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Coast Guard Comes to Rescue of Two Boaters, Tows Disabled Vessel to Safe Harbor on St. Croix

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A Coast Guard Boat Forces Detachment Saint Croix crew, aboard a 33-foot Special Purpose Craft. By. COAST GUARD

ST. CROIX — A Coast Guard boat crew assisted two boaters in distress aboard the sailing vessel Destination that was disabled and adrift Tuesday, in waters north of St. Croix, the Coast Guard made known via release Wednesday.

According to the release, a Coast Guard Boat Forces Detachment Saint Croix crew, aboard a 33-foot Special Purpose Craft – Law Enforcement, towed the Destination to safe harbor in Christiansted, St. Croix, where they conducted a post search and rescue boarding, and terminated the vessel's voyage due to unsafe operations and for not having a garbage and oil placard

available.

“We are glad to have been able to assist and bring these mariners and their vessel to safety,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Dillon Nether, Coast Guard coxswain for the case. “It’s of critical importance to always be familiar with your vessel and safety equipment before heading out on the water. This knowledge could save your life and the lives of everyone else on board your vessel.”

Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan received a 406 Emergency Positioning Indicating Radio Beacon EPIRB alert at 11:02 a.m. Tuesday registered to the sailing vessel Destination that was being transmitted from approximately nine nautical miles north of St. Croix. Coast Guard watchstanders diverted the Coast Guard boat crew from a training mission and directed the launch of a Coast Guard MH-65 Dolphin Air Station Borinquen helicopter to search for any signs of the Destination or of a possible distress, the release stated.

Watchstanders were able to contact the registered owner of the sailing vessel, who relayed the Destination had been sold to another person. Shortly thereafter, Coast Guard watchstanders received a phone call from the new owner, who informed being an inexperienced mariner unfamiliar with using a GPS or operating the vessel’s radio, and not having access to the vessel’s flare kits.

The Coast Guard said a boat crew transited to the approximate EPIRB location and was unable to locate the vessel. Simultaneously, Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) personnel searched the normal mooring location of the Destination with negative results. The Coast Guard boat crew was able to establish cellular phone communications with the captain of the Destination, and they used geographic references, which led to them locating the vessel at approximately 1:55 p.m. Tuesday just west of Salt River Bay in St. Croix. The vessel Destination was out of fuel, and the owners were unsure how sail or anchor. The Coast Guard boat crew took the vessel in a stern tow and brought them safely back to Christiansted Harbor.

“Coast Guard Rescue Sub Center San Juan urges all EPIRB owners to maintain their registration information updated with the most current emergency contact information within the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration database,” said Chief Petty Officer Ricardo Santacana, Coast Guard Sector San Juan command duty officer. “This saves critical time during the investigation and prosecution of search and rescue cases involving EPIRBs, and could very well be the difference in a successful rescue.”