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**News from the USA  
Winter 2005-2006**

## ***Fire Drills During USCG Port State Control Exams***

In some USCG Port State Control inspections recently attended by CSI, we have noticed some problems with the manner in which fire drills are conducted. Some fire drills have led to deficiencies being issued to the vessel. In many cases, we believe that the failed drills were a result in strained or a breakdown in communications between the vessel's officers and the USCG inspectors. We have noted miscommunication regarding the timing and location of the drills, the manner in which the drill is to commence, and even some misunderstanding as to what the USCG expects to see in a fire drill.

The general rule of thumb is to conduct the fire drill for the USCG in the same manner you would conduct the drill during the course of your periodic training. Typically, the USCG inspector will tell the Master that he will only observe the drill as it is conducted, and not get involved and interfere with the crew.

Frequently, however, this is not the case, as some inspectors tend to interject their opinion as to how your drill should be conducted, regardless of your emergency procedures and prior training. The knowledge of some USCG Port State Control Inspectors in regards to shipboard fire-fighting is limited to what they have learned in a classroom, or what they have observed from other inspectors during fire drills. Please review the following tips that outline what the USCG inspectors expect to see during a fire drill:

- Prior to the fire drill, ensure that you have a clear understanding of what the inspectors are directing you to do. If necessary, ask questions to clarify their instructions. Be clear on the proposed location of the drill, and how and when the alarm is to be sounded.
- Request time to conduct a safety briefing with the crew prior to the drill. If the inspector states that he wants the drill to be an unannounced "surprise," make a note of your request and the refusal in your drill report.
- Upon sounding of the alarm, all hands report to muster station / prepare for duties as per muster list. Command, control, communication, and use of the emergency muster list will be closely observed. Ensure that each crewmember musters with the equipment designated on your emergency fire plan.
- Regardless of the location or size of the simulated fire, the inspectors normally require two firemen to turn out in full firefighting gear, including Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA).
- Ensure that your crewmen designated, as firefighters are familiar with their equipment, and are able to properly don the suits and SCBA in a timely manner.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1** Fire Drills During USCG Port State Control Exams
- 2** California Ballast Water Initiatives
- 3** Reduction of Emissions in California Ports
- 3** New SOLAS Regulation for Immersion Suits
- 4** Bow Mariner Investigation Report
- 4** Post Accident Drug Testing
- 4** Coast Guard Web Site Information
- 4** Coast Guard MARPOL Enforcement Policy



- Frequently, in a rush, crewmembers will forget to wear inner and/or outer gloves, or forget to fasten the collar of the jacket completely.
- Also regardless of the location or size of the simulated fire, two fire hoses should be deployed during a USCG observed fire drill. Generally, the hoses should be connected to an outlet, but water should not be used during the drill.
- Conduct the drill as if an actual emergency exists. Demonstrate proper space access techniques, fire fighting techniques, and man tending techniques.
- Demonstrate proper damage control techniques when possible, including use of fire doors, watertight doors, and ventilation ducts. Set fire boundaries in accordance with your training.
- Communication between the on-scene commander and the Master is crucial. Ensure that the Ch/Officer or team commander clearly communicates the progress and status of the drill to the Master. One USCG inspector will typically remain on the bridge with the Master, and critique command and communication.
- Pay attention to detail rather than to the clock. Fire drills are not scored with a stopwatch. Rushing through a fire drill frequently leads to mistakes, forgotten items, and possibly injury.
- Crewmembers should not be nervous or afraid of the USCG inspectors during an inspection or a drill. However in reality, crewmembers frequently feel intimidated by the inspectors, leading to nervousness and mistakes. Try to help your crewmen to learn not to fear the USCG inspectors.

If you have any questions about USCG observed fire drills, or any other concern or question about a USCG Port State Control inspection, please do not hesitate to contact CSI.

## **California Dreaming....**

### **Ballast Water Standards**

In the CSI Winter 2004/2005 Newsletter we discussed the California Ballast Water requirements. Recently, the California State

Lands Commission released its report on *Performance Standards for Ballast Water Discharges in California Waters*, recommending new requirements. The report recommends that the State adopt interim performance standards, based largely on the size of the organism and a long-term standard of ballast water containing no detectable living or culturable organisms. These proposals exceed IMO envisioned standards and the proposed legislation by the U.S. The next step will likely be proposed regulations at which time the maritime community will have an opportunity to comment.

### **Reduction of Emissions in California Ports**

In December 2005, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) adopted measures to reduce a diesel particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen oxide (NO<sub>x</sub>) emissions at California ports. The new regulations go into effect on January 1, 2007. The CARB hopes to reduce diesel PM and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions by 690 tons and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions by 19,000 tons between 2007 and 2020. The CARB regulations require retrofitting existing engines with the best available technology that controls such emissions. California port authorities have initiated installation of emission controls on their cargo-handling equipment. A second part of the new regulations require ships to use cleaner fuels or emission controls as far as 24 miles from their intended port of call. This provision is likely to be challenged in Federal Court as state jurisdiction extends only 3 NM seaward.

The ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach (LA/LB) have instituted programs to reduce PM and NO<sub>x</sub> emissions without the installation of new equipment aboard ships. The ports have entered into an agreement with the Pacific Maritime Association, the Federal Environmental Protection Agency, the CARB and the South Coast Air Quality Management District to establish a voluntary speed reduction program that will reduce emissions from vessels transiting off shore. The program requests that vessels 20 NM from port slow from 20-25 knots to 12 knots. According to port authorities, the program has been partially successful with 67% compliance for vessels calling at Long Beach. This translates into a 2-ton per day emission



reduction. LA/LB are also offering hotelling alternatives to running ship's generators. There is only one Alternative Maritime Power (AMP) source and it is located in the Port of Los Angeles China Shipping terminal. Ships would require retrofitting port facilities and vessels to accept electrical shore ties. Another AMP terminal should be operational in February at the NYK terminal. Either way, ships calling on California ports are faced with either refitting their engine systems with filtering equipment or refitting them for shore-tie connections. (Source: *Pacific Maritime* January 2006)

### ***New SOLAS Regulation for Immersion Suits***

Regulation III/32.3.2 (Immersion suits and thermal protective aids [TPA]) of SOLAS 74 currently requires cargo ships to carry 3 immersion suits for each lifeboat carried on the ship. In addition, the ships are also required to carry thermal protective aids for persons on board not provided with immersion suits. These immersion suits and thermal protective aids may be dispensed with if the ships have totally enclosed lifeboats or free-fall lifeboats or are constantly engaged on voyages in warm climates.

Cargo ships which carry liferafts in lieu of lifeboats pursuant to Regulation III/31.1.3 of SOLAS 74 are currently required by Regulation III/32.3.3 to carry immersion suits for every person on board unless the ships have davit-launched liferafts or liferafts served by equivalent launching appliances or are constantly engaged on voyages in warm climates. These carriage requirements will change when an amendment to Regulation 32.3 (Immersion suits and thermal protective aids) of SOLAS 74 adopted by Resolution MSC.152 (78) on 20 May 2004 at the 78th session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) of the IMO comes into force on 1 July 2006.

The changes in the carriage requirement for cargo ships with effect from 1 July 2006 are as follows:

- cargo ships are required to carry immersion suits for every person on board;
- additional immersion suits are required to be carried for the number of persons normally on watch or working in work

stations which are located remotely from the place or places where immersion suits are normally stowed;

- exemption from the carriage of immersion suits may be granted only to cargo ships constantly engaged on voyages in warm climates. Notwithstanding that, bulk carriers cannot be exempted. The term "voyages in warm climates" means voyages within the latitudes of 30°N and 30°S, and
- TPA are no longer required to be carried except in cases where TPA are required equipment in lifeboats and liferafts.

These changes in carriage requirements are applicable to cargo ships regardless of their date of construction. With respect to cargo ships constructed before 1 July 2006, the new carriage requirements are to be complied with not later than the first safety equipment survey on or after 1 July 2006.

Non-U. S. vessels are required to have SOLAS approved immersion suits. If the immersion suits aboard the ship are Coast Guard approved only, we recommend contacting your classification society to ensure the suits' acceptance. However, most Coast Guard approved safety equipment for merchant ships also hold SOLAS certification.



### ***News From the Coast Guard***

#### ***Bow Mariner Investigation Report***

The U.S. Coast Guard released its report of the investigation into the explosion and sinking of the chemical tanker BOW MARINER in the Atlantic Ocean on February 28, 2004 with loss of life and pollution. The investigation was conducted in cooperation with the U. S. Coast Guard and the Maritime and Port Authority (MPA) of Singapore, the flag state. While the exact cause or source of ignition was never determined, the Coast Guard found that other factors contributed to the explosion and ultimate sinking of the ship. The report found that various cargo tanks were opened for tank cleaning allowing MTBE vapors in the flammable range to accumulate on deck, *failure of the ship management company and senior officers on*



the tanker to properly implement the safety management system, hasty abandonment of the tanker by various senior officers, lack of training and familiarization provided to various personnel, and lack of cohesiveness between the officers and the crew. The report lists nine instances where the ship's SMS was not followed. You may download a copy of the report through the following web site: <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/moa/docs/bowmar1.pdf>.

### **Post Accident Drug Testing**

On December 22, 2005, the Coast Guard issued a final rule on drug testing after a serious marine incident. The final rule revises Coast Guard requirements for alcohol testing after a serious marine incident to ensure that mariners or their employees involved in a serious marine incident are tested for alcohol use within 2 hours of the occurrence of the incident as required under the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 1998. The final rule also requires that most commercial vessels have alcohol-testing devices on board, and authorizes the use of saliva as an acceptable specimen for alcohol testing. This rule also makes some minor procedural changes, including a 32-hour time limit for collecting specimens for drug testing following a serious marine incident. A serious marine incident is defined by the Coast Guard as any marine casualty or accident that requires reporting to the Coast Guard and results in one or more deaths, an injury to a crewmember, passenger or other person that requires treatment beyond first aid or not fit for duty, damage in excess of \$100,000, or a discharge of oil of 10,000 gallons or more whether this resulted from a marine casualty or not within 12 nautical miles of the United States.

### **Coast Guard Web Site Information**

If you want to read how the U. S. Coast Guard develops its targeting matrix for Port State Control, visit the following web site: <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/pscweb/index.htm>. This site lists detentions, targeted states, classification societies, ship management companies and charterers. The site also includes the ISPS and MTSA compliance targeting matrices.

### **Coast Guard MARPOL Enforcement Policy**

MARPOL 73/78 entered into force on October 2, 1983. The Coast Guard is authorized and required by law to implement the provisions of MARPL Annex I. After reviewing data from Port State Control Examinations over the past several years, the Coast Guard has noted an increase of pollution incidents and direct violations of MARPOL I. Evidence from recent legal actions against ship operators and crews show a tendency to hide or conceal illegal dumping of oily waste and sludge.

The Coast Guard has issued guidance to their Port State Control inspection teams though G-PCV Policy Letter 06-01 dated January 20, 2006. The guidance outlines specific inspection techniques for the: Oil Record Books (ORB), Oil Discharge Monitoring Equipment (ODME), Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (SOPEP), Oil Water Separator (OWS), Bilge Alarm/Oil Content Monitor, sludge tank, Incinerator, and the Standard Discharge Connection. You can obtain a copy of the guidance from the Coast Guard website at [www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/moc/docs.htm](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/moc/docs.htm)



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