



# The Cruise Ship Round Turn

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## CRUISE SHIP NATIONAL CENTER OF EXPERTISE

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## A Word from the Chief Traveling Marine Inspector

by Captain Aaron Demo  
*Chief, Traveling Marine Inspectors and Quality Assurance*



The past 18 months have been challenging for the commercial maritime sector, particularly the cruise industry which has experienced its biggest challenge yet with the inability to operate in U.S. waters for 15 months. Brighter horizons are ahead! The cruise industry has taken the painstaking steps to coordinate with local port authorities, the CDC, and the U.S. Coast Guard to prepare for the most safe, responsible resumption of itineraries out of American cruise ports. The Caribbean and Alaskan communities have been especially impacted by this pause and are excited and prepared to start receiving more ships and their passengers.

The Coast Guard also felt some impacts from this industry pause. Although we saw dozens of cruise ships anchored offshore, for a while we were out of the business of inspecting ships, escorting ships in and out of ports, responding to medical emergencies, investigating marine casualties, and inspecting cruise terminals. These are diverse mission areas that are carried out by members of the world's best Coast Guard. Although we did not get to exercise these mission areas for that 15 month pause, we found ways to keep our skills sharp and maintain our "Always Ready" mentality. The Cruise Ship National Center of Expertise (CSNCOE) worked with District Commanders and Captains of the Port to ensure the U.S. Coast Guard understood the status of the ships and crew offshore, and prepared to assist as needed. CSNCOE coordinated behind the scenes with Port State Control (PSC) Authorities around the globe to share lessons learned and best practices for inspecting cruise ships, many of which were laid up for a while, with their operational protocols. The Coast

Guard published clear expectations for obtaining a Certificate of Compliance (COC) after the industry pause, and the industry rose to the occasion to present ships ready for safe, responsible operation in U.S. waters. Internally, we also had to prepare our teams to execute our missions with the highest precision and safety. CSNCOE diligently travelled across the nation getting our PSC teams ready to get this industry rolling again while complying with the world's premier cruise ship compliance program for safety, security, and environmental protection.

By now, our PSC teams have conducted 55 COC exams on cruise ships with the highest attention to health and safety protocols. Things look a little different with masks and social distancing, but the ships officers and crew we have encountered are clearly excited to start seeing people again, and they are happy to be working again. Thus far, we have observed industry personnel that are trained and eager to start running these ships and serving the millions passengers that call upon these ships for their vacation experience out of American cruise ports.

## Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 Vessel Inspections

by CAPT Aimee Treffiletti, LCDR Amy Freeland, LCDR Laura Annetta, & LT Amber VanDusen *CDC Vessel Sanitation Program (VSP) & Global Migration Task Force Maritime Unit for the COVID-19 Response*

The [Vessel Sanitation Program](#) (VSP) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) helps the cruise ship industry prevent and control the introduction, transmission,

and spread of gastrointestinal (GI) illnesses on cruise ships. Every vessel that has a foreign itinerary and carries 13 or more passengers is subject to twice-yearly unannounced inspections

to find out how well they meet the health standards in the [VSP Operations Manual](#). VSP operates under the authority of the Public Health Service Act.

Depending on ship size, up to

four US Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) conduct these inspections. Inspectors evaluate eight specific areas on ships—medical centers, potable water systems, recreational water systems (swimming pools, whirlpools, wading pools, & slides), house-keeping, food service areas (galleys, dining rooms, bars, & provision rooms), integrated pest management, child activity centers, and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all EHOs assigned to VSP have been deployed to CDC’s COVID-19 response as part of the Global Migration Task Force (GMTF) Maritime Unit (MU) for both virtual and field work. Because of the large number of COVID-19 cases and outbreaks associated with cruise travel, CDC initially issued a [No Sail Order](#) for cruise ships operating in U.S. jurisdiction in March 2020, that was extended until [October 2020](#), when CDC issued a [Framework for Conditional Sailing Order \(CSO\)](#) as a phased approach to resume passenger sailings. The CSO included requirements for building laboratory capacity, testing crew, establishing port agreements, and conducting simulated and/or restricted voyages. The MU created a [COVID-19 Operations Manual](#) and [Technical Instructions](#) to help industry comply with the CSO as well as guidance for [Ship Crew Well-Being During COVID-19](#).

Cruise lines must apply for simulated and/or restricted voyages (outlined in Table 1 above) if they wish to resume passenger sailings during the CSO. Simulated voyages are trials conducted with volunteers playing the role of passengers to test a ship’s operational plans in advance of initiating restricted voyages. Restricted voyages differ from previous cruise voyages: cruise ship operators must agree to additional public health measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as outlined in CDC’s [COVID-19](#)

Voyage Type	SIMULATED	RESTRICTED	RESTRICTED (95% VACCINATED)
Description	Tests the cruise ship operator’s public health procedures and protocols; one voyage per ship	Ongoing voyages conducted after a vessel successfully completes a simulated voyage	Ongoing voyages with signed vaccination attestation in lieu of a simulated voyage; may be conducted if at least 95% of passengers and 95% of crew are fully vaccinated
Duration	Shorter duration (~3-5 days)	Usually 5-10 days	Usually 5-10 days
Passenger Capacity	Typically hundreds; at least 10% of the passengers intended to sail on the first two restricted voyages.	Possibly thousands	Possibly thousands
Passenger Type	Volunteers (e.g., corporate employees, crew) who may be more likely to adhere to public health requirements	Paying passengers	Paying passengers

[Operations Manual](#) and [Technical Instructions](#).

With resumption of passenger voyages, MU EHOs conduct modified inspections focusing on COVID-19 prevention and control. Inspectors incorporate terminal operations; COVID-19 testing, reporting, and onboard laboratory capacity; enhanced HVAC measures; mask usage; social distancing procedures; and enhanced cleaning and disinfection procedures into their inspections of simulated and restricted voyages. For inspections of simulated voyages, inspectors observe activities such as the scenario of a patient testing positive for SARS-CoV-2, including patient movement, treatment, testing, isolation, and evacuation, and movement and quarantine of their close contacts.

Partnering with cruise lines, inspectors noted key opportunities to improve COVID-19 prevention, including the following:

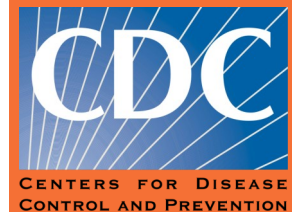
- Identifying unvaccinated passengers early in the embarkation process ensured they were physically distanced throughout check-in and testing.
- Ensuring terminal staff could identify passengers who need-

ed COVID-19 testing during embarkation (e.g., separate check-in, staff members escorting passengers, stickers, wrist bands).

- Ensuring training for all terminal staff on embarkation procedures and terminal locations for health screenings, including separate pathways for vaccinated and unvaccinated passengers, improved terminal operations.

The pandemic created new challenges for inspections. VSP EHOs are trained to conduct inspections to prevent the spread of GI infections. Over the past year they have been trained to conduct inspections focusing on preventing the spread of respiratory infection, specifically COVID-19. Another challenge is an increased risk of exposure; safety risk assessments are conducted before each inspection. Inspectors were fit-tested for and supplied with N95 respirators, and all inspectors are fully vaccinated before boarding any ships.

Coast Guard personnel with questions about the CSO should contact their District Prevention representative, who coordinates with the Coast Guard CDC Liaison Officer.



Coast Guard personnel can refer industry questions about the CSO to the MU at [eoevent349@cdc.gov](mailto:eoevent349@cdc.gov).

\*Note about Florida: As of July 23, 2021, the CSO and accompanying measures, such as technical instructions, are nonbinding recommendations for cruise ships arriving in, located within, or departing from a port in

Florida. However, CDC continues to operate the CSO as a voluntary program for such ships should they choose to follow the CSO measures on a voluntary basis.

*Editor's Note: The CDC Director signed the Temporary Extension and Modification of the CSO on October 25th, to remain in effect until January 15, 2022.*



## Navigating the Alaska Tourism Restoration Act and Passenger Vessel Services Act

by Mr. Michael Hebert

*Jones Act Division of Enforcement (JADE), New Orleans Field Office, U.S. Customs & Border Protection*



U.S. Customs and  
Border Protection

In the maritime transportation industry, we are all mindful of the Passenger Vessel Services Act (PVSA) and the operational parameters enforced by this Act. Cruise Lines having vessels that operate in U.S. waters and call on U.S. ports are attentive in constructing vessel itineraries as to not violate the requirements outlined in the PVSA. The PVSA became law in 1886, and is codified in 46 USC 55103. The PVSA prohibits the transportation of passengers between two different U.S. ports on any vessel, other than a U.S.-flag vessel that meets all requirements for U.S. coastwise endorsement. It applies to all areas of the United States, including island territories and possessions of the United States, except for American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The PVSA does not apply to passenger movements from the U.S. mainland to Puerto Rico and vice versa.

COVID-19 presented numerous operational and economic challenges for the cruise industry, but additionally hindered economic growth in certain geographic locations that heavily depend and thrive on cruise ship passenger traffic. Congressional Representatives, Senators, and White House Officials recognized the hard-

ships occurring in Alaskan communities, and understood there was a need to take action. Therefore, on May 25, 2021 President Biden signed into law the Alaska Tourism Restoration Act (H.R. 1318), which provided cruise ships transporting passengers between the State of Washington and the State of Alaska a temporary fix under the PVSA. Due to the Canadian prohibition on passenger vessels traveling through Canadian waters, large cruise ships sailing to Alaska would not have been able to do so, as the PVSA requires a stop in a foreign country.

The [Alaska Tourism Restoration Act \(H.R. 1318\)](#) addresses the following items:

- Restrict the imposition by the Secretary of Homeland Security of fines, penalties, duties, or tariffs applicable only to coastwise voyages,
- Not prohibit otherwise qualified non-United States citizens from serving as crew, on specified vessels transporting passengers between the State of Washington and the State of Alaska,
- Interim solution for Canadian cruise ship ban and the extraordinary, and
- Mitigate negative impacts of

the COVID-19 pandemic on Alaskan communities.

To be considered a covered voyage under this authority, the vessel must be listed in HR 1318. The web link provided shows the list of cruise vessels that are covered under the Alaska Tourism Restoration Act. The following action items must be completed for a vessel to obtain status of "covered voyage":

- The vessel must send an email to the Canada Border Services Agency and to both the departing U.S. port and the arrival U.S. ports.
- Along with the vessel name and IMO number, the email shall contain the names of each crewman on such voyage who is in possession of a valid, unexpired non-immigrant visa issued pursuant to subparagraph (C) or (D) of section 101(a)(15) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)).

With the Alaska Tourism Restoration Act officially signed into law, there has been immense hope and excitement for many Alaskan communities who significantly rely on tourism.

**"With the Alaska Tourism Restoration Act officially signed into law, there has been immense hope and excitement for many Alaskan communities who significantly rely on tourism."**



## Marine Evacuation System (MES) Lifecycle Maintenance

by Mr. Elvis Garcia  
 Service Director - Americas, Viking Life Saving Equipment (America), Inc.



**Fully Deployed Marine Evacuation System (MES)**

A marine evacuation system (MES) is a lifesaving device found on many modern passenger ships usually consisting of an escape chute(s) where a passenger can evacuate straight into waiting life rafts within the required amount of time. The appealing attributes of MES's are that they generally take up very little deck space and may be deployed by as few as one person, as required by LSA code, Chapter 6/6.2.2.1.1. MES's are found on some, but not all cruise ships, and although MES's are becoming more prevalent, they are not a regulatory requirement in place of davit launched life rafts. There are many brand-specific types of MES's currently being utilized in the maritime industry, and will vary on appearance, design, etc. depending on the manufacturer. For example, VIKING's two primary MES's that they provide are the VIKING Evacuation Chute (VEC) & the VIKING Evacuation Dual Chute (VEDC) systems.

Although MES's present advantages for the swift evacuation of personnel, there are also challenges that can occur in terms of operational deployment, servicing/maintenance,

and crew proficiency. To combat these challenges, VIKING has specialized MES service support teams that are located around the globe in all regions, such as Asia, Europe & the Americas. In the USA, the MES team consists of a MES Manager, eight specialized MES technicians & a local planning team which assists with the planning of all MES related services for passenger vessels. The level of service quality is assured by using a MES technical matrix that ensures that each type of service uses the correct level of MES technician with the proper expertise. The levels start from a Level 3 MES Technician to a Level 6 Global MES Surveyor/Instructor.

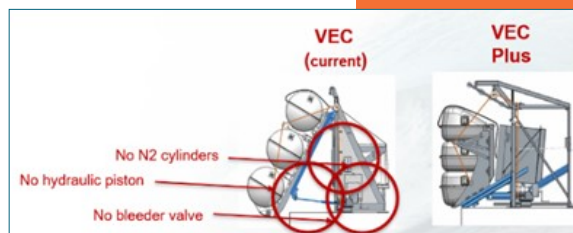
Occasionally modifications to the MES are developed & applied to continuously promote innovation and improvement. These modifications can be created from field MES technician observations, deployment test results, or from the global engineering team's continuous testing of the systems using the FMEA concept. When non-conformities are found, VIKING adopts an 8D reporting system to effectively arrive at a root cause & viable solution(s),

which can also result in system modifications.

Changes on how VIKING approaches MES modifications is modeled in VIKING's MES 2.0 model. This model was created about two years ago to improve the overall approach towards VIKING's MES products & to achieve zero failed MES deployments. MES 2.0 has resulted in improvements in product & service quality, as well as global service continuity & efficiency on all related MES service tasks. Another feature from the MES 2.0, has been the integration of new technology to improve on current camera capabilities used during VIKING's MES deployment tests. These type of recordings allow for live input from remote senior MES technicians; the use of the recordings provides the opportunity to identify areas for improvement & confirmation of modification successes.

One other key component for continued improvement has been the creation of the MES Story Board. This Story Board allows all participants involved (MES technicians, MES Planners, Compliance Authorities, etc.), to have a guided understanding of their role during a MES related service, installation and/or deployments. The Story Board allows for greater efficiency & a higher level of oversight, which has resulted in an overall increase in service quality.

Training of the vessel crew members & participants is a



**VIKING's VEC Modification**

*“The Cruise Ship NCOE served as a focal point for industry and interagency management to manage the complex operational and policy challenges associated with this pandemic. At the same time, the NCOE worked with the Coast Guard operational commanders to ensure that their staff were ready to meet the challenges associated with conducting passenger safety examinations during the COVID-19 conditions.”*

*-RADM John Mauger Assistant Commandant for Prevention Policy*

critical component for proper operation of the MES. VIKING has developed online interactive training resources, which are always available upon request. These training resources allows for a greater understanding of the MES functionalities to mitigate uncertainties regarding proper operation of the system. The VIKING Miami service station is currently planning on building a live training MES chute for our crew members utilizing VIKING MES products & for other pertinent

personnel, such as USCG examiners, who routinely provide oversight of regulatory MES deployments. VIKING is planning to finalize this MES live training by Q1 2022. As always, VIKING continues to welcome USCG training visits to the Miami Service station facility for hands-on introduction to MES service, or a tour of the facility with the objective of providing technical knowledge on VIKING lifesaving equipment.

VIKING will continue to

ensure the common goal of maintaining the highest level of safety for all lifesaving equipment utilized on all vessel platforms. VIKING is dedicated to continual improvement; rigorously testing the MES functionalities & ensuring proficiency and training opportunities for the vessel crews responsible for utilizing VIKING MES's is of the utmost importance. For more detailed information on the MES, please visit VIKING's main [Marine Evacuation Systems \(MES\) website](#).

## Breaking Down the Break-out Season

by Lieutenant Commander Theresa Bigay  
Senior Traveling Marine Inspector, Cruise Ship NCOE

The return of cruise ship operations in the U. S. marked an unprecedented milestone for the cruise industry after an 18-month shutdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the comeback posed a unique set of challenges on all things related to the industry, cruising into and from the U. S. began in earnest, this past summer, confirming that there was light at the end of the tunnel. Over the last year and a half, the industry shutdown has afforded the Cruise Ship National Center of Expertise (CSNCOE) time to reflect on policy development, enhancements to the Foreign Passenger Vessel Examinations (FPVE) Program, and devising the most effective plan to respond to the restart. The return to passenger operations has been measured and deliberate. This facilitated CSNCOE early engagement with field units to alleviate resource gaps and overcome the lack of opportunities to maintain FPVE currency.

The CSNCOE mobilized to attend unit-led FPVE “table-top mock exams”, provide FPVE tailored training, and act as force-multipliers for Certificate of Compliance (COC) exams around the nation. This served



Sector Puget Sound Team Commencing ICOC Exam on SILVER MUSE

as an effective way to refresh FPVE knowledge and exam tactics prior to and during the cruise ship restart. To date, the CSNCOE has attended and supported competency training at 14 field units, completed six annual COC exams and four initial COC completion exams at first port.

The end to this momentous industry shutdown also offered an opportunity to implement use of the Scorecard, an application designed to optimize FPV exams while quantifying deficiency & risk-mitigation

data. The application has been a critical asset during the industry restart. It has been successfully utilized internationally by 18 Coast Guard units during 106 cruise ship activities to capture and quantify over 180 deficiencies. As the CSNCOE conducts quality case reviews on all cruise ship activities, we simultaneously conduct Scorecard data analysis and provide feedback to units. Analyzed data is compiled to determine trends and enhance FPV safety while increasing exam performance. The CSNCOE encour-

ages personnel to notify our office if any difficulties are encountered while using the Scorecard application.

It is important to note the impact of COVID prevention measures on the FPVE process. Exam teams have to undergo safety protocols as they enter the ships, which might vary slightly depending on the vessel or company. Additionally, units might receive requests for teams to either be fully vaccinated or take a COVID test upon arriving onboard. In those instances, units are urged to assemble fully vaccinated teams in order to minimize footprint onboard and maximize the time for the COC examination. Furthermore, the pandemic accelerated implementation of pre-COVID enhancements to passenger muster procedures by some cruise ship companies; therefore, examiners must review the ship's procedures and observe each part of the passenger muster during the examination. Regarding the examination process, the Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance (CVC) issued Policy Letter 21-02 which called on OCMI's to be "aware of COVID related changes on vessels" during exams. Although examiners should ad-

here to restrictions on access to certain quarantined areas, they must also be mindful of how COVID mitigation practices are linked to human factors affecting regulatory compliance. For instance, examiners should note any issues with: storage of additional flammable materials used as disinfectants, CVSSA compliance affected by COVID measures in hospital spaces, social distancing traffic patterns affecting means of escape or blocking escape routes, and other measures which hinder operation of systems or procedures required by SOLAS. While the Coast Guard is responsible for verifying that cruise ships embarking passengers in U.S. ports comply with the SOLAS, the CDC remains the lead agency in implementing the requirements of the CSO and making decision on continued operations after COVID cases are reported.

At present, most cruise ports nationwide have resumed passenger operations with only around five ports awaiting restart. Additionally, lines have shortened itineraries with more voyages of three or seven days, and fewer voyages spanning 10 or 14 days. Across units with cruise ship ports, nearly 55 COCs have been

issued and an estimated 37 vessels will be scheduling examinations in the near future.

After the March 2020 industry shutdown, and the uncertainty of the year that followed, it was difficult to imagine a smooth and steady comeback. As much as it has done with many aspects of our daily lives, the pandemic has changed many aspects of the cruising industry and the FPVE program. As cruise ships continue to operate in U. S. ports, the CSNCOE stands ready to continue supporting field units with examinations, training, qualification of personnel and guidance or policy interpretation.



**PSC Officer Reviewing COC with Cruise Ship Master**

## 2021 Seattle Cruise Season: Planning, Preparedness, and Teamwork in Action

By Commander Lee Bacon, *Chief, Inspections Division, Sector Puget Sound*  
Lieutenant Junior Grade Matthew Olp, *Port State Control Branch Chief*



Investing in readiness, serving with respect & humility, and nurturing relationships are the strong foundational precepts that Sector Puget Sound is guided by with Captain Patrick Hilbert at the helm. These principles, along with a focus on planning, preparedness, and teamwork were instrumental to the shared success of Sector Puget Sound's 2021 cruise season.

The Port of Seattle is typical-

ly a turn-around port – that is, where passengers embark and disembark, ship's stores are brought on, and the vessel quickly gets underway to maintain its schedule rather than the port in which Coast Guard Certificate of Compliance (COC) exams are conducted. If COVID has taught us anything, it is to be flexible. Due to the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 Pandemic, seven cruise ships requested to re-

ceive their Coast Guard renewal COC exam in Seattle. These requests spurred a mammoth undertaking for Sector Puget Sound's Port State Control (PSC) Branch, one which required every member to lean into those guiding principles.

Dwight D. Eisenhower told us, "Plans are nothing; planning is everything." This quote rang true for this operation and planning was crucial to its success. The planning cycle started





### Sector Puget Sound COC Team on Ovation of the Seas

10 weeks prior to the first scheduled COC exam. Our office contacted our key port partners, strengthened internal communications, and established a weekly battle rhythm of conference calls and data collection. We strategically laid out our plan of attack and heavily relied on those industry relationships to develop different courses of action based

upon a myriad of scenarios, culminating in a well-rounded plan.

From the onset, it was evident that a request for forces was in order to adequately staff our examination teams with qualified members. The Cruise Ship National Center of Expertise, Coast Guard District Thirteen, Sector Juneau, and Marine Safety Unit Portland all answered the call in providing subject matter experts. Additionally, the Sector Puget Sound's PSC Branch partnered with the Domestic Vessel Branch to supply additional qualified examiners. The measured approach to planning this operation superbly prepared to rise to the occasion and certificate these cruise ships for the carriage of passengers.

This evolution was only possible because of the outstanding team work of all members involved. A special shout-out to Chief Marine Science Technician Christopher White: he

was instrumental in coordinating examination schedules, obtaining and generating all documentation and carefully balancing the make-up of each team, pairing fully qualified members with break-in members to maximize training opportunities while ensuring the highest standards of safety and security were upheld. During a year of great uncertainty, Sector Puget Sound's Command's trust in its members, members from other units, and external partners was unwavering. Teamwork built on trust is what made this highly visible operational successful for all of those involved.

At the end of July 2021, the countless hours of planning, traveling, examining, and combing through the vast array of regulations came to end. All seven cruise ships were certificated on schedule, earning their COCs and the start to revitalizing the cruise industry operations in the Port of Seattle was well underway.

### Contact the CSNCOE:

#### We're on LinkedIn

[LinkedIn.com/company/Coast-Guard-National-Center-of-Expertise](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Coast-Guard-National-Center-of-Expertise)

CSNCOE Email :  
[csncoe@uscg.mil](mailto:csncoe@uscg.mil)

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LT Kimberly Glore

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Mr. Scott Elphison

Mr. James Garzon

Mr. Eric Jesionowski

Mr. Brad Schoenwald

## Training Updates

### FPVE Underway Course.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Coast Guard Cruise Ship National Center of Expertise (CSNCOE) had to cancel the Foreign Passenger Vessel Examiner (FPVE) courses scheduled for Fiscal Year 2021. We will hold 3 underway courses in Fiscal Year 2022, with the first course tentatively scheduled for Winter 2022. The current course listings are placeholders. Please stand-by for official course dates.

**Port State Control PQS, Low Flashpoint Fuel Addendum.** An addendum for vessels powered by low flashpoint fuels (LFFs) has been added to the PSCE PQS. The LFF addendum is pertinent for the examination of LNG-fueled cruise ships.

## Standards Updates

The **Periodic COC Process Guide** has been updated to include verification items for ships utilizing low flashpoint fuels. The updated Periodic Process Guide can be found on the CSNCOE Web Page.

### CSNCOE Field Notice 21-01 — Evaluation of Passenger Muster Protocols

### CSNCOE Industry Notice 21-01 — Cruise Ship Medical Standards

### CSNCOE Field Notice 21-02—Cruise Ships Built Without a Magnetic Compass

*\*All these documents have been posted to the CSNCOE CGPortal and CSNCOE web page.*

## Scorecard Performance

The Cruise Ship Safety Scorecard was deployed this year at the 41 field units that conduct cruise ship exams. We thank you for your continued participation and feedback for this quality management tool. A total of 55 COC exams have been conducted in 2021 thus far. Our FPVE Teams have scored an average of 28.14 per COC exam. Scores are posted on the CSNCOE CGPortal page for Coast Guard members to review unit and national scores. Bravo Zulu to the units that have demonstrated proficiency during this start-up period. Thank you to MSD Lake Worth, Sector Puget Sound, and Sector Boston who provided valuable feedback to CSNCOE in improving the tool. We have made the improvements and will push them out to the field with our annual update in January.

