# USCG PORT STATE CONTROL

**MARINE SAFETY OFFICE**

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## Welcome to Our Port

*A note from the Assistant Chief of Port State Control*

*Lieutenant Andrew Williamson*

On behalf of our crew, I would like to welcome you to the Port of Mobile, Alabama. As foreign vessel inspectors and boarding officers, my team and I are responsible for all vessels calling to Gulf Coast ports from Pensacola, Florida to Gulfport, Mississippi.

Our mission is threefold. First, and foremost, we are primarily concerned with the safety of all personnel on board your vessel. We take safety very seriously and strive to ensure that you and your crew return safely to your families. We thoroughly inspect all aspects of your vessel concerning lifesaving and fire fighting appliances so that if some unfortunate incident occurs which requires their use, they will operate the way they were designed to operate. Secondly, we ensure the safety of our environment along the gulf coast of the United States. We do this by carefully inspecting the oily water separator, garbage management on board your vessel, and all other appliances designed to prevent pollution under MARPOL 73/78. Finally, we inspect your vessel's navigation equipment, hull condition, and seaworthiness in order to ensure that your vessel will not be a hazard to the waterways of the United States. We hope that safety is the primary concern aboard your vessel and once again, welcome to Mobile.

## Emergency Fire Pumps

*Info on Fire Pump Experience*

*Petty Officer Jeff Estes*

These seemingly insignificant pumps are very important to the survivability of all ships during a shipboard fire. During my tenure in the Coast Guard, I have seen an engine room fire and I can tell you from experience that they are very intense and extremely frightening!

I've been in many emergency fire pump rooms and they are dangerous! On many vessels they are located 7 to 8 decks below the weather deck. The ladders are usually very rusty, it's usually too dark to safely see, and they are not well ventilated.

On one occasion, I was in the emergency fire pump room in the bow of an 800-foot ship. The pump was located 7 decks below and after it was started, I climbed to it's location. As Coast Guard inspectors, we must take a good look at the pump to ensure safety. It appeared to be in fairly good condition, yet upon looking at the engine, the gaskets were damaged, and the sea chest had a constant trickle of water seeping through it. Further investigation showed that the exhaust pipe did not have proper insulation for fire and personnel safety. When the normal working pressure of the emergency fire pump was reached, I immediately noticed the water from the sea chest began to trickle out faster, the engine began leaking oil and the pump started leaking exhaust into the space. The chief engineer and myself immediately left the space.

We will normally run the emergency fire pump until we feel comfortable with the pressure it produces through the fire hoses. I quickly noticed the pressure through the hoses, and told the chief engineer to shut the pump off. By this time the exhaust was extremely thick and the only way to secure the pump was by going back down the 7 decks through the exhaust. The chief engineer was scared for his life (wouldn't you be). He had to don a breathing device to go through the exhaust to the bottom of the pump room to secure the pump.

The morale of this story is that it is YOUR lives here at stake. You should not take any chances with an emergency device placed on your ship. It is there for a reason.

## Ships Certificates

*It Helps*

*Petty Officer Travis Sanders*

When the ships agent comes aboard your vessel to gather certificates, please remember to make copies of the certificates taken if you have the capabilities. This helps out the Coast Guard inspectors as well as the agents by not having to have them faxed to our office. This is just another way to speed up the paper work.

# ISM Enforcement

*ISM Code Enforcement*

*LTjg Tracy Berg*

What does the U.S. Coast Guard do to enforce the International Safety Management (ISM) Code? This article is a brief answer to that question. More detailed information can be found in the Coast Guard Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular (NVIC) 4-98.

The U. S. Coast Guard does not conduct foreign vessel boardings solely to check for ISM compliance. Instead, ISM compliance is integrated as part of all general Port State Control examinations. During an exam, Coast Guard inspectors conduct a document check of ISM paperwork and assess the condition of a ship with regards to their Safety Management System (SMS). If evidence shows the SMS may not, or is not implemented, the inspection is expanded to include more information. Evidence to expand an examination may include invalid ISM certificates, or an evident lack of crew training.

What happens when an exam is expanded? The Coast Guard inspector will spot-check for specific documentation, such as the outline of the master's duties and procedures for reporting non-conformities. This is not an ISM audit, but a way for the inspector to determine if the necessary components of SMS are present. If all the components are in place, the Coast Guard may assist the master in refining or updating the SMS to correct the problem that led to the expanded examination. If the SMS components are not in place, and non-conformity is identified, the Coast Guard will detain the ship and notify the ship's flag state or ISM issuer. This organization then determines if the ship is actually in compliance with the ISM Code. If the ship is in compliance, it is free to leave when deficiencies and non-conformities are corrected. If it is not in compliance, a civil penalty action will be started, and the ship will be denied entry to the U. S. until it comes into compliance.

If you would like a copy of NVIC 4-98, it can be obtained from the following website: http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/nvic/

# IMO Symbology

*Fire Control Plans*

*Petty Officer Brandon Fulkerson*

New interpretations of SOLAS CH. II-2 as explained in Navigation & Vessel Inspection Circular 10-99, require that fire safety plans include proper symbols as referenced in IMO Resolution A.654 (16). The Coast Guard will be looking at your vessel's fire plan to ensure it includes these symbols. Coast Guard boarding teams will have copies of the proper IMO symbology for reference and can give a copy of this symbology to the vessel master if necessary.

# Fire and Abandon Ship Safety

*Know Your Role*

*Petty Officer Ron Burge*

During fire and abandon ship drills, safety is our main goal. Many times we as inspectors have observed crews not following common safety practices during drills. This is often attributed to the crew wanting to complete the drill in a timely manner. Time is a factor in drills, but conducting the drill safely should be the main concern. If a crewmember is injured during a drill or the real thing, that crewmember is of no use to the rest of the crew in completing the task at hand. Several vessel masters have stated that the crews may be nervous because the Coast Guard is evaluating them. We are not on board to intimidate the crew but to point out shortcomings in drill procedures and training. Looking out for unsafe situations is not only the job of the inspectors but of all the crew. Anyone can stop a drill if an unsafe situation is observed. Remember that being able to extinguish a fire or abandon ship quickly is important, but doing it safely is paramount.

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