USCG PORT STATE CONTROL

MARINE SAFETY OFFICE

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Welcome to Our Port

A note from the Chief of Port State Control

Lieutenant Zane Price

On behalf of our crew I would like to welcome you to our port. My team of inspectors and boarding officers inspect all foreign flagged vessels calling on Gulf Coast ports from Pensacola, Florida to Gulfport, Mississippi.

Our mission is threefold. Our primary concern is the safety of you and your crew. We thoroughly inspect all lifesaving and fire fighting appliances so that if the unfortunate need to use them arises, they will operate properly. Secondly, we ensure the safety of our environment by carefully inspecting the oily water separator and all other appliances designed to prevent oil and other types of pollution. Finally, we examine your vessel to determine if it is a hazard to the waterways of the United States. We do this by inspecting your vessel's navigation equipment and hull condition.

We hope that you will strive to maintain a safe working environment. Happy Holidays from Port State Control!

Ballast Water Program

Info on MSO Mobile Ballast Water Management Program

Petty Officer Karole Ferguson

The Ballast Water Management Program is currently underway at MSO Mobile. This program is being implemented as a result of the National Invasive Species Act of 1996, and the interim rule on ballast water management published in the Federal Register on May 17, 1999. These regulations are intended to limit the introduction and spread of aquatic nuisance species in U.S. waters. The primary means of preventing the introduction of non-indigenous species at this time is the exchange of ballast water taken on in foreign ports with open ocean water at a depth of at least 2000 meters. The characteristics and salinity of this deep ocean environment is detrimental to species from the lower salinity near shore waters, and vice versa.

The Coast Guard Ballast Water Inspection boarding will consist of interviews with shipboard personnel involved in the regulation of ballast water, examination of the ship's ballast Water records, completion of a Ballast Water Survey Form, and measurement of salinity in the ballast tanks. Ballast tanks with a salinity of 30 ppt or more are considered to have been adequately exchanged. All ships entering U.S. waters from beyond the EEZ are required to report their ballast water management practices to the Coast Guard on the Ballast Water Reporting Form before leaving their first U.S. port of call. An amended form should be submitted if there are any changes to discharge information submitted in a previous form. At present the exchange of ballast water is on a voluntary basis, but may become mandatory in the future if there is a lack of voluntary compliance. Submittal of the Ballast Water Reporting Form and maintaining ballast water records onboard the vessel is mandatory.

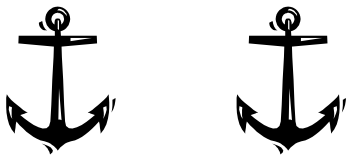
Contact kferguson@miomobile.uscg.mil for more info.

Gaskets

Often overlooked

Petty Officer Ron Burge

Don't over look something you walk by everyday. Fire-fighting hose gaskets, watertight door gaskets and vent gaskets can deteriorate quickly if not cared for. Things to look for are dry rot, paint on gaskets, nicked or cut gaskets, severely worn or improperly installed gaskets. These problems can lead to loss of fire fighting water pressure at hose connections, loss of watertight integrity and the inability to properly isolate a compartment during a fire. Gaskets are easily cared for and most are easily replaced. So the next time you walk through a watertight door or pass by a fire hose station check the gaskets



Lifeboat Sails

Be Familiar!!!

Petty Officer Rick Thompson

Recently, while conducting inspections of lifeboats, we have noticed that some crewmembers are unfamiliar with some of the equipment. One item in particular is the sails for the lifeboats. We are finding that the crew does not know how to properly set up the sails. According to SOLAS, all crewmembers should be familiar with their duties and know how to use all of the equipment onboard the lifeboat and life rafts.

Lifesaving Equipment Maintenance and Operation

Matter of Life or Death

Chief Warrant Officer Grodecki and Petty Officer Alan Perander

Everyone involved with the construction, operation, and maintenance of commercial vessels realizes that the owners, operators and crews have demanding schedules and are keenly aware that time really is money. It may be tempting to some to skip on maintenance and crew training. This is generally an unwise decision, particularly with lifesaving systems.

Almost without exception, a ship's crew takes pride in their ship and in their work. When the Coast Guard or any other regulatory agency comes aboard, it is an opportunity for the crew to display their efforts. The regulatory agency representatives usually only have enough time on board the ship to examine the "big ticket items", so a lot of stones go unturned. Let's discuss those maintenance items that seem insignificant and eventually become repetitive and mundane. You know the ones . . . The 3rd mate has done this item at least a thousand times. He can do that job in his sleep, and he certainly doesn't need a checklist or a technical manual to show him how to do it. That statement sounds reasonable but couldn't be farther from the truth.

Airlines require their pilots to go through a detailed checklist before they can even taxi their aircraft away from the terminal. Why? Because, they have millions of dollars of property and peoples' lives in their hands. They've learned that just one mistake or lapse in memory could have catastrophic results. That very same concept applies to shipboard lifesaving and fire fighting equipment. The person in charge of maintenance must insist that these items are checked, double-checked and meticulously maintained every single time. One seemingly insignificant oversight could be the factor contributing to an accident and possibly an expensive and lengthy litigation later. One missed step in a maintenance procedure could - literally - mean the difference between life and death. Think about that, the next time the new mate is sent to do the maintenance on *your* lifeboats. The same concept applies to training. Every drill should be conducted as if it were the real thing and all equipment training should be participated in as if the crew's lives depended on it.

There have been a number of incidents in the Mobile River, which illustrate the potentially tragic consequences associated with improperly maintained lifesaving equipment and inadequate crew training.

1) A freight ship was conducting an abandon ship drill when the enclosed lifeboat dropped, bow first, twenty feet into the water with five people on board. Fortunately, there were no life threatening injuries, but it is not hard to imagine that there could have been loss of life.

2) A lifeboat was being raised, and the electric winch tripped a circuit breaker. The crew inserted a metal crank into the winch and began to raise the boat manually. The ship electrician went below and reset the breaker without telling the crew. As the winch started turning under electrical power, the crank smashed through an AB's arm, breaking it in half.

3) While a lifeboat was being lowered, the forward davit cable slipped. This knocked five crewmembers around in the lifeboat. Luckily there were just minor bruises and scrapes.

4) While testing a lifeboat engine while the boat was in the cradle, the propeller sheared off the drive shaft and hit the bulkhead with enough force to dent it.

When it comes to spending money to maintain lifesaving equipment and expending energy to train the crew, it is not prudent to skimp. Do not be 'Penny Wise, Pound Foolish." A little extra time and money invested now; will save a lot of time, money ***and lives*** in the long run.

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