

ACSA Industry Meeting 01July08, NPFVOA Offices, Seattle

Round of Introductions

CDR Chris Woodley, ACSA History

- Losses of GALAXY and ARCTIC ROSE
- Determination that vessels were processing beyond head and gut
- Three possible paths: strictly require class and loadline, status quo (do nothing), or an alternative that would increase the fleet's safety while allowing vessels to continue operating in the current management regime
- ACSA adopted after consultation with industry with focus on:
 - Watertight integrity
 - Stability
 - Fire Fighting
 - Safety Training.
- ACSA has been a learning experience for the Coast Guard and Industry
- Now is a good time for both program review and "re-calibration" with Industry
- List of requirements (from D13Instruction, Appendix 3 of the ACSA Agreement) led to adoption of an 840 or Inspection Book
- The ACSA program has had continuous support at Coast Guard HQ, D13, D17, and Congress
- The ACSA program has had lots of attention since the loss of the ALASKA RANGER both from HQ and Congress. Consequently, the Coast Guard discovered some implementation issues that we are working to improve. It is procedurally difficult to amend policy through DHS and OMB to clarify the existing G-PCV Policy Letter 06-03..

Ques: How can Industry be assured that they will have input?

Ans: The Coast Guard will ultimately have to make the final decisions, but the ACSA program emphasizes education and partnership with vessel owners.

Ques: How can Industry be assured of program consistency when there is internal disagreement amongst the Coast Guard, especially with regards to Sector Anchorage?

Ans: There has been some difference in interpretation, but conflict is good, as it brings problems to the forefront and encourages discussion. There is now one Coast Guard position and approach to the ACSA program.

Ques: We need ACSA work performed in Dutch Harbor. Now we hear that Coast Guard folks in Anchorage are getting involved?

Ans: Charlie Medlicott has been the "face" of the ACSA program in Dutch Harbor, but he doesn't have the entire qualification set necessary to carry out all ACSA inspections. MSD Unalaska works for Sector Anchorage, and has other fully-qualified ACSA inspectors. Sector Anchorage is onboard with the ACSA program.

Ques: Is it possible to have the Coast Guard in Dutch Harbor walk-thru ACSA vessels to generate worklists?

Ans: Yes. Advance scheduling of examinations and having the necessary vessel reps (nav architect, shipyard, etc) available will maximize success.

Ques: What is the Coast Guard doing to train more ACSA inspectors?

Ans: The Coast Guard is working on additional inspector billets for the ACSA program, but this may take some time. In addition, the Coast Guard is looking to bring other marine inspectors into the ACSA program, such as the two qualified marine inspectors who are reporting in to MSD Unalaska this summer.

Ques: What about using Class or 3rd Party surveyors to ease the Coast Guard workload?

Ans: To a degree, the Coast Guard is already using these resources to complete ACSA work. The Coast Guard understands that the Industry needs to understand what the Coast Guard is looking for, so education by the marine inspector is critical. The Coast Guard intends to be more engaged rather than less, during the start-up of the ACSA program.

Ques: Marty can't be everywhere at once...?

Ans: Better communications, scheduling and planning can help.

Ques: Is there enough "paper trail" on a vessel's history to keep continuity if Marty moves on?

Ans: The Coast Guard recommends that owners keep proactive in documentation and records. The Coast Guard encourages Industry to protest decisions if they feel aggrieved. Appeals are always available if there are disagreements. In addition, Marty replied that he uses the 840 Book to closely detail decisions that he makes, and he brings these issues to the attention of the Coast Guard.

Ques: The Industry is concerned about continuity and marine inspector workload, especially if fishing picks up and FVs spend more time in Dutch Harbor, rather than Seattle?

Ans: Forthcoming implementation guidance will improve continuity. In addition, two qualified marine inspectors are reporting to MSD Unalaska this summer.

Ques: My vessel already has a Loadline Certificate, but Marty has been holding us to a stricter standard than Class... so why do I need to pay for a Loadline?

Ans: The regulations for fish processors require a Loadline Certificate. The Coast Guard's oversight of Class and 3rd Party surveyors will sometimes pick up issues missed by Class.

Comment: Safety in the Head and Gut fleet is now much greater than it was before the ACSA program. The Industry may not agree with all the requirements, but we recognize that 90% + of the owners' expenses are going to the intended purpose of actually increasing vessel safety.

Comment: The longliners recognized the need for a regulatory alternative, and are glad for the hard work and good relationships with the key Coast Guard personnel involved. Vessels are safer, but drydock and naval architect availability has made the January 2008 deadline unrealistic. We recognize the value in better documentation of ACSA inspection standards. We also support a longliner co-op to allow for fleet consolidation/re-capitalization to further increase safety.

Ques: Can there be a standard, detailed "book" documenting the status and history of my vessel?

Ans: Some shipyards are providing these reports. The Coast Guard would like to see the Industry agree on a format.

Comments:

- Need clarity on appeals – will be addressed via implementation guidance to be developed
- There is concern about changing personnel have changing requirements – always an issue with the Coast Guard but implementation guidance that will include examination guidance should minimize differing interpretations.
- Is the Coast Guard trying to push ACSA vessels closer to the standards for inspected vessels – yes and no. To the extent that the Coast Guard has standards for systems for inspected vessels we have referred to those standards with a large body of policy and interpretations and we do want the ACSA vessels to continually improve safety which pushes toward the same level of safety as inspected vessels. The Coast Guard still considers these vessels uninspected and we recognize that vessels cannot be modified to meet those standards realistically. We generally agree that only significant safety issues should require safety upgrades.
- Annual meetings between stakeholders is a good thing.
- The ACSA program has put a burden on local shipyards requiring more work than originally anticipated.

Ques: Does the Coast Guard recognize there are significant differences between the trawl and longline fleets?

Ans: The Coast realizes there are significant differences. These differences are taken into account, to an extent as specific as the individual vessel.

Ques: What about “new” vessels entering the ACSA program.

Ans: Vessels will be admitted to the ACSA program on a case-by-case basis, however no new vessels will be allowed to process beyond H&G until they come into full compliance (i.e. no interim exemptions).

There was considerable discussion of the 2-year re-issuance of the ACSA exemption/equivalencies. The Coast Guard explained the requirements of 46 CFR 28.60, which put the responsibility and onus for continued participation on the vessel owners. The Coast Guard further explained that because the owners were responsible for submitting their proposal for establishing an equivalent to existing regulation when requesting an exemption, the Coast Guard was reticent to establish a “prescriptive” answer that would be satisfactory for all vessels. There was concern by several vessels that operators not be required to attest to a vessel’s seaworthiness.

Comment: The Industry would like to have the Coast Guard’s guidance document include a detailed section on re-issuance and renewal requests, incl. a sample letter.

Break for Lunch.

There was additional discussion on regulatory authority for exemptions and the need for the owners to make specific requests for any exemption

841 Book Review.

The Coast Guard facilitated a page-by-page review with tracked changes of the 840 Examination Book and noted the following:

The Industry is resistant to required internal subdivision watertight integrity, as this is specifically “grandfathered” by 46 CFR 28.580. The issue of watertight integrity for subdivision inside the hull envelope, regardless of how it seems obvious to the Coast Guard, remains an issue.

Section	Comment
A.b.	Timelines need to be adjusted since additional time for compliance has been granted
B.	
C.14	Ground tackle – must be a simple way to determine requirements. CG only questions when maintenance or repair questioned
C.15.	Critical piping – The CG will define which systems are to be considered critical
C.16	Non metallic expansion joints – move to Section G; difficulty in determining installation date and therefore 10 year rule isn’t realistic; modify to visual exam
C.17	Pressure vessels – limit inspection to compressed air systems of 5 cubic feet or more; move to Section G.
D.	Rudders added to examination requirements
E.3 & .4	Need to be clarified
F. 1.& .3	Add ‘weathertight’ to closures of concern. If doors have 24” coamings and are QAWT doors used, no alarm or indicator needed in F.3. deleted. Operators to develop watertight/weathertight integrity plan IAW stability addendum by Dec 2009.
I.1.	Fixed fire extinguishing systems will be certified as complying with 46 CFR Pat 76 by Professional Engineer at next servicing.
I. 6	CO2 detectors only needed in areas used for cylinder storage in quarters/workspaces.
	Freon detectors in storage/machinery spaces. Portable Freon detectors CG will identify an appropriate standard for these.

Mike Rosecrans noted that HQ is drafting a “Guide for Implementation” as the replacement for existing documentation, and this will become the overall guiding document on ACSA for both the Coast Guard and Industry.

Mr. Rosecrans also advertised the availability of documents to the Industry through www.fishsafe.info.

Ques: Can the ACSA program evolve into 3-year drydock intervals, vice the present requirement for 2-in-5 years?

Ans: No, the ACSA standard, twice in five years, is consistent with the US-inspected and international standards.

The Coast Guard thanked the Industry participants for their attendance and the open conversation, as well as thoughtful comments and questions. The meeting ended around 1615.