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From: Captain of the Port Houston-Galveston  
To: Distribution

Subj: COTP POLICY ON LAY-UP OF VESSELS

Under the authority of Title 33 United States Code 1221, 50 USC 191 and Title 33 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 6 and 160, the Coast Guard has certain responsibilities regarding the protection of vessels, bridges or other structures on or in the navigable waters and their resources from environmental harm caused by vessel damage, destruction or loss. In light of these responsibilities, vessels may be required to remain at a particular berth for an extended period of time due to operational inactivity, ownership change or facilitation of repairs. Normally vessels will not be permitted to enter a lay-up status while at anchorage, however, emergency situations may be considered on a case by case basis.

All vessels greater than 300 gross tons are required to submit a lay-up proposal to berth within the COTP Houston-Galveston zone in order to ensure adequate safety and environmental measures have been taken. Barges and Uninspected Towing Vessels are exempt from submitting lay-up proposals. At a minimum, your lay-up proposal must specifically address the following:

- specific location (berth) of the lay-up(s) and its proposed duration
- assurance that cargo tanks, adjacent cofferdams, ballast tanks, pumprooms, cargo piping systems and cargo venting arrangements are thoroughly clean and gas free (certification must be made by a qualified marine chemist)
- proof of suitable liability insurance in addition to that required by the Federal Water Pollution Control Act
- if a laid up vessel is to be moored to a waterfront facility, the facility and all shoreside mooring fittings as well as number, size, arrangement, and condition of mooring lines should be certified by a qualified marine surveyor as safe and capable of holding the vessel secure – taking into account the vessel's freeboard, draft, climatic, tidal and current conditions in the area
- plans for safe rendering
- contingency plans for heavy weather, firefighting, use of tug boats, and emergency evacuation of crewmembers
- assurance of compliance with sewage and garbage disposal plans
- standard and emergency communications plans between shore and the shipkeeping crew
- possession of current "deratting" certificate
- qualifications of the shipkeeping crew; if no live aboard crew is planned, the applicant should show that periodic visits by competent persons are adequate to assure safety and compliance with U. S. laws
- assurance that prescribed navigation lights and shapes will be displayed
- statement that the applicant will notify the COTP of a change in registry or ownership of the laid-up vessel
- must meet State of Texas regulations

If your proposal for lay-up procedures is approved you will be notified by this office. Failure to comply with the proposal or not providing a lay-up proposal could result in an order to remove your vessel from the Captain of the Port Zone. A Coast Guard assessment team may be sent to monitor adherence to the stipulations of the lay-up proposal.

For further information regarding this policy, contact the Captain of the Port Houston-Galveston at (713) 671-5111 or the Marine Safety Unit Galveston at (409) 766-3715.

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Captain, U. S. Coast Guard  
Captain of the Port Houston-Galveston