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

1. 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.

2. Discussion: In recent years, certain types of mobile drilling units have been built and certified 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 certified. In view of the above, a special examination is required to provide the information normally obtained during a drydock examination.

3. 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.

Encl: (1) Examination Procedures

Dist: (SDL No. 89)
A: None
B: n(45); c(10); q(6); w(3); bp(1)
C: a(4); c(2)
D: i(2); k(1)
E: o(2)
F: None
List 112-155
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 dry-
docking examination. The guidelines contained in the current Notes on Inspec-
tion 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 OCMI. 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 OCMI to ascer-
tain 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 OCMI. 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 OCMI, 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 OCMI. 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 OCMI 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