

§ 115.650 Alternative Hull Examination (AHE) Program options: Divers or underwater ROV.

To complete your underwater survey, you may use divers or an underwater remotely operated vehicle (ROV).

(a) If you use divers to conduct the underwater survey, you must—

(1) Locate the vessel so the divers can work safely under the vessel's keel and around both sides. The water velocity must be safe for dive operations;

(2) Provide permanent hull markings, a temporary grid system of wires or cables spaced not more than 10 feet apart and tagged at one-foot intervals, or any other acoustic or electronic positioning system approved by the OCMI to identify the diver's location with respect to the hull, within one foot of accuracy;

(3) Take ultrasonic thickness gaugings at a minimum of 5 points on each plate, evenly spaced;

(4) Take hull plating thickness gaugings along transverse belts at the bow, stern, and midships, as a minimum. Plating thickness gaugings must also be taken along a longitudinal belt at the wind and water strake. Individual gaugings along the transverse and longitudinal belts must be spaced no more than 3 feet apart;

(5) Ensure the third party examiner observes the entire underwater examination process;

(6) Record the entire underwater survey with audio and video recording equipment and ensure that communications between divers and the third party examiner are recorded; and

(7) Use appropriate equipment, such as a clear box, if underwater visibility is poor, to provide the camera with a clear view of the hull.

(b) You may use an underwater ROV to conduct the underwater survey. The underwater ROV operating team, survey process and equipment, quality assurance methods, and the content and format of the survey report must be accepted by the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI) prior to conducting the survey. If you choose this option, you must—

(1) Locate the vessel to ensure that the underwater ROV can operate effectively under the vessel's keel and around both sides;

(2) Employ divers to examine any sections of the hull and appurtenances that the underwater ROV cannot access or is otherwise unable to evaluate; and

(3) If the OCMI determines that the data obtained by the ROV, including non-destructive testing results, readability of the results, and positioning standards, will not integrate into the data obtained by the divers, then a third party examiner must be present during the divers portion of the examination.

[USCG-2000-6858, 67 FR 21081, Apr. 29, 2002, as amended by USCG-2000-6858, 69 FR 47383, Aug. 5, 2004]

§ 115.655 Hull examination reports.

(a) If you use only divers for the underwater survey portion of the Alternative Hull Examination (AHE), you must provide the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI), with a written hull examination report. This report must include thickness gauging results, bearing clearances, a copy of the audio and video recordings, and any other information that will help the OCMI evaluate your vessel for a credit hull exam. The third party examiner must sign the report and confirm the validity of its contents.

(b) If you use an underwater remotely operated vehicle (ROV) as the predominate means to examine the vessel's underwater hull plating, you must provide the OCMI with a report in a format that is acceptable to the OCMI, per § 115.650(b) of this part.

(c) The OCMI will evaluate the hull examination report and grant a credit hull exam if satisfied with the condition of the vessel. If approved and you exclusively use divers to examine the hull plating, you may receive a credit hull exam to 36 months. (Underwater examinations are required twice every 5 years). If approved and you use an underwater ROV as the predominant means to examine the underwater hull plating, you may receive a credit hull exam up to 60 months (5 years).

(d) At least 60 days prior to each scheduled underwater exam, the owner may request a waiver from the OCMI if:

(1) A satisfactory exam has been completed within the last three years;