

Marine Safety Newsletter

US Coast Guard Marine Safety and Environmental Protection Directorate

CG to Upgrade its Communications System

The National Distress and Response System Modernization Project, or NDRSMP, is a project that will help Coast Guard units communicate better with each other, with other agencies, and to pinpoint radio signals to find boaters in trouble.

Currently, the Coast Guard monitors channel 16 on a VHF-FM radio. Channel 16 is used for boats and ships to hail one another and is the International Distress Frequency. However, the boating population is much larger than it was 30 years ago when the system was implemented, therefore there is a lot of traffic on this one channel. In fact, if one person is talking on channel 16 then other calls may not be heard.

In addition to having overcrowded radio frequencies, the Coast Guard also has difficulty pinpointing where someone is calling from with the current radio system. An instrument hooked up to the radio can show Coast Guard radio operators generally which direction the signal is coming from, but only while the boater is on the radio.

With the new system, Coast Guard radio operators will be able to replay the message. With the improved signal reception and the replay, operators will be able to figure out the location within 25 square miles, thus saving valuable time.

The new system will: have enhanced VHF-FM coverage to close coverage gaps; provide position location beyond just simple directional finding; have digital selective calling; have digital voice recording with immediate enhanced playback capability; have multi-channel usage; have asset tracking; and have protected communications. It will also be capable of interoperability that crosses the spectrum from 100MHz to 1GHz, facilitating enhanced coordination and operations with various agencies and customers

The Coast Guard is pursuing its modernization initiative in two phases. The phases include Design Demonstration and Validation Phase with the Initial Operational Capability testing scheduled for 2002 or 2003, followed by the Full Scale Development Phase with implementation and completion scheduled for 2005 or 2006.

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The *Marine Safety Newsletter* is published by the USCG Marine Safety and Environmental Protection Directorate to collect and disseminate information of general interest to the maritime community. The monthly newsletter prints abstracts of major USCG rulemakings, studies, special projects, and related events. Articles from non-Coast Guard sources may not represent USCG policy or views.

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www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/gmhome.htm

June 2000



Vessel Oil Spill Incident Fax Reporting Form

The Coast Guard's Office of Response (G-MOR), in cooperation with the National Response Center (NRC), has updated the "Vessel Oil Spill Incident Fax Reporting Form," a report form based on the International Maritime Organization's notification format.

This form was designed to ease the burden of reporting spills and allow for quick and accurate reports from vessels underway. The time saved through this process allows a ship's master and crew to focus immediately on the response to an oil spill, thereby minimizing its environmental impact.

Initially, the fax form was tested as a spill reporting option for non-U.S. flag vessels covered by a Vessel Response Plan (VRP) or a Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (SOPEP). In light of successful prototype testing, the Coast Guard is authorizing use of this form for U.S. flag vessels as well. The vessel crew shall contact the NRC within fifteen minutes of faxing the form to confirm its receipt, ensure its legibility, and answer any follow-up questions.

The "Vessel Oil Spill Incident Fax Reporting Form" can be found on the VRP homepage website at: www.uscg.mil/vrp under the "Hot News!" items section. Any questions or comments about this initiative should be directed to LT Claudia Gelzer, VRP Program Manager, at (202) 267-1983.

WWW.



What's New on the World Wide Web

www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/gmhome.htm

NVIC 1-00 Guidance for The Establishment and Development of Harbor Safety Committees Under The Marine Transportation System (Mts) Initiative

NVIC 2-00 Inspection Guidance for Vessels Participants in Marine Events of National Significance

NVIC 3-00 Manning and Training Guidance for Fast Rescue Boats on United States Vessels

www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/nvic/

Rise in False Alarms Prompts Warning From Coast Guard



The Coast Guard says that distress calls that turn out to be hoaxes, are on the rise.

Fake distress calls are a dangerous and costly problem. They put unnecessary risk and stress on the rescue crews of the Coast Guard. So far this year, the Coast Guard has received 46 calls that have turned out to be hoaxes.

The Coast Guard does have technology that can trace a radio transmission to a narrow area, however, a radio transmission, unlike a telephone call, can not be traced directly back to the caller, officials said.

Hoaxes not only place Coast Guard officials in jeopardy, but they are also costly to taxpayers. In fact, each time a helicopter is sent out, it costs \$2,500.

Making phony distress calls is a crime punishable up to six years in jail and a \$250,000 fine.

Increased Violence at Sea

The U.S. Coast Guard said that its encounters at sea with Cuban immigrants are becoming increasingly more violent.

A video released on Tuesday, May 30, 2000, of a confrontation that took place on May 24, 2000, showed refugees throwing rocks, wrenches, nuts and bolts at a Coast Guard cutter off the coast of Key West, FL. One refugee even waved a machete. The men also brought a bag of rocks with them specifically to keep the crews at bay, they told the Coast Guard after being captured.

That confrontation is one of 13 in the past year during which Cuban migrants aggressively tried to ward off the Coast Guard — or hurt themselves — to avoid being returned to their homeland.

Over the past year, some Cuban men and women have poured gasoline on themselves and threatened to light a match to keep cutters away. One man slit his wrist with a soda can hoping to get a trip to the United States for medical attention, where he would likely have been allowed to stay.

In South Florida, the problem has been seen mainly among groups of Cuban migrants, while on the west coast of the United States, there have been similar reports of violence from groups of Chinese immigrants.



Military Fantasy Career Contest

The Department of Defense, in cooperation with Yahoo! Inc., launched an awareness initiative that will allow Internet users the opportunity to experience a "day in the life" of either a soldier, sailor, airman, Marine, and/or Coast Guardsman.

The "Fantasy Career in Today's Military Contest" will give contest applicants a chance to spend a few days with one of the military Services. Applicants will be required to complete an official entry form and submit an essay and resume through "Yahoo! Careers" homepage at <http://careers.yahoo.com>. The contest was launched to coincide with Armed Forces Day (May 20) and will last through Independence Day (July 4).

Each of the services will offer a prize and Pentagon officials hope the contest will catch the attention of potential recruits.

Contestants must be U.S. residents 18 or older, complete an entry form, submit a resume and answer a simple essay question through Yahoo! Each of the military Services – Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard — will review entries by civilian applicants. Each Service will then select and host one winner to take part in one of the following military careers:

- **Coast Guard:** Experience the many facets of search and rescue operations, including training as a rescue swimmer, riding in a 47-foot self-righting boat, and studying the skills of helicopter rescue
- **Air Force:** Experience a two-day adventure as an honorary F-15 pilot-in-training
- **Navy:** Fly to an aircraft carrier, join in flight operations, and observe operations in the combat director's center aboard this veritable floating city
- **Army:** Train with airborne paratroopers, an Apache helicopter pilot, and experience an actual tandem jump with the world-renowned Army Golden Knights
- **Marines:** Test physical and mental capabilities by going through the Marine Corps' Basic School and be taught how the Marines translate leadership instincts into action

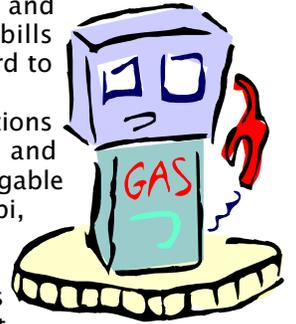
Winners will be announced in early August and the Fantasy Career military experience will be conducted between August 21 and September 30.

For news media inquiries, contact Lt. Col. Catherine Abbott, (703) 697-5134 or Maj. Tim Blair (703) 697-5133.

Higher Fuel Costs Causes Coast Guard to Cut Back Operations

With the exception of search and rescue missions, higher fuel bills have forced the U.S. Coast Guard to cut back on its operations.

Cut backs in routine operations have been made in 26 states and more than 10,000 miles of navigable rivers, including the Mississippi, Missouri, and Ohio Rivers. Coast Guard boats that would be out patrolling the waterways remain docked. Helicopters that would normally be flying drug interception missions remain grounded.



According to officials, fuel costs are approximately \$1 million more than the Coast Guard can afford. So rather than deplete its budget before the end of the year, Coast Guard officials have cut back on basic operations.

The Coast Guard has asked for more money from Congress, which has taken the request under consideration. Congress is considering a bill that would provide the Coast Guard with additional gas money, but that bill isn't expected to pass until August. That is near the end of the summer boating season and almost the end of the Coast Guard budget year, which concludes in September.

COAST GUARD FAST FACTS

During an average day the Coast Guard will...

- Save 14 lives
- Assist 328 people in distress
- Save \$2,490,000 in property
- Seize 209 pounds of marijuana and 170 pounds of cocaine worth \$9.2 million
- Service 150 aids to navigation
- Interdict 176 illegal immigrants
- Board 90 large vessels for port safety checks
- Process 120 Seamen's documents
- Investigate 17 marine accidents
- Inspect 64 commercial vessels



Outcome of IMO Sub-Committee on Ship Design & Equipment

The Ship Design and Equipment (DE) Sub-Committee held its 43rd session at IMO Headquarters on April 10-14, 2000, under the chairmanship of Mr. A. Chrysostomou (Cyprus).

Forty-six member states, one associate member, one observer from intergovernmental organizations, and 19 observers from nongovernmental organizations participated.

Three working groups (Development of Guidelines for Ships Operating in Ice-Covered Waters, Revision of Resolutions MEPC.60(33) and A.586(14) regarding pollution prevention equipment, and Revision of the High Speed Craft Code) and two drafting groups (International Approval Procedures for Life-Saving Appliances (LSA), and Development of Requirements for Wing-in-Ground (WIG) Craft) were established.

Three correspondence groups were also established to address intersessionally, Development of Guidelines for WIG Craft, Asbestos-Related Problems On Board Ships, and Revision of Resolution MEPC.60(33). All decisions of the Sub-Committee were consistent with U.S. objectives.

Highlights of the session include:

- Agreement on a MSC circular on covering Standardized Evaluation and Test Report Forms for Life-Saving Appliances to be used in conjunction with the LSA code and Resolution MSC.81(70); Revisions to the Draft Guidelines for Ships Operating in Ice-Covered Waters in accordance with the direction from MSC 71
- Acceptance of Proposed Amendments to SOLAS Regulation II-1/3-5 regarding the Prohibition of New Installations of Materials Containing Asbestos in All Ships: Agreement on Guidelines for the Safety of Passenger Submersible Craft
- Completion of Revisions to the High Speed Craft Code
- Agreement on Development of Guidelines on Representative Samples of the Fuel Delivered for Use On Board Ships

Mr. A Chrysostomou (Cyprus) and Captain J.E.C. Rocha (Brazil) were unanimously re-elected as Chairman and Vice-Chairman, respectively, of the S/C for 2001.

For any questions regarding the outcome of the IMO DE 43 meeting or IMO DE, please contact Mr. Wayne Lundy, G-MSE-3, at (202) 267-2206.

Notice of the Working Group on BLG of the SOLAS Subcommittee Meeting

The Working Group on Bulk Liquids and Gases (BLG) of the Subcommittee on Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) will conduct an open meeting at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, June 15, 2000 in Room 6319, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, 2100 Second Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20593-0001.

The purpose of the meeting is to finalize preparations for the Fifth Session of the Subcommittee on Bulk Liquids and Gases of the IMO which will be held on June 26-30, 2000, at the IMO Headquarters in London.

For further information contact: Commander R. F. Corbin, U.S. Coast Guard (G-MSO-3), 2100 Second Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20593-0001 or by calling (202) 267-1217.

UPCOMING IMO MEETINGS

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| June 12-16 | Council—84th session |
| June 14-15 | Technical Co-operation Committee (TC)—48th session |
| June 26-30 | Sub-committee on Bulk Liquids and Gases (BLG)—5th session |
| July 10-14 | Sub-committee on Safety of Navigation (NAV)—46th session |
| September 11-15 | Sub-committee on Stability and Load Lines and on Fishing Vessels Safety (SLF)—43rd session |
| September 18-22 | Twenty-Second Consultative Meeting of Contracting Parties to the London Convention 1972 |

Marine Log 2000: Success for the Human Element

The human element continues to be a high priority in the maritime industry's quest toward improved safer operating conditions. That was the general consensus at the 5th annual Human Element Conference held in Washington, DC in April. Presented by Marine Log in cooperation with the Coast Guard, this two-day conference examined human element issues concerning the supply of qualified mariners; fatigue; risk; and the Standards for Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW).

The first morning's session on the shortage of qualified mariners was held in a roundtable format with the six panel members representing shipowners, ship managers, maritime academies, training centers, maritime unions, and the Maritime Administration. Prompted by a series of questions from the moderator, these representatives discussed their respective views on the potential reasons for the shortage of qualified mariners, areas of the problem, factors that might be making a maritime career appear undesirable, and some potential measures for improving the problem. The roundtable was complemented by a presentation on the Coast Guard's perspective of this shortage, and a recruiting and retention success story by Princess Cruises.

The subject of fatigue dominated the afternoon session. A broad range of perspectives was offered, and comments from the audience showed their approval. Presentations ranged from general information on fatigue, such as knowing the factors that contribute to sleep debt and understanding the risk involved, to specific areas such as fatigue among pilots and the commercial fishing industry. Ocean Shipholdings outlined their alternate watch schedule, which has received wide acclaim among their licensed and unlicensed crew.

An interesting presentation discussed a study focused on the effects of low-level sedation on occupational performance, specifically how low-level sedation can impact safety in the marine industry. Each of the presenters on fatigue communicated that a proactive fatigue management approach, one accepted by all levels, is the most obtainable solution for the marine industry.

The second day of the conference began with a focus on risk. Incorporating risk into maritime operations is an important way of creating and maintaining a strong level of safety and human element awareness into the way that mariners operate. Presenters offered their experiences with risk assessments, noting the numerous benefits of being able to identify hazards and potential effects before accidents occur. One presentation examined some of the most frequent and expensive P&I claims that have their root causes in human error; many of the claims tied back to earlier conference presentations such as fatigued mariners (sometimes caused by crew shortage), as well as language problems and misunderstandings.

The final section of the conference focused on STCW, but it was an issue that had been mentioned throughout many of the presentations. STCW continues to be a common topic of discussion among mariners, and as the 2002 deadline looms closer, compliance is a major concern for many companies and individuals. Two presenters provided insightful information on the process of achieving STCW compliance, including one presentation on STCW Courses for Licensed Mariners and Shoreside Management.

One comment from a conference participant summed up the purpose of the conference well — "There can never be too strong of a focus on the human element in the maritime industry, because our people are our most valuable resource."

For additional information on any of the presentations, please contact the PTP Coordination Staff at (202) 267-2997.

PRINCIPLES

- Take a Quality Approach
- Honor the Mariner
- Seek Non-Regulatory Solutions
- Share Commitment
- Manage Risk

VISION

To achieve the world's safest, most environmentally sound and cost-effective marine operations by emphasizing the role of people in preventing casualties and pollution.

GOALS

- Know More
- Train More
- Do More
- Offer More
- Cooperate More

Contact us directly with your PTP story:

Commandant (G-MSE-1), U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, 2100 Second Street, SW, Washington, DC 20593-0001; (202) 267-2997; (202) 267-4816 FAX; e-mail: fldr-he@comdt.uscg.mil

Contributions

Marine Safety Newsletter and *Proceedings* magazine welcome manuscript and photo submissions for publication. No payment can be made for manuscripts or photos submitted for publication. However, an author or photo credit byline will be given. The Editor reserves the right to make any editorial changes in manuscripts, which he believes will improve the material without altering the intended meaning. All correspondence should be addressed to: Editor, U.S. Coast Guard, National Maritime Center, 4200 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 510, Arlington, VA 22203-1804.

Deadlines

- The Marine Safety Newsletter is published monthly on the 5th of each month.
- The deadline for articles, calendar events, and regulatory information is on the 25th of the previous month.
- Readers receive their copy of the *Marine Safety Newsletter* around the 15th of each month.

Up to the Minute News

Items missing the deadline for the *Marine Safety Newsletter* are posted on the World Wide Web at:

www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/gmhome.htm.

Address Changes

If you would like to receive the Marine Safety Newsletter or change your address (be sure to send label or include code number), please call **(202) 493-1056** or fax **(202) 493-1065**.

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