

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *When will the new regulations for Towing Vessels be published?*

A: The Coast Guard continues working on publishing the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) for the inspection for certification of towing vessels. As of August 09 the NPRM is being cleared for publishing. Once published, we anticipate public meetings will be held in various locations allowing interested parties to discuss the proposed rules.

Q: *What Towing Vessel will be required to be inspected under the new rules?*

A: The NPRM associated with the inspection for certification of towing vessels will identify those towing vessels that Coast Guard proposes will be required to obtain a certificate of inspection (COI) and the time frame for obtaining a COI.

Q: *How long will it take to examine my Towing Vessel?*

A: Examination can take from 30 minutes to a few hours depending on the size and complexity of your vessel. By conducting a pre-inspection of your vessel utilizing the exam forms, available on line or at a local Coast Guard unit, you can address issues prior to a Coast Guard exam and make the exam go quicker & smoother. Schedule your industry initiated exam with your local Coast Guard Sector today!

Q: *What regulations apply to my Towing Vessel now?*

A: In general, regulations that currently apply to Towing Vessels may be found in Title 46 and 33 of the Code of Federal Regulations. For vessels that go on International Voyages certain parts of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) also apply. You may obtain a copy of the USCG Requirements for Uninspected Towing Vessels on-line at the web pages provide in this brochure, or through your local Coast Guard Sector or District office.



To obtain general information regarding TVBP and download the related documents mentioned in this brochure, visit the following Coast Guard internet web-site:

Homeport

WEBPAGE ADDRESS:

<https://homeport.uscg.mil>

Path:

Missions>Domestic Vessels>Uninspected Vessels>Towing Vessels

E-MAIL ADDRESS:

hqs-pf-flidr-g-pcv@USCG.MIL



United States Coast Guard

**Towing
Vessel
Bridging
Program**



The Transition from Uninspected to Inspected

The Act

Pursuant to the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2004, Pub. L. 108-293 of August 9, 2004, a significant regulatory project is underway that would subject the majority of commercial towing vessels to Inspection. In the period between the current and future state of towing vessel safety oversight, a Towing Vessel Bridging Program has been initiated to ease the transition and ensure that both the Coast Guard and the towing vessel industry are informed and prepared to meet the new requirements to be finalized in Subchapter M.

The Objective

The Coast Guard will accomplish this goal by enhancing, improving, and increasing interactions with the towing vessel industry, and by acclimating all involved with the procedures, policy, requirements and administration of existing and, as implementation draws closer, new Subchapter M regulations. To further these ends, during this period of transition the Coast Guard will conduct extensive industry outreach, properly train our people, and will examine every uninspected towing vessel (UTV) that could be inspected under Subchapter M.

Elements of the Bridging Program

There are five elements to the Towing Vessel Bridging Program: Industry Outreach; Education and Qualification; Industry Initiated Exams; Risk-Based Targeted Exams; and Law Enforcement Boardings and Surge Operations.

Implementation

The bridging program will be implemented in three phases.

Phase 1—Getting the word out

The initial focus of Phase 1 will be on industry outreach and Coast Guard personnel education, and qualification. The focus will shift to conducting Industry Initiated Examinations after Coast Guard personnel are trained and qualified to perform towing vessel examinations. Also during Phase 1, the Towing Vessel National Center of Expertise in Paducah, KY will develop a risk assessment tool that will be used in Phase 2. Phase 1 will commence during the summer of 2009 with an anticipated duration of up to 18 months, but will be scaled based on progress in meeting industry demand for exams.

Phase 2—Risk-Based exams & Formal training

During Phase 2, the focus will be on Risk-Based Targeted Examinations. In addition, the Towing Vessel National Center of Expertise and Coast Guard Training Center Yorktown will develop and deliver training in preparation for Towing Vessel Inspections that will occur later in Phase 3. The risk-based tool developed in Phase 1 will be employed to determine towing vessel examination priority. Phase 2 activities will occur after the industry has been given the opportunity to participate in and the Coast Guard has satisfactorily time to conduct Industry Initiated Examinations, and will continue until Subchapter M implementation.

Phase 3—Issue Certificates of Inspection

Phase 3 will commence with the implementation of the new Subchapter M towing vessel inspection regulations and issuance of Certificates of Inspection (COI). We anticipate that the risk-based tool developed and employed in Phase 2, or an enhanced version, will be used to determine priorities for issuing COIs. The Towing Vessel National Center of Expertise and Training Center Yorktown will continue to develop and deliver formal towing vessel inspections training during this phase.

Guiding Principles

The purpose of this program is to ease the towing vessel industry's transition from an uninspected to an inspected regime. In all encounters with the towing industry our approach will be measured, professional, and, to the greatest degree possible, in the spirit of cooperation, while ultimately ensuring compliance with applicable safety, security, and environmental protection regulations.

Workgroups

Workgroups comprised of Coast Guard and Towing Vessel Industry representatives from around the country worked diligently to develop products for the Towing Vessel Bridging Program. These products include: The Towing Vessel Outreach, Orientation, and Indoctrination Workbook; USCG Requirements for Uninspected Towing Vessels Guide; and Exam Forms with instructions.

Industry Initiated Exams

To schedule an exam contact your local Coast Guard Sector or Marine Safety Unit. If you can not locate an office near you, contact the Coast Guard District or Area Towing Vessel Coordinator at one of the following numbers:

- D1 Boston, MA (617) 223-8272
- D5 Portsmouth, VA (757) 398-6554
Atlantic Area (757) 398-7720
- D7 Miami, FL (305) 415-6868
- D8 New Orleans, LA (540) 671-2264
- D9 Cleveland, OH (216) 902-6045
- D11 Alameda, CA (510) 437-3754
Pacific Area (510) 437-5847
- D13 Seattle, WA (206) 220-7216
- D14 Honolulu, HI (808) 535-3415
- D17 Juneau, AK (907) 463-2815