

Maritime Safety

ISSUE: In the last century, the “safety first” mantra was at the heart of U.S. marine transportation industry operations. Today, it still is a top priority, although it now shares that preeminent position with concerns over security and the environment. Domestic maritime safety regulations are issued and enforced by a number of Federal and state agencies, most notably the U.S. Coast Guard, but also the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The U.S. marine transportation industry also complies with International Maritime Organization (IMO) safety agreements and protocols to which the United States is a signatory and International Labor Organization (ILO) maritime labor conventions. The Maritime Administration is working with stakeholders not only to develop sensible requirements, but to find the most efficient and effective methods to actually implement them.

ACTION NEEDED: None – For Information Only.

BACKGROUND:

The Maritime Administration has a key role in developing both the IMO rules and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards by reason of its expertise in ship design and engineering, operations, repair and maintenance experience; its relationship with the marine transportation community; and its contribution of ships for testing platforms. The Maritime Administration is a member of several technical committees including both the IMO and ISO committees.

The Agency is a principal in the interagency Ship Structure Committee (SSC). Currently, SSC is examining wind and wave loads and their impact on ship and offshore structures; the fatigue and fracture characteristics of composite, steel and aluminum building materials; hull inspection and maintenance issues; and detail design and fabrication technologies. The Agency also works in concert with the American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) Technical Committees to review proposed rule changes governing shipbuilding.

Furthermore, the Maritime Administration represents the U.S. Navy Program Office overseeing various technical panels of the National Shipbuilding Research Program/Advanced Shipbuilding Enterprise (NSRP/ASE). This program is designed to address technical, management, training and other issues related to military and dual use vessel construction. The Maritime Administration is also at the forefront of efforts to ensure the safe and secure transportation of liquefied natural gas (LNG), through its licensing of new, safe offshore ports that will be used by LNG tankers.

The Maritime Administration’s goal with these activities is to address the public’s concerns about safety in the marine field, while still allowing efficient commercial operations.

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