

USCG Cruise Ship NCOE Field Notice



U.S. Coast Guard
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Cruise Ships Operating with Additional Watercraft for Tendering or Excursions

This field notice provides guidance to OCMI's evaluating compliance for additional watercraft carried by Foreign Passenger Vessels for the purpose of tendering in remote locations or for providing excursions for passengers. The initial consideration OCMI's face when determining examination standards for additional watercraft is compliance with the Passenger Vessel Services Act (PVSA). While [U.S. Customs and Border Protection \(CBP\) Ruling, HQ H311571](#) is helpful in clarifying coastwise trade considerations applicable to additional watercraft used in tendering and/or excursion operations in U.S. waters, OCMI's should always recommend operators contact CBP for disposition of their case. When Foreign Passenger Vessels carrying the additional watercraft are examined, the lead PSCO should communicate with the master to determine the operating conditions of the watercraft. The PSCO should then follow the guidance in this field notice based on the desired watercraft usage. If the additional watercraft is intended for use in both tendering and excursions, the PSCO should follow this guidance for excursion vessels.

If the ship intends to use additional watercraft for *tendering* in U.S. waters, the applicable standard for additional watercraft used as tenders is the IMO Lifesaving Appliances (LSA) Code and should be documented accordingly by the ship's flag/classification society. If there are questions regarding a tendering vessel's documentation or compliance with the LSA code, the PSCO should contact the Cruise Ship National Center of Expertise for assistance.

If the ship intends to use additional watercraft for passenger *excursions* in U.S. waters, the watercraft used must be coastwise-qualified, and treated as U.S. flagged passenger vessels complying with either 46 CFR subchapter C or 46 CFR subchapter T, depending on the number of passengers carried. The lead PSCO should ensure that inspections on the additional watercraft are carried out with personnel certified with the relevant competency(s), and are documented in accordance with the relevant policy for U.S. passenger vessel inspections. Additionally, the PSCO should communicate with all other OCMI's where the excursion watercraft operations are planned and add a special note in the Foreign Passenger Vessel's MISLE profile.

If a Foreign Passenger Vessel intends to use any additional watercraft that does not meet the guidance above, the field unit should issue a COTP Order under the authority of the Ports and Waterways Safety Act preventing the unauthorized operation of the watercraft. PSCOs may encounter use of the European Union Recreational Craft Directive 94/25/EC, as amended, as an international standard for recreational vessels. However, this Directive is limited in scope and is not considered applicable for passenger vessel operations in U.S. waters.

Questions regarding the additional watercraft on cruise ships for excursions or tendering should be forwarded to the National Technical Advisor for the Cruise Ship National Center of Expertise at (954) 767-2140 or by email at CSNCOE@uscg.mil.