

PLAN TO LICENSE OPERATORS OF FEDERALLY DOCUMENTED COMMERCIAL
FISHING INDUSTRY VESSELS OF LESS THAN 200 GROSS TONS

SLIDE 1 1. Good (morning/afternoon). I'm LCDR David Paxton from the Qualification Branch of the Merchant Vessel Personnel Division. I here today to give you four briefings. This seven minute brief will be on the plan to license operators of Commercial Fishing Industry Vessels.

SLIDE 2 The Commercial Fishing Industry Vessel Safety Act of 1988 required the Coast Guard to provide a plan to license operators of federally documented commercial fishing vessels. This requirement was based on the historically poor safety record of the commercial fishing industry and on Congressional desire to improve that record.

On January 13, 1992, the Department of Transportation forwarded the Plan to Congress. The primary goal of the licensing plan was to reduce the high percentage of casualties related to Human Factors.

SLIDE 3 It is estimated that approximately 80% of maritime casualties are contributed to human error. The Marine Board National Research Council Reported that human factors are implicated as a direct or secondary cause in many incidents, especially those

resulting in fatalities.

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SLIDE 5 On May 24, 1993 a joint CG/CFIVAC recommendation was forwarded to Congress in the form of a revised Executive Summary. The joint recommendation utilizes a licensing system that is consistent with current Coast Guard licensing requirements. *but* will authorize training organizations to examine and certify individuals as meeting the required professional knowledge and skill levels for a license. *NO CG Exam*

SLIDE 6 Within the parameters addressed by Congress, between 5 net tons and less than 200 gross tons, the competency standards would form the basis for two new licenses: Master of fishing vessels of less than 79 feet, and Master of fishing vessels of

less than 200 GT. The licensing plan only applies to those commercial fishing vessels with an admeasurement of at least five net tons for which a Certificate of Documentation is required by the Coast Guard, it does not affect the smaller state numbered vessels.

SLIDE 7 To accommodate fishermen in remote areas of the country the majority of applications and associated paperwork will be processed through the mail.

SLIDE 8 To improve the application process and to minimize confusion, training organizations will be encouraged to assist the students in organizing their applications prior to mailing to the Coast Guard for evaluation and license issuance. Applicants must produce a certificate of training from an approved course and satisfy the other requirements in order to obtain a license.

SLIDE 9 Presently, there is no existing statutory authority to require fishing vessels of less than 200 gross tons or those fishing vessels over 200 gross tons operating solely within the Boundary Line to have a licensed operator on board. Title V of the Marine Safety Act of 93, would amend Title 46 USC Chapter 89 to require all Federally documented uninspected commercial fishing vessels to be operated by an individual licensed by the Coast Guard. The Marine Safety Act was forwarded to Congress on May 19, 1993.

SLIDE 10 The estimated Coast Guard resources needed for issuing the initial 57,000 original licenses will require 18 licensing officials and 3 staff officials at a cost of approximately one million dollars per year. Future annual recurring resource needs would be similar.

SLIDE 11 To help educate the fishing and training industries about the licensing plan, the Coast Guard produced an eight minute video that illustrates the dangers of the fishing industry and promotes the safety benefits. The video gives a basic explanation of how the licensing plan will be implemented, and how the Coast Guard is working with the fishing industry by using third party training, allowing applications by mail, encouraging remote training by the training industry, and allowing extensive grandfathering. For your viewing, I have a copy of the video for you.

To market the legislative proposal, the Coast Guard is: forwarding, under four and two star letters, copies of the video to selected Members of Congress and all the members of the Coast Guard advisory committees.

SLIDE 12 In addition, briefings will be conducted for key congressional staffers on the importance of this safety issue and the need to implement legislation for the training and licensing

of operators of commercial fishing industry vessels.

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Both the Coast Guard and Committee feel that the licensing of commercial fishing vessel operators, with the emphasis on training, is a needed step to improve the safety record of the fishing vessel industry and to reduce casualties contributed to human error.