



Dockside Safety Examinations

The Commercial Fishing Industry Vessel Safety Act of 1988 and the subsequent Requirements for Commercial Fishing Industry Vessels in 46 CFR Part 28 were intended to reduce commercial fishing vessel fatalities and losses. While there is no requirement for fishing vessels to be inspected, fish processing vessels and fish tender vessels engaged in the Aleutian Trade must undergo a third party examination once every two years.

To help fishermen understand the regulations and requirements for their vessels, the Coast Guard instituted a Dockside Safety Examination Program. These examinations are voluntary, no-fault, and non-adversarial in nature. They serve as an information resource, encourage compliance with the regulations, and discourage unsafe operations. Upon successful completion of a dockside examination, a vessel will be issued an Examination Decal.



Dockside safety examinations are generally conducted by Coast Guard active duty, Reserve, Auxiliary, or civilian employees at no cost to the fishermen. They may also be conducted by members of a third party or similarly qualified organization for a nominal fee.

During a dockside examination, the examiner will check that all the required safety and lifesaving equipment and systems are on board for that type vessel and where it will be operating. The examiner will check that the equipment is installed properly and has been serviced and inspected as required. Licenses, certificates, registrations, documents, and placards required on the vessel or for the crew will be checked. The examiner will also check on required navigational safety items and pollution prevention equipment, and that emergency instructions, drills, and safety orientations are being conducted, if applicable.

A copy of the examination booklet will be provided to you with a list of deficiencies or recommendations for action. No citations/penalties will be issued for any outstanding items from a dockside examination.



If your vessel is found to be in full compliance with the requirements, a safety decal will be issued and installed on, or adjacent to a starboard, forward, pilot house window. The decal is considered valid for a period of two years. Its display serves as an indicator to boarding officers that your vessel has been examined comprehensively dockside and was found to be in full compliance with all applicable Federal regulations.

An important reason for scheduling and successfully completing a dockside examination now is that if your vessel is required to carry a NMFS Observer, you must have a safety decal. Other reasons for you to get a dockside safety examination include:

- It will be conducted at your convenience;
- It increases your chances for a safe return;
- It should reduce the length of time the Coast Guard spends on your vessel, if you are boarded;
- It reduces the chances for problems being found by the Coast Guard, if you are boarded; and
- It reduces the chance of your voyage being terminated for safety violations.

So, be safe and be in compliance. Visit www.FishSafe.info to schedule a free dockside examination. Or, call a Coast Guard District Fishing Vessel Safety Coordinator at:

- (617) 223-8440 for the 1st CG District;
- (757) 398-6554 for the 5th CG District;
- (305) 415-6868 for the 7th CG District;
- (504) 671-2154 for the 8th CG District;
- (216) 902-6343 for the 9th CG District;
- (510) 437-5931 for the 11th CG District;
- (206) 220-7226 for the 13th CG District;
- (808) 541-2118 for the 14th CG District; or
- (907) 463-2810 for the 17th CG District.



For more safety information or to view other references, visit our Web Site at www.FishSafe.info.