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MOC Policy Letter No. 3-99

From: Commandant
To: Distribution

JUL 27 1999

Subj: APPLICATION OF EMERGENCY CONTROL SYSTEMS FOR TANK BARGES

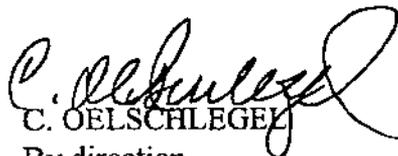
Ref: (a) Federal Register Vol. 63, No. 250, December 30, 1998, Interim Final Rule
(USCG 1998-4443)

1. Questions have arisen over the applicability of reference (a) to tank barges that are being pushed from behind or are being towed along side a towing vessel. Even though the Interim Final Rule was based on an incident involving a barge that was being towed on a hawser astern the towing vessel, the Interim Final Rule did not differentiate between these different configurations.

2. This policy is designed to clarify the intent of the regulations and Interim Final Rule. The Interim Rule revises the regulations found in Title 33, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 155.230. The revised regulations require an operable anchoring system and an emergency retrieval system on tank barges that operate in coastal waters and the territorial seas, the Great Lakes, Long Island Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and parts of Puget Sound. **The regulations are meant to apply only to those barges that are being pulled on a hawser astern the towing vessel, and not to barges being pushed ahead or towed along side.**

3. Barges that are secured to the side or bow of a tug, for the entire length of the voyage, would not be required to possess the anchor and barge retrieval systems. However, if the barge, for any reason, including emergency situations, **at any time during a voyage**, could be towed astern, the barge must have the required anchor and emergency retrieval systems in place.

4. All barges, including barges that are not required to comply with the Interim Final Rule, must always be under the control of the towing vessel. To ensure this, vessel operators are to arrange for a towing vessel to have sufficient horsepower to maintain navigational control of the tow at all times and in all weather conditions.


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By direction

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