

Executive Summary

“Enhancing the Coast Guard Marine Safety Program” 25 September 2007

Background. The Coast Guard ensures the safety of maritime transportation and commerce through a layered, interwoven system of authorities, compliance, collaboration, enforcement and public dialogue. We have been a leader in promoting global maritime safety, security, and environmental protection. Notwithstanding, the maritime industry is experiencing unprecedented complexity and growth, while also facing increased risk from transnational threats. These dynamics lead to a greater demand for Coast Guard Marine Safety services and call for a renewed focus on this core Coast Guard mission.

Way Ahead. While we have taken steps to improve this system, we acknowledge much more must be done. I am directing the development of a strategy that provides a vision and roadmap for improving the effectiveness, consistency, and responsiveness of the Coast Guard Marine Safety program to promote safe, secure, and environmentally sound maritime commerce. The Coast Guard will reinvigorate industry partnerships, improve mariner credentialing services, bolster inspector and investigator capacity, improve technical competencies, and expand rulemaking capability to ensure that we meet current and future industry needs. The Coast Guard will develop metrics to continually assess our progress towards achieving Marine Safety goals and objectives.

This strategy, to be developed in consultation with industry partners, will include the following decisive actions (some of which are underway) to improve Marine Safety mission effectiveness:

Improve the Coast Guard’s Marine Safety Capacity and Performance

- Increase marine inspector and investigator capacity.
- Strengthen marine inspection and investigation consistency through addition of civilian positions.
- Increase accessions from U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and maritime institutions.
- Strengthen Marine Safety career paths.
- Expand professional Marine Safety training and education.
- Expand opportunities for maritime industry training.
- Enhance engineering capacity for plan review, policy and standards development.

Enhance Service Delivery to Mariners and Industry Customers

- Establish Centers of Excellence.
- Improve information technology systems.
- Increase rulemaking capacity to meet regulatory implementation.
- Improve credentialing through greater efficiency, transparency and capacity.

Expand Outreach and Advisory Mechanisms for Industry and Communities

- Establish Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety, Security, and Stewardship.
- Establish a national council of maritime advisors for the Commandant.
- Exercise leadership at international, national, regional, state, and local safety, security, and environmental committees.

We are confident these courses of action will result in needed improvements, although many require additional planning to ensure proper implementation and efficacy. A more thorough review of resource requirements is needed before developing specific timelines and milestones.

“Enhancing the Coast Guard Marine Safety Program”

Current state. The Coast Guard’s Marine Safety program is responsible for ensuring the safe operation and navigation of some 20,000 U.S. and foreign-flagged vessels. We conduct over 70,000 domestic vessel inspections and 10,000 port state control examinations each year to safeguard maritime commerce, international trade and supply chain security. We also conduct 14,000 casualty, suspension and revocation, and civil penalty cases annually to leverage lessons-learned and prevent future maritime tragedies. These missions are accomplished by a cadre of approximately 1,000 uniformed and civilian inspectors, investigators and port state control officers stationed domestically and around the world. They are carried out through a shared commitment with industry to facilitate safe, secure, and environmentally sound marine transportation.

Discussion. The Coast Guard’s responsibility to improve Marine Safety service delivery is time-critical given growth trends in the maritime industry and increase in demand for Marine Safety services. Industry growth and increased complexity over the last 10 years outpaced commensurate growth in the Coast Guard Marine Safety program, resulting in a performance gap. For example, last year United States deep-draft seaports and seaport-related firms employed over 8 million American citizens while adding nearly \$2 trillion to our domestic economy. From 2002 to 2005, U.S. port calls of large, ocean-going merchant vessels (i.e., over 10,000 gross tons) increased nearly 10 percent to 61,047 according to U.S. Department of Transportation statistics. Moreover, over the last five years, the number of U.S.-flag passenger vessels increased by seven percent and offshore oil industry vessel growth exceeded 35 percent. We recognize industry’s concern that our Marine Safety program lacks sufficient capacity to be responsive, inclusive, accessible, and customer-focused. We share in their desire to aggressively address this concern.

Projected growth areas for Marine Safety services include:

- New inspection requirements for as many as 7,000 uninspected towing vessels;
- Market-driven shifts in port activity due to increased demand for such products as liquefied natural gas, petroleum, dangerous cargoes, and containerized freight;
- Proportional growth in marine investigations resulting from industry growth;
- Increased demand for commercial fishing vessel examinations; and
- Continued growth in requirements to publish implementing regulations.

An integrated Coast Guard approach to safety, environmental protection, waterways management, and security best ensures the long-term success of the global maritime transportation system. The goal in preventing or responding to major marine incidents, regardless of cause, is the same: to save lives, preserve property, protect the environment, and minimize disruption to the maritime transportation system. The Coast Guard’s operational model is flexible, adaptive, efficient and capable of succeeding with myriad

maritime scenarios. Today, as in the past, our safety, security, and stewardship program goals and authorities to act are inextricably linked.

Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, our longstanding industry partnerships were critical to protecting the global marine transportation system. These partnerships remain vital today. We must ensure resources match the growing demand for our Marine Safety services. Our marine safety capacity and effective engagement with stakeholders demand senior leadership's attention. We will improve Marine Safety program focus and performance.

Course of Action. The Commandant is directing the development of a strategy that includes the following courses of action, (some of which are underway):

Improve the Coast Guard's Marine Safety Program Capacity and Performance

Increase marine inspector and investigator capacity.

Within budget, the Coast Guard will add more marine inspectors, port state control officers, and investigators. We will use these full-time positions to meet current and anticipated growth in maritime commerce and expansion of the regulated fleet. Demand for inspection and investigation work is increasing and capacity to match these demands must be built and sustained as a result of growth factors such as projected Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) ships and facilities, thousands of towing vessel examinations, non-tank vessel response plan reviews, ballast water management oversight, and regulatory development.

Strengthen marine inspection and investigation consistency by adding civilian positions.

Within budget, we intend to increase the number of civilian inspectors and investigators. Additional civilian inspector/port state control officer positions and investigating officers will help the Coast Guard retain expertise and geographic-specific competencies while ensuring long-term continuity in critical mission areas. We will distribute civilian positions according to demand and to complement the military workforce. Military personnel must continue to serve as marine inspectors and investigators to ensure innovation, and garner requisite experience for future program management and command responsibilities. A blend of military and civilian personnel is critical to building and sustaining consistency and competence.

Increase accessions from U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and maritime institutions.

The Coast Guard will strengthen recruiting efforts at the maritime colleges through additional liaison officers and by seeking opportunities for Coast Guard officers to serve as faculty at those institutions. Maintaining and sustaining competency within the Marine Safety program begins with recruitment and accession of additional maritime professionals, and active partnerships with maritime educational institutions.

Strengthen Marine Safety career paths.

We will demonstrate the value the organization places on the Marine Safety profession by revising personnel management policies. These policies must continue to ensure a viable career path to the most senior ranks in the Coast Guard, and value and promote the competencies of marine safety specialists. These policies could include, but are not limited

to: direct commission programs; direction and guidance to officer selection panels relating to the need for specific Marine Safety specialties; increased tour lengths; incentives to retain qualified inspectors and investigators; institutional recognition of Marine Safety leadership positions in the field; and continuation contracts for officers possessing critical skills. Recognize those who advance from apprentice, to journeyman, to expert marine safety professional status.

Expand professional Marine Safety training and education.

We recently completed extensive review, update, and field testing of Marine Safety course and qualification material. The Coast Guard will expand formal and informal training and education opportunities to improve Marine Safety competencies, skills and qualifications. These programs will include additional resident educational opportunities for the military and civilian marine safety workforce, and enhanced pipeline training for field personnel to ensure better continuity and consistency in service. Through continuous evaluation, we will ensure training, education and qualification standards are responsive to the dynamics of the marine transportation system. A robust marine inspector and investigator workforce also requires additional expert field personnel to conduct unit training in order to build and sustain these critical competencies.

Expand opportunities for maritime industry training.

The Merchant Marine Industry Training (MMIT) program is a model of industry partnership and professional development. Therefore, the MMIT program will be expanded to include both formal and informal assignments to maximize interaction and experience. We will adjust the MMIT to industry's technological innovations, complexity, and growth as a means for the Coast Guard to better understand and address emerging safety, security, stewardship, and economic issues. The Coast Guard will engage industry within applicable legal and ethical guidelines to maximize training opportunities and fully immerse participants in industry operations. The Ship Rider and other industry familiarization programs will be offered to a larger group of Marine Safety professionals.

Enhance engineering capacity for plan review, policy, and standards development.

We will seek additional capacity and expertise for plan review of vessels and facilities. Increased technical capacity is needed to address plan review of commercial non-tank vessels, marine fire fighting and salvage, standards development and vessel construction specialties at Coast Guard Headquarters and the Marine Safety Center. Increased growth and complexity in ship design and construction, including high capacity fast ferries, LNG ships, mega container and cruise ships, and novel structural designs, call for an innovative and knowledgeable technical staff to develop guidance, standards, and policy. As industry evolves, so too does the demand for technical expertise.

Enhance Service Delivery to Mariners and Industry Customers

Establish Centers of Excellence.

We plan to establish additional Centers of Excellence (COE) to provide venues for professional development and exchange between industry and Coast Guard personnel. COEs will focus on specialized areas of industry to improve inspector competencies and promote consistency across ports. For example, the Coast Guard Cruise Ship COE in Miami, Florida was created to recognize and address cruise ship complexity, industry

growth, and attendant risk. Specialized vessel inspection approaches were developed to improve inspector competence, effectiveness, and efficiency in nationwide cruise ship inspections. The support staff manages a resident 6-day course which provides instruction on USCG policy, and covers technical and management issues for foreign flagged cruise ships. COEs are appropriate for existing industry sectors and projected growth areas including investigations, LNG ships, towing vessels, fishing industry vessels, and outer continental shelf activity. COEs also will provide deployable casualty response and surge capacity.

Improve information technology systems.

The Coast Guard will incorporate tools to improve access and the exchange of information between industry and government using existing marine exchanges as a model. Such systems provide real-time, technology-based information to capture and manage the maritime transportation system. The Coast Guard will enhance web-based portals for sharing information and lessons learned between Coast Guard field personnel and industry, and include Coast Guard office directories and contact methods. The Coast Guard also will provide help-desks and FAQs to facilitate transparency.

Increase rulemaking capacity to expedite regulatory implementation.

The Coast Guard will increase capacity to address current and anticipated rulemaking projects. Increased rulemaking capacity requires additional support for project management, rulemaking development, economic analysis, environmental analysis, technical writing, and administrative law capacity to ensure legal sufficiency and efficacy of implementing regulations. We will publish timely guidance to assist regulated industry with implementation. To the extent practicable, the Coast Guard also will prepare legislative change proposals that minimize required rulemaking process time.

Improve mariner credentialing through greater efficiency, transparency and capacity.

The National Maritime Center (NMC) consolidation began in 2005. Located in West Virginia, recent accomplishments include implementation of the Mission Management System and reduction in cycle time by 25 percent since September 2006. The following milestones will further improve service delivery to the mariner:

- Credentialing help desk fully staffed by February 2008;
- Online self-help application tracking and payment options via www.pay.gov;
- Bulk application processing for academies, schools and industry groups;
- Issue of merchant mariner licensing documents in less than one week; and
- Rebuild primary computer system and implement web-based processing.

Expand Outreach and Advisory Mechanisms for Industry and Communities

Establish an Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety, Security, and Stewardship

The Assistant Commandant for Marine Safety, Security, and Stewardship will direct and integrate Marine Safety, security, and environmental protection doctrine, policy, plans, and regulations. This flag officer will be the Coast Guard's national Marine Safety leader and will ensure alignment throughout the Coast Guard and among federal and international partners. This flag officer will be responsible for developing and promulgating national policy in prevention, response and waterways management, as well as leading and overseeing the important work of numerous federal advisory committees and industry partnerships.

Establish a national council of maritime advisors for the Commandant.

A council of maritime advisors will inform the Commandant of national maritime trends and issues of concern. This council will draw its membership from industry leaders, governors, academics, former military and government officials, and media.

Exercise leadership at international, national, regional, state, and local safety, security, and environmental committees

We will commit resources to lead, support, and engage these committees to collectively advance the shared goals of safety, security, and environmental stewardship. These fora also offer important opportunities to shape regulatory initiatives, and develop non-regulatory solutions where appropriate. We will incorporate customer engagement using quality processes to elicit maritime input as previously done with the "Prevention through People" philosophy.

Conclusion. The Coast Guard has established a clear way ahead to enhance the Marine Safety program. The proposed courses of action are responsive to external stakeholders and overseers, and supportive of work in progress and ongoing initiatives.