and is cold only.
4. Spray bottle – Observer saw boater use hand held spray bottle.
5. Other – Observer saw boater take other preventative step (e.g. wipe outside of boat with cloth).

Contact made

If contact is made with boater for any reason, check this box and explain in comments section of your form.