

**§ 115.620 Description of the Alternate Hull Examination (AHE) Program for certain passenger vessels.**

The Alternate Hull Examination (AHE) Program provides you with an alternative to drydock examination by allowing your vessel's hull to be examined while it remains afloat. If completed using only divers, this program has four steps: the application process, the preliminary examination, the pre-survey meeting, and the hull examination. If a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) is used during the program the preliminary exam step may be omitted. Once you complete these steps, the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI) will evaluate the results and accept the examination as a credit hull exam if the vessel is in satisfactory condition. If divers are exclusively used for the underwater survey portion of the examination process, you may receive credit for a period of time such that subsequent AHEs would be conducted at intervals of twice in every five years, with no more than three years between any two AHEs. If an underwater ROV is used as the predominant method to examine the vessel's underwater hull plating, you may receive credit up to five years. At the end of this period, you may apply for further participation under the AHE Program.

[USCG-2000-6858, 67 FR 21080, Apr. 29, 2002]

**§ 115.625 Eligibility requirements for the Alternative Hull Examination (AHE) Program for certain passenger vessels.**

(a) Your vessel may be eligible for the AHE Program if—

- (1) It is constructed of steel or aluminum;
- (2) It has an effective hull protection system;
- (3) It has operated exclusively in fresh water since its last drydock examination;
- (4) It operates in rivers or protected lakes; and
- (5) It operates exclusively in shallow water or within 0.5 nautical miles from shore.

(b) In addition to the requirements in paragraph (a) of this section, the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI) will evaluate the following in-

formation when determining your vessel's eligibility for the AHE Program:

- (1) The overall condition of the vessel, based on its inspection history;
- (2) The vessel's history of hull casualties and hull-related deficiencies; and
- (3) The AHE Program application, as described in § 115.630 of this part.

(c) When reviewing a vessel's eligibility for the AHE program, the OCMI may modify the standards given by paragraph (a)(5) of this section where it is considered safe and reasonable to do so. In making this determination, the OCMI will consider the vessel's overall condition, its history of safe operation, and any other factors that serve to mitigate overall safety risks.

[USCG-2000-6858, 67 FR 21080, Apr. 29, 2002]

**§ 115.630 The Alternative Hull Examination (AHE) Program application.**

If your vessel meets the eligibility criteria in § 115.625 of this part, you may apply to the AHE Program. You must submit an application at least 90 days before the requested hull examination date to the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI) who will oversee the survey. The application must include—

- (a) The proposed time and place for conducting the hull examination;
- (b) The name of the participating diving contractor and underwater remotely operated vehicle (ROV) company which must be accepted by the OCMI under § 115.650;
- (c) The name and qualifications of the third party examiner. This person must be familiar with the inspection procedures and his or her responsibilities under this program. The OCMI has the discretionary authority to accept or deny use of a particular third party examiner using the criteria established in 46 CFR 114.400;

(d) A signed statement from your vessel's master, chief engineer, or the person in charge describing the vessel's overall condition, level of maintenance, known or suspected damage, underwater body cleanliness, and the anticipated draft of the vessel at the time of the examination;

(e) Plans or drawings that illustrate the external details of the hull below the sheer strake;

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(f) A detailed plan for conducting the hull examination in accordance with §§ 115.645 and 115.650 of this part, which must address all safety concerns related to the removal of sea valves during the inspection; and

(g) A preventative maintenance plan for your vessel's hull, its related systems and equipment.

[USCG-2000-6858, 67 FR 21080, Apr. 29, 2002]

### § 115.635 Preliminary examination requirements.

(a) If you exclusively use divers to examine the underwater hull plating, you must arrange to have a preliminary examination conducted by a third party examiner, with the assistance of qualified divers. The purpose of the preliminary examination is to assess the overall condition of the vessel's hull and identify any specific concerns to be addressed during the underwater hull examination.

(b) If you use an underwater ROV as the predominate means to examine your vessel's hull plating, a preliminary examination and the participation of a third party examiner will not be necessary.

(c) The preliminary examination is required only upon the vessel's entry or review into the AHE program.

[USCG-2000-6858, 67 FR 21081, Apr. 29, 2002]

### § 115.640 Pre-Survey meeting.

(a) You must conduct a pre-survey meeting to discuss the details of the AHE procedure with the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI). If you exclusively use divers to examine the underwater hull plating, the third party examiner must attend the meeting and you must present the results of the preliminary examination. If you use an underwater remotely operated vehicle (ROV) as the predominate means to examine the vessel's hull plating, then a representative of the ROV operating company must attend the pre-survey meeting and address the underwater ROV's capabilities and limitations related to your vessel's hull design and configuration.

(b) A vessel owner, operator, or designated agent must request this meet-

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ing in writing at least 30 days in advance of the examination date.

[USCG-2000-6858, 67 FR 21081, Apr. 29, 2002]

### § 115.645 Alternative Hull Examination (AHE) Procedure.

(a) To complete the underwater survey you must—

(1) Perform a general examination of the underwater hull plating and a detailed examination of all hull welds, propellers, tailshafts, rudders, and other hull appurtenances;

(2) Examine all sea chests;

(3) Remove and inspect all sea valves in the presence of a marine inspector;

(4) Remove all passengers from the vessel when the sea valves are being examined, if required by the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI);

(5) Allow access to all internal areas of the hull for examination, except internal tanks that carry fuel (unless damage or deterioration is discovered or suspect), sewage, or potable water. Internal sewage and potable water tanks may be examined visually or by non-destructive testing to the satisfaction of the attending marine inspector; and

(6) Meet the requirements in § 115.650 of this part.

(b) A marine inspector may examine any other areas deemed necessary by the OCMI.

(c) If the AHE reveals significant deterioration or damage to the vessel's hull plating or structural members, the OCMI must be immediately notified. The OCMI may require the vessel be drydocked or otherwise taken out of service to further assess the extent of damage or to effect permanent repairs if the assessment or repairs cannot be completed to the satisfaction of the OCMI while the vessel is waterborne.

[USCG-2000-6858, 67 FR 21081, Apr. 29, 2002]

### § 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