



Homeland
Security

U.S. COAST GUARD
Sector Upper Mississippi River



Marine Safety Information Bulletin # 04-11

This bulletin is used purely for informational purposes to assist the maritime community within the Sector Upper Mississippi River Area of Responsibility. Its purpose is to advise relevant parties of emerging information & situations that may impact our Marine Transportation System as well as facilitates cooperation among the involved parties regarding actions that we may be taking and/or that you may need to employ in the interest of safety/security.

Moving Hazards Aboard Uninspected Towing Vessels

December 15, 2011

“Yellow is a Caution and Physical Hazard Zone.” Be Aware!

This Marine Safety Information Bulletin addresses safety issues relating to spaces aboard Uninspected Towing Vessels (UTV) where crewmembers may be exposed to moving, rotating and/or articulating machinery. This year, the Coast Guard has responded to multiple marine casualties that illustrate the dangers of working in machinery spaces. Recently, in one incident, an experienced engineer got “caught in between” a steering ram and bulkhead onboard a UTV and was severely injured while conducting maintenance while the vessel was underway. Another recent Serious Marine Incident involved a crewmember who was severely injured when entangled in the vessel’s rotating main propulsion shaft.

Company Safety Officers are urged to revisit their vessel operating procedures and safety plans to ensure they adequately address safety training, oversight, and controls for crewmembers while working in machinery spaces. Interviews of UTV crewmembers/engineers indicate they routinely clean or conduct work in these spaces alone without oversight and without notification to the pilot house.

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) has regulations in place applicable to the work environment aboard UTVs. OSHA’s safety color code for designating caution and marking physical hazards are located in 29 CFR 1910.144(a)(3). These regulations should be reviewed while evaluating your plans and procedures.



As a result of these Serious Marine Incidents, the U. S. Coast Guard strongly recommends UTV Owners/Operators ensure the following:

1. Ensure marking of physical hazards as per OSHA requirements – see 29 CFR 1910.144. OSHA requirements state the following: Yellow shall be the basic color for designating caution and for marking physical hazards such as; striking against, stumbling, falling, tripping, and “caught in between”.
2. Develop or amend vessel operation procedures to include provisions for safely entering typically unmanned machinery spaces while the vessel is underway.
3. Develop or amend vessel operation procedures to require notification to the officer of the watch for personnel that will be working around moving, rotating and/or articulating machinery.
4. Ensure some type of barrier is in place to mark and impede the entrance into areas that have moving, rotating and/or articulating machinery.
5. Ensure crewmembers are aware of the dangers of wearing loose fitting clothing and gear around moving, rotating and/or articulating machinery.
6. Ensure crewmembers are properly trained and practice company safety procedures when working around moving, rotating and/or articulating machinery.

Owners/Operators should be aware of these potential safety hazards and take proper action as needed. Any questions regarding this Information Bulletin may be addressed to the Prevention Department Towing Vessel Examination Branch, Sector Upper Mississippi River at (314) 269-2562.



B. L. Black
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Captain of the Port