

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: *When will the new regulations for Towing Vessels be published?*

A: The Coast Guard continues working on publishing the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) associated with proposing regulations for the inspection for certification of towing vessels. The NPRM is presently in clearance. Once published, we anticipate public meetings will be held in various locations allowing interested parties to discuss the proposed rules.

Q: *What Towing Vessel will be required to be inspected under the new rules?*

A: The NPRM associated with the inspection for certification of towing vessels will identify those towing vessels that Coast Guard proposes will be required to obtain a certificate of inspection (COI) and the time frame for obtaining a COI. As the NPRM is in clearance, we cannot provide any additional specifics at this time.

Q: *How long does it take to examine my Towing Vessel?*

A: Examination can take from 30 minutes to a few hours depending on the size and complexity of your vessel. By conducting a pre-inspection of your vessel utilizing the exam forms, available on line or local CG unit, you can address issues prior to a CG Exam and make the exam go quicker & smoother. Schedule your industry initiated exam with your local Sector today!

Q: *What regulations apply to my Towing Vessel now?*

A: In general, regulations that currently apply to Towing Vessels may be found in Title 46 and 33 of the Code of Federal Regulations. For vessels that go on International Voyages certain parts of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) also apply. You may obtain a copy of the USCG Requirements for Uninspected Towing Vessels on-line at the web pages provide in this brochure, or through your local CG Sector or District office.



To obtain general information regarding TVBP and download the related documents mentioned in this brochure, visit the following CG internet web-site:

Homeport

WEBPAGE ADDRESS:

<https://homeport.uscg.mil>

Path:

Missions>Domestic Vessels>Uninspected Vessels>Towing Vessels

E-MAIL ADDRESS:

hqs-pf-flidr-g-pcv@USCG.MIL



United States Coast Guard

**Towing
Vessel
Bridging
Program**



The Transition from Uninspected to Inspected Vessel Status

The Act

Pursuant to the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2004, Pub. L. 108-293 of August 9, 2004, a significant regulatory project is underway that would subject the majority of commercial towing vessels to Inspection. In the period between the current and future state of towing vessel safety oversight, a Towing Vessel Bridging Program (TVBP) has been 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 Subchapter M.

US Coast Guard Objective

The Coast Guard will be accomplish this goal by enhancing, improving, and increasing interactions with the towing vessel industry, and by acclimating all involved with the procedures, policy, requirements and administration of existing and, as implementation draws closer, new Subchapter M regulations. To further these ends, during this period of transition the Coast Guard will conduct extensive industry outreach, properly train our people, and will examine every uninspected towing vessel (UTV) that could be inspected under Subchapter M.

Elements of the Bridging Program

There are five elements to the TVBP: Industry Outreach; Education and Qualification; Industry Initiated Exams; Risk-Based Targeted Exams; and Law Enforcement Boardings and Surge Operations.

Implementation

The bridging program will be implemented in three phases.

Phase 1

The initial focus of Phase 1 will be on industry outreach and CG personnel education, and qualification. The focus will shift to conducting Industry Initiated Examinations after CG personnel are trained and qualified to perform towing vessel examinations. Also during Phase 1, the Towing Vessel National Center of Expertise (TVNCOE) will develop a risk assessment tool that will be used in Phase 2. Phase 1 will commence during the summer of 2009 with an anticipated duration of up to 18 months, but will be scaled based on progress in meeting industry demand for exams.

Phase 2

During Phase 2, the focus will be on Risk-Based Targeted Examinations. In addition, the TVNCOE and Coast Guard Training Center (TRACEN) Yorktown will develop and deliver training in preparation for Towing Vessel Inspections that will occur later in Phase 3. The risk-based tool developed in Phase 1 will be employed to determine towing vessel examination priority. Data relevant to towing vessel operations will be analyzed periodically and adjustments will be made to the tool to enhance the risk-based decision-making process. Phase 2 activities will occur after the industry has been given the opportunity to participate in and the Coast Guard has satisfactorily time to conduct Industry Initiated Examinations, and will continue until Subchapter M implementation.

Phase 3

Phase 3 will commence with the implementation of the new Subchapter M towing vessel inspection regulations and issuance of Certificates of Inspection (COI). We anticipate that the risk-based tool developed and employed in Phase 2, or an enhanced version, will be used to determine priorities for issuing COIs. The TVNCOE and TRACEN Yorktown will continue to develop and deliver formal towing vessel inspections training during this phase.

Guiding Principles

Coast Guard personnel shall engage the towing vessel industry in the spirit of partnership during this transition to inspection and certification. Again, the purpose of this program is to ease the towing vessel industry's transition from an uninspected to an inspected regime. In all encounters with the towing industry our approach will be measured, professional, and, to the greatest degree possible, in the spirit of cooperation, while ultimately ensuring compliance with applicable safety, security, and environmental protection regulations.

Workgroups

Workgroups comprised of CG and Towing Vessel Industry representatives from around the country worked diligently to develop products for the TVBP. These products include: The Towing Vessel Outreach, Orientation, and Indoctrination Workbook; USCG Requirements for Uninspected Towing Vessels Guide; and Exam Forms with instructions.

Voluntary Exams

To schedule a voluntary exam contact your local CG Sector or Marine Safety Unit. If you can not locate an office near you, contact the CG District Towing Vessel Coordinator at one of the following numbers:

- D1 Boston, MA (617) 223-8272
- D5 Portsmouth, VA (757) 398-6554
- D7 Miami, FL (305) 415-6868
- D8 New Orleans, LA (540) 671-2264
- D9 Cleveland, OH (216) 902-6045
- D11 Alameda, CA (510) 437-2984
- D13 Seattle, WA (206) 220-7216
- D14 Honolulu, HI (808) 535-3422
- D17 Juneau, AK (907) 463-2815