UNCLAS

R 021725Z JUL 10
FM COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC//CG-54//
TO COMLANTAREA COGARD PORTSMOUTH VA//LANT-00/LANT-3P//
COMPACAREA COGARD ALAMEDA CA//PAC-00/PAC-3//
INFO COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC//CG-01/CG-5/CG-6/CG-7/CG-543//
BT
UNCLAS //N16710//
SUBJ: COAST GUARD TOWING VESSEL BRIDGING PROGRAM (TVBP) UPDATE
A. COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC 121639Z JUNE 09
B. TOWING VESSEL BRIDGING PROGRAM POLICY MEMO, DATED 12JUN09
1. THIS MESSAGE PROVIDES AN UPDATE ON THE TOWING VESSEL BRIDGING PROGRAM (TVBP) AS INTRODUCED AND OUTLINED IN REFERENCES (A) AND (B). PHASE 1 OF THE TVBP COMMENCED JUNE 12, 2009. DURING THIS TIMEFRAME THE COAST GUARD AND INDUSTRY HAVE CONDUCTED EXTENSIVE OUTREACH, ORIENTATION, AND TRAINING OF ITS MEMBERS. INDUSTRY INITIATED EXAMINATIONS (COAST GUARD EXAMS OF TOWING VESSELS REQUESTED BY INDUSTRY) STARTED IN EARNEST DURING THE FALL OF 2009 AS COAST GUARD TOWING VESSEL EXAMINERS COMPLETED THE NEW PERSONAL QUALIFICATION STANDARDS (PQS). TO DATE, THERE HAVE BEEN OVER 1200 INDUSTRY INITIATED EXAMINATIONS CONDUCTED ON A TOWING VESSEL FLEET OF RESPONSIBILITY (FOR) OF APPROXIMATELY 6400 VESSELS NATIONWIDE.
2. AS STATED IN REF (B), THE GOAL OF THE TVBP IS TO ENHANCE, IMPROVE, AND INCREASE COAST GUARD INTERACTIONS WITH THE TOWING VESSEL INDUSTRY, BY ACCLIMATING ALL INVOLVED WITH THE PROCEDURES, POLICY, REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION OF EXISTING REGULATIONS AND, AS IMPLEMENTATION DRAWS CLOSER, NEW SUBCHAPTER M REGULATIONS. I AM VERY PLEASED WITH THE WORK THAT ALL INVOLVED HAVE INVESTED IN THIS EFFORT AND THE RESULTS SO FAR. I WANT TO ENSURE EVERY TOWING VESSEL COMPANY HAS BEEN EDUCATED ON THIS PROGRAM AND ALL UNINSPECTED TOWING VESSELS (UTV) THAT WILL BE INSPECTED UNDER SUBCHAPTER M HAVE BEEN EXAMINED FOR COMPLIANCE WITH CURRENT REGULATIONS.
3. A WORKGROUP COMPRISED OF COAST GUARD, AMERICAN WATERWAYS OPERATORS (AWO), AND TOWING VESSEL INDUSTRY MEMBERS HAS BEEN MONITORING PHASE 1 OF TVBP AND IS MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS TO PROGRAM MANAGERS ON COURSE ADJUSTMENTS AS NEEDED. THIS WORKGROUP IS CURRENTLY UPDATING THE TOWING VESSEL OUTREACH, ORIENTATION, AND INDOCTRINATION WORKBOOK TO INCLUDE BETTER SURVEYS, ESTABLISH A LONGER AND MORE ROBUST/REOCCURRING VESSEL RIDER PERIOD, AND A FEEDBACK MECHANISM TO THE TOWING VESSEL NATIONAL CENTER OF EXPERTISE (TVNCOE). ONCE THESE TOOLS ARE COMPLETE, AREA AND DISTRICT COORDINATORS WILL BE NOTIFIED AND THEY WILL BE POSTED ON HOMEPORT.
4. MILESTONES. OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE AS WE MOVE FORWARD WITH THE TVBP. OVER 140 COAST GUARD TOWING VESSEL EXAMINERS HAVE BEEN QUALIFIED, THE TOWING VESSEL NATIONAL CENTER OF EXPERTISE WAS COMMISSIONED, NUMEROUS SAFETY ISSUES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AND ADDRESSED, A TOWING VESSEL TRAINING COURSE HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, AND WE HAVE CONTINUED TO WORK WITH INDUSTRY TO EASE THE TRANSITION FROM UNINSPECTED TO INSPECTED SAFETY REGIMES TO MINIMIZE THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON VESSEL OPERATIONS.
5. PHASE 1. DURING THIS ORIENTATION AND INDOCTRINATION PERIOD, GREAT STRIDES HAVE BEEN MADE BY THE COAST GUARD AND INDUSTRY TO ENHANCE RELATIONSHIPS AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF RESPECTIVE OPERATIONS AND CULTURES. FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM INDUSTRY AND THE WORKGROUP OVERSEEING PHASE 1 WILL HELP US TO FINE TUNE THE SCOPE DRAFT OF EXAM, PROCEDURES FOR DECAL ISSUANCE, WORK THROUGH ANY SAFETY

UNCLAS

UNCLAS

CONCERNS, AND DEVELOP ADVANCED TRAINING TOPICS FOR COAST GUARD AND INDUSTRY MEMBERS. UNITS SHOULD EXPECT ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE AND UPDATES TO REF (B) IN THE MONTHS TO COME ON THESE TOPICS.
6. PHASE 2. THE COAST GUARD OFFICE OF VESSEL ACTIVITIES, DOMESTIC COMPLIANCE DIVISION (CG-5431), IN CONSULTATION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TOWING INDUSTRY, LANT AND PAC AREA, AND THE TVNCOE, IS CURRENTLY DEVELOPING A STRATEGY AND POLICY FOR CONDUCTING TARGETED EXAMS DURING PHASE 2 OF THE TVBP. PHASE 2 ACTIVITIES WILL LIKELY COMMENCE SUMMER OF 2011 ONCE TRAINING AND INDUSTRY OUTREACH EFFORTS ARE COMPLETE, AMPLE OPPORTUNITY FOR CONDUCTING INDUSTRY INITIATED EXAMS HAS BEEN GIVEN, AND ALL DISTRICTS REPORT THEY ARE READY TO COMMENCE PHASE 2 ACTIVITIES. ALL LEVELS OF COMMAND ARE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO CONDUCT OUTREACH WITH INDUSTRY, DISCUSSING THE ELEMENTS OF TVBP, STRONGLY ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION IN THE INDUSTRY INITIATED EXAMS DESCRIBED IN REF (B) AND, AFTER PUBLICATION OF THE SUBCHAPTER M NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING, COMMUNICATING DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED REGULATIONS AND ENCOURAGING COMMENT.
7. PHASE 3 WILL COMMENCE WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW SUBCHAPTER M TOWING VESSEL INSPECTION REGULATIONS AND ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATES OF INSPECTION. SUBCHAPTER M IS STILL IN CLEARANCE.
8. MORE INFO ON TVBP MAY BE FOUND AT:
HTTP://HOMEPORT.USCG.MIL/DOMESTIC VESSELS/TOWING VESSELS. THE POINT OF CONTACT FOR THE TOWING VESSEL BRIDGING PROGRAM IS MR. PATRICK LEE. HE MAY BE REACHED AT PATRICK.J.LEE(AT)USCG.MIL OR (202) 372-1135.
9. RDML KEVIN COOK, DIRECTOR OF PREVENTION POLICY, SENDS.
10. INTERNET RELEASE IS AUTHORIZED.
BT

UNCLAS