



U.S. Department of
Transportation

News:

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs
Washington, D.C. 20590

M 49.1

FOR RELEASE MONDAY
February 6, 1989

CG 03-89
Contact: Nicholas Sandifer
Tel.: (202) 267-0930

COAST GUARD RAISES FEDERAL THRESHOLD FOR REPORTING RECREATIONAL BOATING ACCIDENTS

Boating accidents that result in property damage of more than \$500 will have to be reported under a new rule issued by the U.S. Coast Guard. The regulation raises the accident reporting threshold from \$200 to \$500 because of the increased costs of minor repairs. All accidents involving injuries which require medical treatment beyond first aid must also be reported, regardless of the level of property damage.

The rule also provides that state casualty reporting systems may continue to require submission of boating accident reports at a lower threshold than that required by the Coast Guard. State boating accident reporting thresholds and accident report forms are available by calling the Coast Guard's toll-free Boating Safety Hotline, 800-368-5647; in Washington, D.C., call 267-0780.

The rule is based on public comment on a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking issued April 25, 1988, and a subsequent notice issued June 10, 1988, extending the comment period to July 25, 1988.

The rulemaking (CGD 82-015) was published in the Federal Register today, and may be obtained by writing to Commandant (G-LRA-2), U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, D.C. 20593-0001, or by calling the Coast Guard Boating Safety Hotline.

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FOR RELEASE THURSDAY
April 6, 1989

CG 07-89
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NEW LIFESAVING EQUIPMENT PROPOSED FOR LARGE COMMERCIAL SHIPS

The Coast Guard today announced proposed changes in the regulations for lifesaving equipment on large commercial ships. The proposed regulations are the result of recent revisions of an international treaty known as the Safety of Life at Sea Convention, or "SOLAS."

The proposed rules would also carry out a number of recommendations that resulted from marine casualty investigations by the Coast Guard and the National Transportation Safety Board. Lifesaving equipment regulations for Great Lakes ships and other ships in domestic trade that are not covered by SOLAS would also be revised to require more effective lifesaving devices.

Under the proposed regulations:

- o Large commercial ships operating in the ocean or on the Great Lakes would be required to carry a new type of Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) that operates on a worldwide satellite frequency. EPIRBs alert the Coast Guard and other foreign search and rescue forces to a vessel casualty, and provide a homing beacon to locate a vessel in distress. The new satellite EPIRBs would be phased in over a six-year period, replacing an older style EPIRB that was not designed to work with the satellite search and rescue system now operating through U.S. and Soviet Satellites.

- o Ferries and passenger ships operating in water below 59 F would have to carry lifeboats or rafts to keep all survivors out of the water.

- o New large passenger ships in ocean service would be required to have partially enclosed lifeboats with rigid canopies at each end, and an open area in the center that can be quickly closed with a foldable cover. This gives more protection for passengers than conventional open lifeboats.

- o Totally enclosed lifeboats would be required on most new large cargo and tank ships. They provide protection from heavy seas and are either self-righting, or provide some means for escape if they are capsized.

-more-

The proposed regulations would also allow the use of some new lifesaving systems, including free-fall lifeboats, marine escape slides, and inflatable buoyant apparatus.

Free-fall lifeboats improve the speed and reliability of lifeboat launching by eliminating the need to lower the lifeboat to the water on a cable. The design of the boat and its angle of entry into the water allow the boat and survivors to safely endure the impact with the water, and start the boat moving safely away from the ship. Because free-fall lifeboat users need to be trained, free-fall lifeboats would not be allowed on passenger ships.

Marine escape slides are designed for abandoning a large passenger ship. Based on inflatable slides used on aircraft, they allow rapid abandonment of the ship to a platform on the water, where survivors enter their liferafts.

Inflatable buoyant apparatus are floating platforms that can handle large numbers of passengers rapidly and safely in relatively protected waters such as those used by many ferries.

The Coast Guard's proposed regulations will be published in the April 10 issue of the Federal Register, with a four-month comment period. Comments should be submitted to: Coast Guard Marine Safety Council (G-LRA-2), 2100 Second St., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20593-0001.

Copies of the proposed regulations may be obtained by writing to: Coast Guard Survival Systems Branch (G-MVI-3), 2100 Second Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20593-0001. Requests may also be made by facsimile at (202) 267-1069 (24-hour automatic operation), or by telephone at (202) 267-1444.

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FOR RELEASE MONDAY
April 10, 1989

CG 08-89
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COAST GUARD ISSUES RULEMAKING ON ILLEGAL DRUG POLICY FOR COMMERCIAL FISHING INDUSTRY VESSELS

Personal-use quantities of illegal drugs found on commercial fishing vessels would subject owners to a summons rather than immediate seizure of their vessels, under a rulemaking proposed today by the U.S. Coast Guard.

The proposed rule would formalize new procedures, which are required by the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, and which were put into effect Feb. 16 on an interim basis. Before that, commercial fishing industry vessels found with personal-use quantities of illegal drugs aboard were immediately seized and escorted to port to await forfeiture proceedings by the U.S. Customs Service.

The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) would apply to commercial fishing, fish processing and fish tender vessels that are engaged in or are en route to or from a fishing area or intermediate port of call.

It would not apply to recreational or sport fishing vessels. Neither would it apply to common carriers such as ferry boats, head boats or cruise ships. The law already protects this class of vessel from seizure and forfeiture due to the conduct of a passenger who has or brings aboard illegal drugs, or if the illegal drugs are found in the manifested cargo. These vessels are not protected if there is evidence that the master or operator knew of or participated in the violation or was grossly negligent in preventing it.

Under the proposed regulations, the vessel operator would get a summons from the Coast Guard boarding officer. It requires the vessel to report to the local director of customs at a specified port at a specified date. Then the penalty or forfeiture is determined by the Customs Service. If the vessel fails to appear, it may be seized and the operator subjected to prosecution.

The complete text of the NPRM is contained in the April 10, 1989 issue of the Federal Register. Written comments should be addressed to Executive Secretary, Marine Safety Council (G-LRA-2/36) (CG 89-003), U.S. Coast Guard, Washington, D.C. 20593-0001.

Separate NPRMs covering expedited forfeiture procedures after seizure for violations involving possession of personal-use quantities were also issued today by the Justice Department and the U.S. Customs Service.

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