

# *Season's Greetings ~ OMSA December Edition*



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## **EPA Releases Proposed 2013 Vessel General Permit and Small Vessel General Permit**

On November 30<sup>th</sup>, the EPA released the proposed update to the Vessel General Permit (VGP) for discharges from vessels, along with a VGP for smaller vessels under 79 feet. This newest draft VGP would replace the current 2008 VGP when its five year term expires on December 19, 2013 and go into effect on that date. Comments on this proposed rule are due February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012.

The 2013 version would continue to regulate the 26 specific discharges in the 2008 permit. However, the 2013 permit allocates more stringent requirements for ballast water discharges. The good news for offshore operators is that the EPA has provided a few exemptions to the ballast water requirement for vessels that operate in one Captain of the Port (COTP) Zone or vessels that have designated ballast water tanks that only carry municipal water, as many in the OMSA membership do.

The EPA has also provided clarifying details to many parts of the permit that OMSA specifically asked for in its comments to the EPA; 1) the paper work requirements for laid up/cold stacked vessels; 2) improved efficiency for administrative requirements, including electronic recordkeeping; 3) decrease in wait time of approval after applying for an Notice of Intent (NOI); and 3) a consolidated annual report in place of a one-time report and noncompliance report.

The EPA also released a Small Vessel General Permit (sVGP) that regulates discharges from non-recreational vessels less than 79 feet. This permit is smaller than the original VGP and specifies best management practices for fuel management, engine/oil control, gray water and ballast water. Vessels under the sVGP do not have to apply for an NOI, but have to sign an authorization form to keep onboard and conduct annual self-inspections and keep records of such.

OMSA staff is still reviewing the 2013 VGP in depth and will be putting together a working group of operators to review the proposed rule. OMSA will also be making comments on the 2013 VGP at a public meeting held at EPA Headquarters on January 11, 2012. The meeting will be held at 1201 Constitution Avenue NW, Room East 1153, Washington D.C., 20460 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Any OMSA members that can make the trip are encouraged to attend. Please contact Sarah Branch at [sarah@offshoremarine.org](mailto:sarah@offshoremarine.org) with any questions.

The 2013 VGP can be downloaded and viewed on the EPA's website [here](#).



## **Notice of Arrival on the OCS Exemption Provision Passes the House**

The House of Representatives passed the Coast Guard Authorization Act that included a provision that proposes an exemption of U.S. vessels from having to report a Notice of Arrival (NOA) on the Outer Continental Shelf unless that vessel is coming from a foreign port. It is anticipated that the Senate will address the Act after the first of the year 2012.

Representative Charles Boustany introduced this language and Representative Jeff Landry was the sponsor of the language in the House Natural Resources Committee.

OMSA continues to work with Coast Guard Headquarters on adjusting the regulation so that it makes sense for OMSA members. OMSA presented the Coast Guard with a formal proposal that recommend using AIS to provide the Coast Guard with the most up-to-date information/location of our vessels. This issue will be discussed more in depth at the next OMSA/CG Partnership Meeting on February 1<sup>st</sup>, in Washington D.C.

The Authorization Act can be read here with the NOA provision at the very bottom <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=h112-2838>.

## **OMSA Submits Comments on NPRM on Towing Vessel Regulations**

The deadline to submit comments on the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for towing vessel regulations was December 9<sup>th</sup> and OMSA submitted comments on behalf of the membership. OMSA supports the two-option method of compliance with these unprecedented regulations, in allowing operators to choose either developing Towing Safety Management System (TSMS) or having annual Coast Guard inspections.

The OMSA staff held two working group meetings to review the rulemaking and develop comments to the docket on behalf of the industry. OMSA has also participated in a Towing Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) working group along with the American Waterways Operators (AWO) and other towing companies throughout the country. For a copy of OMSA's comments please contact Sarah Branch at [sarah@offshoremarine.org](mailto:sarah@offshoremarine.org).

## **House Passes Congressman Landry's POWER Act to Create Offshore Jobs**

The House of Representatives passed the Providing for Our Workforce and Energy Resources Act (POWER Act) on December 9<sup>th</sup>. This bill, HR 2360 introduced by Congressman Jeff Landry, aims to clarify the application of all U.S. laws and jurisdiction of the development and maintenance of renewable energy resources on the OCS, including Jones Act activities. The POWER Act boosts job opportunities for U.S. citizens and increases worker safety. The passage of this bill makes Landry the first Louisiana Representative to have a stand-alone bill accepted by the House this year. To view a press release by Landry's office please go [here](#).

Dr. Joe Orgeron of Montco gave a very robust testimony in support of the POWER Act before a hearing of the House Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources in September. Dr. Orgeron stressed the incomparable safety record the U.S. domestic operators and the offshore industry.

OMSA sent several letters to Congress in support of the bill and will continue working in support of this initiative as the bill makes its way through the Senate.



### **Coast Guard Safety Alert – Mustang Survival PFD Recall**

The Coast Guard released a Marine Safety Alert urging mariners to check their Mustang Survival PFD's, after Mustang issued a recall on all model number MD2010 and MD2012 inflatable PFD's that were sold in the U.S. The recall is being issued for the inspection and repair of an inflator installation inconsistency that could prevent some PFD's from properly inflating with CO<sub>2</sub>.

Please read the entire alert [here](#) to determine if any of your equipment is affected. There are detailed pictures of affected PFD's and information on how to return the affected PFD's to Mustang.

### **Coast Guard News**

**Advisory Committee Volunteers Sought** - The USCG seeks applications for membership on the **Merchant Mariner Medical Advisory Committee (MMMAC)**. This Committee provides advice to the Coast Guard on matters related to medical standards for issuance of merchant mariner credentials; medical standards and guidelines for the physical qualifications of operators of commercial vessels; medical examiner education; and medical research. They are seeking one member who represents the professional mariners with knowledge and experience in mariners' occupational requirements.

Applicants must send a cover letter describing their interest, reasons for application, and qualifications, and should enclose a complete professional biography or resume to LT Dylan McCall, the Alternate Designated Federal Officer (ADFO), on or before **January 20, 2012**.

Applicants must send their cover letter and resume to: USCG Headquarters, CG-543 Office of Vessel Activities, 2100 2nd St. SW., Washington, DC 20593; or by faxing to (202) 372-1128; or by emailing to [Dylan.k.mccall@uscg.mil](mailto:Dylan.k.mccall@uscg.mil).

For further information contact: Lieutenant Dylan McCall, ADFO of MMMAC at (202) 372-1128 or [Dylan.k.mccall@uscg.mil](mailto:Dylan.k.mccall@uscg.mil) or see the announcement: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2011-12-13/html/2011-31869.htm>.

The USCG also seeks applications for membership on the **Merchant Marine Personnel Advisory Committee (MERPAC)**. This Committee advises the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security on matters related to personnel in the U.S. merchant marine, including but not limited to training, qualifications, certification, documentation, and fitness standards.





### *Coast Guard News Cont'd:*

They seek applications for six positions that become vacant on June 1, 2012. To be eligible, you should have experience in the following areas of expertise: One member for marine educators representing the viewpoint of State Maritime Academies; one member for marine educators representing the viewpoint of the small vessel industry in maritime training institutions other than state or Federal Maritime Academies; one member for a licensed chief engineering officer authorized to serve on vessels of any horsepower; two members for licensed deck officers; and one member who will represent the general public. An OMSA member could qualify for 5 of the 6 open seats.

Applicants should submit a cover letter and resume in time to reach the USCG by **February 6, 2012**. The submission address is: Commandant (CG-5221), Attn: MERPAC, U.S. Coast Guard, 2100 2nd St. SW., Stop 7126, Washington DC 20593-7126; or by calling (202) 372-1408; or by faxing (202) 372-1926; or by emailing to [rogers.w.henderson@uscg.mil](mailto:rogers.w.henderson@uscg.mil).

For further information contact: Rogers W. Henderson, ADFO of MERPAC; (202) 372-1408 or at [rogers.w.henderson@uscg.mil](mailto:rogers.w.henderson@uscg.mil) or online at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2011-12-07/html/2011-31333.htm>.

OMSA suggests improving your chance of selection to either committee by also including one or more reference letters from your local USCG OCMI and/or from OMSA. Please contact Richard Wells at 504.734.7622 or [richard@offshoremarine.org](mailto:richard@offshoremarine.org) for an OMSA reference letter. OMSA strongly urges OMSA members to apply for a seat on the MERPAC committee as there are no members on MERPAC with experience in the workboat industry. This resulted in MERPAC recommendations that did not adequately address the training difference between an OSV and a large ship crewmember.

**Alternate Tonnage Threshold For Oil Spill Response Vessels** -The USCG published an interim rule setting an alternate size threshold based on the International Tonnage Convention (GT-ITC) for oil spill response vessels (OSRVs). The rule came into effect on December 12. Any comments are due by February 10, 2012. This finally breaks the old 500 GRT limit that kept most new OSV's from also serving as an OSRV. The alternate limit is 6000 GT. For full details please [click here](#).

**Liftboat Sea Service** – As recent applicants have discovered, the NMC is now strictly applying the 3 for 1 service limits from NMC Policy Letter 09-01 to mariners with liftboat service. This makes any transaction other than a renewal difficult or impossible to complete if all service is on a liftboat. The OMSA staff has invited the USCG to visit liftboats to better understand the unfairness of these service limits to liftboats. Two visits have taken place with a third visit planned in early 2012. This issue will also be discussed at the next USCG/OMSA Safety Partnership meeting in February.

**Towing Vessel Crew Size** – The USCG has recently begun changing the crew size on SOLAS Safe Manning Documents for uninspected towing vessels of under 200 GRT on international voyages of over 600 miles. Previously a 5-person crew was considered adequate. Recently tug owners have been shocked to be told a crew of 9 was now required. This requires a 3-watch system for bridge officers, deck crew and engine crew.





### *Coast Guard News Cont'd:*

As many tugs lack 9 berths, this is a real problem. Additionally it makes US tugs economically uncompetitive with non-US flag tugs for international towing jobs. OMSA will closely follow this and will work with the AWO to reverse this USCG decision. This issue will also be discussed at the next USCG/OMSA Safety Partnership meeting in February.

**NMC Performance Report** – The National Maritime Center (NMC) has released their November Performance Report. The number of applications in processing has *declined* to 2339, and the number of new applications was *smaller* than the number of credentials issued. Total gross processing time is *steady* at 41 days. For full details, please [click here](#).

As a reminder, the NMC application workload/backlog always increases in January through April to over double current levels. For mariners with mariner credentials that expire during this period, you must allow additional time (at least 80 days) for routine applications and at least 200 days for applications with medical complications or nontraditional sea service to avoid having credentials expire before NMC processing action is completed.

**2012 Drug Testing Rate** – The 2012 random drug testing rates are unchanged from 2011. Vessel crewmembers will be tested at a *minimum* 50% rate. Additional details are at the DOT web site - <http://www.dot.gov/odapc/rates.html> or call 504.671.2152 for the Gulf Region USCG DAPI (Drug and Alcohol Program Inspector) office.

### *Proposed Regulations*

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved publication in the Federal Register of USCG proposed regulations to update the TWIC regulations. It is expected this proposal will be published in early 2012. These proposed regulations may address the requirement for TWIC readers on vessels or facilities. OMSA will closely follow this proposed regulation and will advise the OMSA membership as soon as it is published. We expect to have informal OMSA member meetings to discuss the proposal in depth and draft the OMSA formal comment on this proposal, just as we did in 2009.

Additionally the USCG has a proposed regulation adding performance standards (and likely ballast water treatment equipment) to the existing ballast water management regulations in 33 CFR Part 151 under review at OMB. This was one of multiple regulation changes the USCG proposed in 2009. Other pending proposals are expansion of AIS carriage requirements, non-tank vessel spill response requirements, OSV inspection rules updates, OCS operations rules updates, and finalization of the mariner credential regulation changes due to STCW changes. It appears many changes are in store in 2012 for OMSA members. OMSA will closely follow these proposals and keep the membership advised.

### *Small Shipyard Grant Program*

The U.S. Maritime Administration announced that \$9.98 million in federal funding is now available to help enhance the efficiency and competitiveness of qualified small U.S. shipyards.





### *Small Shipyard Grant Program cont'd:*

The grants are available for “capital and related improvements for qualified shipyard facilities that will be effective in fostering efficiency, competitive operations, and quality ship construction, repair, and reconfiguration.

Grant funds may also be used for maritime training programs to foster technical skills and operational productivity in communities whose economies are related to or dependent upon the maritime industry”.

Grants are limited to no more than 75 percent of the estimated improvement costs. Application packages must be received by 5 p.m. on January 17, 2012. Additional information is available at:

<http://federalregister.gov/a/2011-31830> or by contacting the Maritime Administration, Office of Shipyards and Marine Engineering, Room W21-318, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington DC 20590, (202) 366-5737.

### *Improperly Encoded TWIC*

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) announced the integrated circuit chips (ICCs) on approximately 26,000 Transportation Worker Identification Credentials (TWIC’s) were improperly encoded and may not work with TWIC card readers. TSA will replace these cards at the card holder’s request at no cost. Detecting a TWIC card with the encoding problem and instructions on obtaining a replacement card, are [here](#).

If a card has this issue *it is still valid* and provides evidence of your eligibility for unescorted access to secure areas. This issue only affects your card *when using it with some readers*. If a TWIC has this issue, a person may decide not to replace it, or replace it later at a more convenient time. The TWIC’s that have this problem can be identified by the 8-digit Agency Serial Number (ASN) that is printed on the back of the TWIC. If the ASN on a TWIC matches a number on the [TSA list](#), then the card was improperly encoded and may need replacement depending on how the card is used.

OMSA members may contact Sarah Branch at OMSA at 504.734.7622 or [sarah@offshoremarine.org](mailto:sarah@offshoremarine.org) if you need additional information on this issue.





## *Welcome to the Members Corner!*

OMSA would like to welcome 2 new members to the association:

Schat Harding Inc.

Elliott Bay Design Group

Thank you for your support!

## *OMSA Christmas Bash Recap*

The Christmas Bash was a huge success!! I want to thank SEACOR Marine, LLC for sponsoring our live entertainment: The Blackened Blues Band. I would also like to thank Karl Senner, Inc., for sponsoring the bar and keeping all the guests hydrated with liquid courage! A special thanks to Bollinger Shipyards Inc., for sponsoring the delicious food we ate all night long!!

I want to thank the following members that support this event year after year with their attendance and these are members that know how to party:

*Hornbeck Offshore Operators*

*Edison Chouest Offshore*

*Coastal Marine Equipment Inc.*

*Montco Offshore*

*Aries Marine Corp.*

*Bollinger Shipyards, Inc.*

*Karl Senner, Inc.*

*Marine Systems, Inc.*

*Candy Fleet Corp.*

*ES&H Consulting*

*VT Halter Marine*

*Harvey Gulf International Marine*

*Fincantieri Marine Group*

*STX US Marine*

*Kongsberg Maritime*

*GulfMark Americas, Inc.*

*Wartsila North America*

*Cargotec USA*



### *OMSA Christmas Bash Recap cont'd:*

Thank you so much for your generosity your support makes OMSA's Christmas Bash possible! We look forward to seeing you at our party next year.

If anyone has any comments or suggestions for next year's Christmas Bash please feel free to contact [kelly@offshoremarine.org](mailto:kelly@offshoremarine.org) or call: Kelly 504.734.7622.

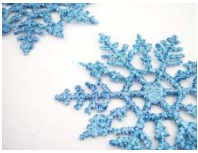


***OMSA is MOVING TO THE NEW ORLEANS CBD!!!***



We are pleased to announce that OMSA is relocating to the New Orleans Central Business District. We will move the first week of January so please be patient if we cannot immediately answer your calls, but please know that we will get back to you as soon as possible! Please email us should you need anything during our move week, but if you need **immediate assistance** please contact: Kelly Pettigrew on her cell at 504.377.5552. Once we are up and running again we will notify the membership via email.





Please update your records with our new address and telephone & fax numbers:

The New Orleans Exchange Centre  
935 Gravier Street  
Suite 2040  
New Orleans, LA 70112

504.528.9411 office  
504.528.9415 fax

***OMSA Rebrands!***

OMSA is not only moving but we are also rebranding! We will announce in January 2012 via a national press release, but wanted to give you a sneak peek at the association's new logo!



Manager of Member Services, Kelly Pettigrew, worked closely with graphic design firm AMG Creative, to help create a logo that would give OMSA a fresh look and encompass OMSA's mission. Mr. Chris Schultz and Ms. Jennifer LaCombe of AMG Creative were instrumental in the development of the new logo and we are very pleased with how it came out. We would like to thank Edison Chouest Offshore for sponsoring the expenses associated with creating our new logo. We thank AMG Creative for all their hard work and patience.



*OMSA would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas  
& Happy Holiday's!*

*Please have a safe and Happy New Year!*

*From your OMSA Staff:*

*Jim, Joe, Kelly, Richard & Sarah*

