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CG-543 Policy Letter  
11-13

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COMDT (CG-543)

To: Distribution

Subj: PASSENGER SHIP SAFETY CERTIFICATE (PSSC) SURVEY TRAINING

Ref: (a) COMDTINST 16705.1 Coast Guard Merchant Marine Indoctrination (MMI) Ship Rider Program

1. PURPOSE. The purpose of this policy letter is to establish guidelines for USCG training during Passenger Ship Safety Certificate (PSSC) surveys conducted by a Recognized Organization.
2. ACTION. Sectors and other field units shall use the following guidance while participating in PSSC Survey Training.
3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED. None
4. BACKGROUND. The Merchant Marine Industry Training (MMIT) Indoctrination Ship Rider program was developed to give Apprentice Marine Inspectors an orientation to the Merchant Marine Industry by exposing them to a sustained period of merchant marine operations on a commercial vessel. Building on this premise, the Cruise Ship National Center of Expertise (CSNCOE), in partnership with Recognized Organizations and various cruise lines, instituted an advanced training program for its staff in 2010. This program was designed to expand the CSNCOE's understanding of the scope of cruise ship flag state inspections relative to USCG Certificate of Compliance (COC) examinations. Other field offices began to individually initiate similar programs. This policy letter was developed to standardize the procedures used by all offices arranging this training.
5. DISCUSSION. This advanced training program is intended to give experienced Foreign Passenger Vessel Examiners (FPVE's) an in-depth understanding of the full scope of a PSSC survey and how the recognized organization assists the flag administration in meeting its obligations under SOLAS. To carry this out, FPVE's may "shadow" a Recognized Organization representative during a ship's PSSC survey (typically a weeklong evolution).
6. PROCEDURES. Sectors and other field units shall take note of the following when implementing this training.
  - a. To be eligible to participate in this training, participants must:

- (1) Hold and be current in the Foreign Passenger Vessel Examiner (FPVE) competency.
  - (2) Normally carry out Foreign Passenger Vessel COC exams or directly supervise those that do in a port with regular scheduled foreign passenger vessel arrivals.
  - (3) Have graduated from the Advanced Foreign Passenger Vessel Examiner Course.
  - (4) Be certified by the OCMI as a Verifying Officer for the FPVE PQS.
- b. While participating in the training:
- (1) Each participant is on duty engaged in official USCG business.
  - (2) Coincidental travel of participant family or friends is not acceptable.
  - (3) Fraternalization with passengers, crew or hotel/entertainment staff is not permitted.
  - (4) Shore excursions in foreign countries are not permitted.
  - (5) Participants shall not evaluate/approve/disapprove any ship's actions on behalf of the Recognized Organization or the USCG. Instead, discuss any observations and areas of non-compliance and corrective action for major safety related discrepancies with the surveyors as a matter of training.
  - (6) The Recognized Organization will make room and board arrangements. Note that surveyors are typically provided with a passenger cabin but it is not uncommon to be moved several times during the survey. Participants should expect similar treatment. All other onboard expenses are the responsibility of the participant (phone calls, laundry, purchases etc.).
  - (7) Medical care may be obtained on the ship if needed. Notify the chain of command in these situations to facilitate any associated costs.
- c. Requests for training shall be coordinated through the CSNCOE. The CSNCOE will determine the appropriate ship and Recognized Organization for the training and schedule the participation.
- d. Once training is scheduled, PSCO's are to participate under official orders issued by their unit. All costs shall be borne by the participant's unit.
- e. There may be an occasion where participants have to fly to meet the ship in a foreign country or disembark in a foreign country to return home. In those cases, ensure all administrative procedures for foreign travel to include country clearances and theater training are followed.

- f. Communicate the travel itinerary and name of ship through the chain of command to at least the local District Command Center.
  - g. Coordinate with the participating Recognized Organization to attend or arrange a pre-survey meeting. This is a vitally important step that typically occurs one week prior to the survey to review the scope, procedures, work attire, and schedule of the survey.
  - h. During the survey, PSCO's are expected to:
    - (1) Attend the survey's opening meeting to observe interaction between surveyors and ship's officers and confirm the survey schedule.
    - (2) Optimize the training experience by engaging with the surveyors. Target specific survey items to witness. If in doubt, call the CSNCOE to help you prioritize your schedule. Take pictures and notes as appropriate to document the PSSC training.
    - (3) Attend the survey closing meeting.
  - i. Within a week of completing the training, the participant shall submit to their command a PSSC survey training summary report describing daily activities and lessons learned. After approval by the command, forward a copy of the survey training summary report to the CSNCOE.
7. DISCLAIMER. This document is intended to provide operational requirements for Coast Guard personnel and is not intended to nor does it impose legally-binding requirements on any party outside the Coast Guard.
8. QUESTIONS. Questions or concerns regarding this policy letter may be directed to Cruise Ship National Center of Expertise.

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