February 22, 2017

Dear USCG Documented Boat Owner,

We are sending this information as a public service to boaters. Some boaters have searched online for USCG Documentation trying to find the web site for the USCG NVDC. Some of these boaters have accidently connected to a non government web site, “www.uscgdocumentation.us” which looks very much like the real USCG site. Some boaters used this web site to conduct documentation services like boat purchase or documentation renewal at extremely inflated prices. If a boater then realized the mistake and contacted the business to cancel the service they are told there is a no refund policy. The primary reason given is this element of the on line transaction,

“I agree to pay the above total amount according to the card issuer agreement and hereby authorize the charge for the total amount above for the processing of selected USCG documents. I understand that my application will be processed in the order in which it is received by U.S. Vessel Documentation***. I understand that application and processing fees are non-refundable as per 46 CFR 67.500(e)***”

The actual 46 CFR 76.500 refers to the documentation operations of the USCG and states:

“ §67.500 Applicability.

(a) This subpart specifies documentation services provided for vessels for which fees are applicable. No documentation service for which a fee is applicable will be performed until the appropriate fee has been paid. Fees are contained in Table 67.550.

(b) There is no fee for the annual renewal of endorsements upon the Certificate of Documentation, unless renewal is late.

(c) There is no fee for replacement of a Certificate of Documentation due to a wrongful withholding.

(d) The Director, National Vessel Documentation Center may waive collection of fees applicable under this subpart for a service provided to a Federal agency when the fee would be directly paid with federally-appropriated funds by a Federal agency acting in its own behalf.

(e) Application fees under this subpart are not refundable”

You should note that the words processing fees are not part of the actual regulation. Also application fees received by a third party and not yet forwarded to the USCG would likewise not be covered. This is an agreement made under false pretenses with a legal right to cancel and receive a refund.

In a second strategy to confuse boaters with an existing boat documentation certificate, this company has been mailing a “courtesy notice” that the boaters certificate will expire within 45 days and they should submit a renewal through the same web site, www.uscgdocumentation.us or via a call to their phone number again at extremely inflated prices. The letter looks official and also has a West Virginia return address even though the company is located in Long Beach, CA. The letter contains two claims that CFR and USC legal provisions may lead to fines, fess, vessel forfeiture and imprisonment for failure to renew your certificate. These claims of penalties and fines are very misleading. This renewal letter is timed to arrive before the official USCG renewal letter sent annually by the USCG.

If you or any other boaters have been a victim of this business, please contact us by phone, return mail or on our website. If we receive sufficient number of replies we can pursue a lawsuit for false, misleading advertisement and agreements made under false pretenses. We will contact you in advance. We will also forward your information to law enforcement if you desire.

Thank you for your time and safe boating to you,

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