



Marine Safety Information Bulletin

02-15

May 20, 2015

Ship to Ship Transfers at Sea Involving Vessels More Than 150 Gross Tons

The following Marine Safety Information Bulletin (MSIB) is to remind vessel owners, operators and lightering operation providers of new rules that came into effect on May 5, 2015 regarding ship to ship (STS) transfer of oil cargoes involving at least one vessel that is more than 150 gross tons (Federal Register 80 FR 5922).

The Coast Guard has added 33 CFR 156 Subpart D titled Prevention of Pollution During Transfers of Oil Cargo Between Oil Tankers at Sea, which applies to STS transfer operations involving at least one vessel greater than 150 gross tons. Subpart B Special Requirements for Lightering of Oil and Hazardous Material Cargoes will now only apply to oil and hazardous material cargo transfers when both oil tankers are less than 150 gross tons in the marine environment beyond the baseline. This MSIB will discuss reporting requirements for transfers and incidents specifically. All affected owners, operators, and masters of U.S. and foreign flagged ships are reminded to read the notice in its entirety as not all changes are discussed herein.

For pre-transfer notices, the new regulations align with existing MARPOL Annex I requirements to require that a vessel involved with STS operations give at least 48 hours advanced notice of transfer. This is a change from the previous requirements to provide 24 hour notices to the nearest Coast Guard office. The Coast Guard recognizes that 48 hour notice may present a challenge and the new regulations allow for an incomplete initial notification provided that the remaining information is submitted at the earliest opportunity. A 24-hour notice requirement remains for all vessels subject to 33 CFR 156 Subpart B.

For vessels conducting STS operations in Marine Safety Unit Port Arthur's Captain of the Port Zone, an initial notification on behalf of the ship to be lightered (STBL) must be received 48 hours prior to transfer with as much information as is known at the time. Vessel representatives or STS providers may then provide one complete update when all additional required information is known. Each service vessel is not required to submit notice provided that the names and requisite information for each service vessel is submitted.

Masters, vessel agents, and lightering service providers should be aware that the required reporting information is slightly different than the existing requirements. Care should be taken to ensure all internal reporting procedures are updated to ensure compliance.

The Coast Guard recognizes that the earlier notification requirement and need for subsequent updates may require coordinated information management between vessels and lightering service providers, vessel agents, and lightering operations providers. All parties are encouraged to communicate directly with Marine Safety Unit Port Arthur personnel to identify a reporting and update system that best facilitates individual needs. This may be particularly important to find a best practice for making multiple updates simultaneously.

Additionally, regarding reporting of incidents, for STS operations conducted subject to the new Subpart D, the Person in Overall Advisor Control (POAC) is the party responsible for ensuring the incident is reported in accordance with 33 CFR 151.15. There should be one report made by or on behalf of the POAC to prevent multiple and potentially conflicting reports to the Coast Guard.

Please submit all advance notices to MSU Port Arthur's Port State Control email at portarthurpsc@uscg.mil. This MSIB will be posted on the Coast Guard's HOMEPORT website at <http://homeport.uscg.mil> and the VTS website at www.uscg.mil/d8/vtspportarthur. If you have any questions regarding this MSIB, please call MSU Port Arthur at (409) 723-6500.



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