

Southern Towing Company

Newsletter

April 2006

TV's in the Wheelhouse

When are TV's allowed in the wheelhouse? NEVER! When you are on watch, whether underway or at a dock you have responsibilities. You cannot do your job properly while watching TV. This might seem obvious when you are underway. When you are at the dock loading or discharging you have a job to do that cannot be done properly if you are watching TV. The same goes for video games.

Licensing Information: Fingerprinting & Criminal Background Checks

The Coast Guard amended their rules to include new security requirements when applying for an original, renewal, or raise in grade licenses. The new rule requires an identity check, meaning that fingerprints must be taken for a criminal record review. This means that you must appear in person at an REC sometime during the process. You will need to present 2 forms of identification, one of which must have your photograph. For the first time criminal record reviews will be required each time an application is made. This new requirement will likely cause many more delays in the renewal process.

Safety Shoe Policy

Tennis shoes or street shoes are not appropriate to walk across a dock, lock wall or shipyard area. All employees should be prepared to board a boat wearing appropriate safety shoes. For cooks, pilots and shop personnel who do not work on deck, the safety shoes do not have to cover the ankle. All others must cover the ankle, be made of leather and have skid resistant soles. Every employee will be reimbursed up to \$100 each year for a new pair of safety shoes.

New Insurance Cards

You should have received your new health insurance card by this time. If not, contact Paula. To check on the status of claims with JP Farley Health Insurance call 1-800-252-4644. If you are having any problems getting prescriptions filled, contact Paula or ask the pharmacist to use your social security number.

Open Enrollment for Health Insurance

If you want to add someone or you want to enroll in the health insurance you may do so in August. Please call Paula and let her know, so that she can send the paper work for this.

Why Exercise?

Exercise is so beneficial to us that the lack of it creates a risk of reduced endurance. What other single thing can simultaneously

- Reduce risk of death from heart disease
- Reduce risk of developing diabetes, high blood pressure, or colon cancer,
- Help control your weight
- Help you build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints,
- Help improve your mood,
- Enhance your cognitive thinking,
- Help you fall asleep and sleep better, and
- Reduce stress?

UAN Bargemen (Lessons Learned)

Lately, we have had a number of incidents and near misses on our UAN barges that could have been prevented with some common sense. The first incident involved a barge being loaded

from a ship. The barge was being loaded at a rate of 1000 tons per hour. The barge could hold 3000 tons. The bargeman left the barge unattended while loading to help the boat relocate some other barges. We were very fortunate that nothing happened, but there was a real possibility for a disaster. Let's look at this. Suppose all the tanks were not loading at the same rate. Suppose it took longer for the boat to shift barges than planned. This barge could very easily have been overloaded and spilled a very large quantity of UAN. Don't have the attitude of 'so what?' Although UAN is not carried in USCG inspected barges, and the bargemen don't need any USCG certification to transfer UAN, it should still be handled as if all those regulations did apply. Even though it is not in the same pollution category as petroleum products, it is still a pollutant under the Refuse Act of 1899. The Coast Guard can fine anyone or send him to jail if they are inclined to do so. The target of those penalties can be the bargeman, the pilot or other Southern Towing Company personnel. Our customers expect us to handle their products properly. They expect us to avoid spilling it and losing any of it. If we continue to mishandle their products they will find someone else to transport it. We will lose business and you will lose a job. Don't leave a barge unattended during a transfer operation.

Coast Guard Boardings

The Coast Guard is continuing their aggressive boarding program. During recent boardings they have found such deficiencies as covers missing on electrical outlets and machinery guards missing. Other items they noted as deficient included depleted first aid kits and globes missing on lights. Review the Coast Guard's boarding checklist and the STOP Manual to be sure your boat is in compliance with all requirements.

Service Awards

Congratulations to Mike Ingram and Phillip Lambert for completing 5 years of service, Kevin Carrone for 10 years, Ralph McCleskey for 15 years and to Captain Richard (Dickie) Sides for completing 35 years of service to Southern Towing Company.

Alcohol Testing

New alcohol testing regulations go into effect in June. Anytime anyone is involved in a "serious marine casualty" which includes being injured and needing professional medical help, that person must be tested for alcohol within 2 hours of the incident. We will be sending alcohol test kits to the boats for use. Wheelhouse personnel are receiving training in the use of these test kits at the wheelhouse meetings. If you have any questions contact Mike Slack.

Identity Theft

This is an issue that keeps popping up. You can check your credit and help protect yourself against identity theft by

ordering your free annual credit report. You can get one free from each of the three reporting agencies by calling 1-877-322-8228. We have had 2 people in the office who have recently had their banking information stolen.

Referring Friends For Employment

When you refer a friend to us for employment tell them they **MUST** come to the office to complete an application. Do not tell them to call Bobby.

Paint

The paint we use on the boats is flammable. It must be stored in a "paint locker". It is not to be stored in the engine room or the shaft alley. This creates a fire hazard and will give the Coast Guard something else to write us up for.

Nautical Trivia

Fly-by-night... A large square sail used downwind or on a reach that could be used easily and quickly. This made it very useful for sailing at night especially

by people who dealt in contraband. Since these people's character was always in question they became known as fly-by-night-ers.

Drugs

All crewmembers are reminded that taking sleep aid drugs (prescription or over the counter) can have dangerous consequences on a boat. If you need to take them do so only at bedtime. But it is important to remember that as part of the crew you may be needed anytime in an emergency. That is the time when you need to be most alert. Avoid drugs that make you sleepy if possible.

POLLUTION PREVENTION

ZERO TOLERANCE is our policy when it comes to pollution. Don't think of just oil or other petroleum products entering the water. Anything that leaves the boat or barge (except gray water: water from showers and sinks) that gets into the rivers is considered pollution. That includes plastic, garbage, trash, human waste, cigarette butts and anything else that is not just water. We have an excellent record. Let's work hard to keep it that way.