

Southern Towing Company

Newsletter

Aug 2006

Safety Awards

The Chamber of Shipping of America annually presents the 'Jones F. Devlin' award to vessels that have had no loss time personnel injuries for a minimum of two years. This year the LARRY TILLEY received an award for completing 13 consecutive accident free years; the FRANK STEGBAUER for completing 3 years and the BOBBY JONES for 2 accident free years. Congratulations and 'Well Done!' to the crews of those boats.

Crossing the Bar

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family of Don "Cowboy" Lude who passed away on June 17th while serving as pilot on the Laura Elizabeth.

ToxiPro O2 Meter

Oxygen meters have been sent to all the boats for use by crewmembers prior to entering a confined space and to use while in that space. A confined space is a compartment that is not designed for occupancy, is normally closed up and may have little, if any breathable atmosphere. Examples of confined spaces include wing voids and rake ends. The ToxiPro O2 Meters will measure the atmosphere within those compartments and let you know if sufficient oxygen is in that compartment. If not already, you will soon be receiving training in their use.

Coast Pilot

Coast Pilot 5 has been sent to all boats. If you did not receive one call Mike Slack.

Attention Steersmen

If you are a steersman, or if you are upgrading your license to add a route

(such as Inland) you are required to complete a Towing Officer Assessment Record. If you do not have one of these contact Mike Slack. A Designated Examiner must sign each element of the TOAR once you have shown your proficiency in order to advance your license.

Did you know?

The contribution limit for your 401K plan has increased to \$15,000 for 2006, and if you'll be 50 before the year ends, you can contribute an extra \$5,000 to your 401(k) for a total of \$20,000.

Drug Violation

One of our licensed ammonia tankermen recently failed a random drug test. His employment was terminated and the Coast Guard was notified. They will revoke his Tankerman license. Remember, we are a Zero Tolerance company.

401(k) Plan

The next enrollment for the 401(k) plan is October 1st, please contact Paula if you would like to participate or if you have any questions.

Was It Worth It?

One of our deckhands lost his employment for taking 3 aerosol cans, 2 renuzits, and a box of garbage bags. Our STOP Manuel, on page P-4 says "Any act of dishonesty. This includes theft or wrongful use of money, equipment, supplies, or materials, which may belong to the Company or to a fellow employee." Is cause for immediate dismissal. If you haven't read the STOP Manuel lately, then you need to refresh your memory. Was it worth it to him to lose his job over a few inexpensive items?

Health Insurance

Everyone should have received their new ID cards from Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Please DO NOT USE JP Farley, DISCARD your ID cards with JP Farley. Contact Paula with any questions.

TWIC

There is no new news regarding the proposed TWIC (Transportation Worker Identification Credential) regulations which were published in May, other than vessel owners will not be required to purchase card readers during the first phase of the TWIC implementation. Comments to the proposed regulations were to be made in June. Since that time no additional information has been published. The next step will be that the Homeland Security Administration will publish follow-up regulations in the form of either 'supplemental proposed regulations,' 'interim final rule,' or 'final rule.' If you have any questions contact Mike Slack or Bill Stegbauer.

Good News/Bad News

How many times have we said to Pay Attention when transferring fuel? The person-in-charge needs to pay attention and do his job. Recently a Tankerman on an ammonia barge decided not to pay attention while fueling his barge. The result was that the tank overflowed into the hopper dumping a large quantity of diesel fuel into the hopper. The good news is that it didn't overflow into the river and cause a pollution incident. The bad news is that it cost a lot of money and time to clean the hopper.

Coast Guard Random Boardings

The Coast Guard has begun a random boarding program to verify compliance

with the Maritime Security regulations. They are boarding all boats, not just those pushing cargoes covered under the regulations. Be sure that you understand your responsibilities under the security regulations. If you have any questions contact your Vessel Security Officer or our Company Security Officer, Mike Slack.

License and MMD Holders

If you hold a license or an MMD don't forget to renew on time. If you were a Tankerman and are now an engineer, do not let your Tankerman MMD expire. You may be called upon at some time to fill in as a Tankerman. If you are a licensed engineer, don't forget to renew your license. Remember that it takes a long time to renew a license or MMD, so start early. You can renew up to a year before it expires. Call Mike Slack if you have questions or need the renewal paperwork.

Child Support

We have notified the childcare enforcement courts about the change in

our health insurance provider. If you need additional information sent, please contact Gay at the office.

ID Cards

All crewmembers are required to carry a photo ID card with them when reporting on board. It does not matter if you are on an ammonia tow, a coal tow, a rock tow or a solution tow. You must have a photo ID with you. The facilities and boat stores are enforcing the security regulations. They are not to allow anyone onto their property unless they can be properly identified through a photo ID. A birth certificate or a social security card are not acceptable. If you have lost your driver's license get a state issued ID card.

Extension of License and MMD Expiration Dates

If you have a license or MMD that was issued by REC New Orleans that has expired or will expire before April 1, 2007 you can contact any REC for the procedures to obtain correspondence confirming the validity of the license or

MMD past the expiration date. If this applies to you contact Mike Slack with any questions.

More on Licensing

The Coast Guard is centralizing the licensing (and MMD) program. REC's will continue to assist mariners to complete applications, take fingerprints, verify citizenship and identity, and administer exams and oaths. The restructuring will allow the National Maritime Center (NMC) to conduct evaluations, make decisions on applications and authorize the issuance of the license or MMD. The purpose of the change is to streamline the process using economies of scale and increased use of technology, enhance security and improve consistency of information, procedures, and mariner evaluations.

Call the Office First

If you are involved in a casualty, our policy is that you contact someone from the office before contacting the Coast Guard. We will either call the USCG or direct you to contact them.