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MTSA Regulated Facility Operators and Security Course Providers:

Our nation is more secure today because of the hard work and patriotism of vessel and waterfront facility operators in supporting the goals and implementing the requirements of the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 (MTSA). Facility Security Officers (FSO) are vital to this process, and have a multitude of challenging responsibilities. Equally vital are the many companies that offer courses to train FSOs and other security personnel. One of the Coast Guard's goals is to ensure those courses meet regulatory requirements and provide quality, practical instruction.

Since 2004, the Maritime Administration (MARAD) has overseen a voluntary program that reviews course curriculum for compliance with MTSA regulations; the Coast Guard assumed that responsibility from MARAD October 1, 2014. Previous MARAD certifications approved under this voluntary program will remain valid. I strongly encourage FSOs and other maritime professionals to take courses that have been certified through the MARAD or the Coast Guard process.

Course providers may now submit a course to a Coast Guard accepted Quality Standard System (QSS) organization for review and certification. Course providers and mariners can find more information on this process on the Coast Guard's Homeport site, <http://homeport.uscg.mil>, by selecting the "Maritime Security" link on the left of the page, then on the "Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA)" link, and then on the "Maritime Transportation Security Act Training Courses" link under the "General Information" heading. This site also contains a document titled "MTSA Updated list of MTSA certified courses," which lists all certified maritime security courses. This information is also on our web page: <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/cg544/facilities.asp>.

The Coast Guard recognizes successful completion of a valid course certified under this process or previously certified under the MARAD contract as meeting certain training requirements under Title 33 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 104 and 105.

Regardless of claims made by course providers, courses and/or providers not on the Coast Guard's list, maintained on both Homeport and our web page, have either not submitted their courses for review or have not satisfactorily met the requirements to receive certification by the Coast Guard or MARAD. Course providers that believe the list is inaccurate or have questions regarding the status of their course's approval may contact my staff at the number provided below. Individuals may also contact this Office if they have questions regarding whether the courses they previously attended are certified.

The Coast Guard is working to complete proposed regulations for FSO Training and Certification to meet the requirements of the 2010 Coast Guard Authorization Act (CGAA) Section 821. Specifically, Section 821 requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish

comprehensive FSO training requirements, and to coordinate with MARAD in developing the FSO training curriculum. In late 2012, the Coast Guard hosted a public meeting at which the industry provided comments on the draft model course curriculum. We incorporated those comments into the draft model course.

We are now working to incorporate the model course into a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM). The NPRM will also address issues such as the frequency of training and whether or not courses may be grandfathered. While the regulatory development process is complex, I hope to publish that NPRM later this year. I will make sure the FSO and course provider communities are aware of the NPRM when it becomes available. The NPRM will include a public comment period of at least 60 days and we will welcome public comment at that time. This will provide the Coast Guard the necessary information to ensure the final rule reflects the needs of the industry and meets the intent of the original legislation.

Thank you for your commitment to maritime security. I am confident that cooperation amongst the maritime industry, course providers, and the Coast Guard will continue to build the secure ports and facilities that our nation depends upon.

If you have any questions on this matter, please contact the Coast Guard Office of Port and Facility Compliance (CG-FAC) at (202) 372-1132.

Sincerely,



A. E. TUCCI
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Chief, Office of Port and Facility Compliance