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U.S. COAST GUARD
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NVC 12-69

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NAVIGATION AND VESSEL DETECTION CIRCULAR No. 12-69

Subj: Special Examination In Lieu of Drydocking for Large Mobile Drilling Units

- Purpose. To set forth procedures to be used when conducting an examination in lieu of drydocking on large mobile drilling units. This circular does not establish a new requirement but is intended to provide uniform procedures for an existing requirement.
- Discussion. In recent years, certain types of mobile drilling units have been built and certificated which are so large that they cannot be handled by any existing drydock facility. These units have not been exempted from the routine drydock requirements of the regulations under which they were certificated. In view of the above, a special examination is required to provide the information normally obtained during a drydock examination.
- Action. Special examinations in lieu of drydocking will be conducted in accordance with the procedures set forth in enclosure (1) insofar as they are applicable to the unit being examined. The interval between examinations will be as specified in the applicable regulations. Until such time as the Coast Guard offers inspection service at overseas locations, it is the responsibility of the owner to conduct an examination in accordance with the procedures set forth herein in cases where a drydock examination becomes due while the vessel is operating at an overseas location. The results of this owner conducted examination shall be entered in the vessel's log book.

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Encl: (1) Examination Procedures

Dist: (SDL No. 89)

A: None

B: n(45); c(10); q(6); w(3); bp(1)

C: m(4); o(2)

D: i(2); k(1)

E: o(2)

F: None

List 112-155

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EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

1. The purpose of an examination of the underwater body is to make an evaluation of the condition of the hull and its fittings. Of primary concern are the effects of corrosion, and hull damage. If these are not detected and corrective action taken, they could lead to reduced strength and loss of hull integrity. Insofar as is practicable, the special examination in lieu of drydocking shall be conducted using the same procedures as in a regular drydocking examination. The guidelines contained in the current Notes on Inspection and Repair of Steel Hulls are applicable. Special procedures necessary because of the nature of these vessels are discussed below.
2. In lieu of drydocking, large mobile drilling units shall be placed in their lightest draft condition consistent with adequate stability. The area above this waterline shall be examined by traditional means. Particular attention shall be paid to areas of high stress such as joints of structural members. The remaining submerged area of the hull shall be inspected by independent divers acceptable to the OCGI. In addition, underwater television shall be employed to give a visual presentation to the inspector. A permanent magnetic tape record of the TV presentation shall be retained, by the owner, until the next examination. The hull shall be cleaned to the degree necessary to allow an adequate determination of the hull condition. The underwater area of the hull shall be thickness gauged to the degree necessary for the OCGI to ascertain the condition of the hull. This gauging may be accomplished either by underwater ultrasonic testing, or by ultrasonic testing internally. The method and procedures used in the ultrasonic gauging shall be acceptable to the OCGI. Fittings which penetrate the hull shall be given the same examination as is accomplished at a regular drydocking. All internal compartments shall be entered and visually examined.
3. If acceptable to the OCGI, at every second examination, the owner may have the examination conducted while the unit is at its working draft. This examination shall be conducted as above with the following exceptions:
 - (a) The hull gauging will, of necessity, have to be accomplished using underwater ultrasonic techniques.
 - (b) In addition, a representative number of welds in high stress areas shall be examined using underwater ultrasonic techniques acceptable to the OCGI. Records of indications, such as sketches of detected flaws, will be maintained in sufficient form to be used for comparative purposes during subsequent inspections.
 - (c) The only internal compartments required to be entered and examined at this examination will be those which can be made accessible in the working condition.
4. Prior to the examination, the owner shall submit an inspection plan to the OCGI for his approval. The plan shall set forth the draft at which the unit is to be examined, the divers to be used, method of visual presentation, method of underwater cleaning, method of gauging, the locations that are to be gauged, the hull fittings to be opened, compartments to be opened for