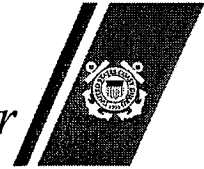




**Homeland
Security**

*U.S. COAST GUARD
Sector Upper Mississippi River*



Marine Safety Information Bulletin # 03-12

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.

PHASE 2 TOWING VESSEL BRIDGING PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT July 23, 2012

A significant regulatory project is currently underway that will require the majority of commercial towing vessels to be inspected by the Coast Guard. In the period between the current and future state of towing vessel safety oversight, a Towing Vessel Bridging Program was initiated to ease the transition and ensure that both the Coast Guard and the towing vessel industry are informed and prepared to meet the new requirements to be finalized in Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Subchapter M.

In Phase 1 the Coast Guard encouraged industry to participate in Industry Initiated Examinations (IIEs) which focused on acclimating industry to an inspection-like process, and ensuring compliance with 46 CFR Subchapters B and C. Response to Phase 1 has been encouraging with 75% of the towing vessels in the Eighth Coast Guard District participating to date. Elements introduced in Phase 1 will not end in Phase 2.

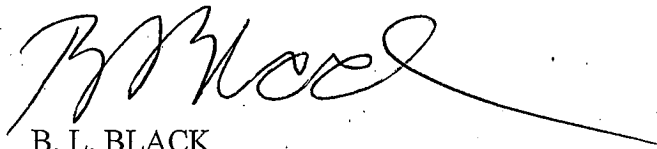
During Phase 2, which commenced on July 1, 2012, the Coast Guard will target towing vessels considered high risk, with an emphasis on those that did not participate in Phase 1. Once contacted by the Coast Guard, companies will have 14 days to schedule an IIE. If companies choose not to participate within the allotted time frame, an examination will be scheduled for the company by the Coast Guard. This has the potential to may negatively impact your operations and, based on the outcome, could result in enforcement actions taken against your company.

Owner/Operators with vessels who actively participated in Phase 1, but have not had all of their vessels examined will be considered a low risk and not initially targeted for Phase 2 boardings. We will still schedule requests for IIEs; they are strongly encouraged and will reduce interruptions by potential non-voluntary examinations.

Coast Guard Sector Upper Mississippi River is committed to continuing outreach efforts and is fully prepared to conduct IIEs upon request. To schedule an examination with Sector Upper Mississippi River, or if you have any questions regarding the Towing Vessel Bridging Program, please contact Chief Warrant Officer Brandon Hansen at (314) 269-2500 ext 6 or at STL-DG-SECUMR-TOWING@uscg.mil.

Additionally, the Coast Guard has posted information regarding all aspects of this program on the Coast Guard Homeport website. To access this information, please go to:

<http://homeport.uscg.mil>>DomesticVessels>TowingVessels

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. L. Black', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

B. L. BLACK
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard
Captain of the Port
Sector Upper Mississippi River