

# Southern Towing Company

Newsletter

December 2005

## Safety Gear

Whenever you are on a barge, even if you are not working you are required to wear a work vest. Going out onto a barge to make cell phone calls because it is quieter than on the boat is not a very safe thing to do. Your attention is focused on the phone call, not on where you are stepping. You compound the danger if you don't wear a work vest. STC safety rules and long standing policy calls for you to wear a work vest whenever you are out on a barge, working or not.

## Rules of the Road

Rule 5 "Look-out" reads as follows: *"Every vessel shall at all times maintain a proper look-out by sight and hearing as well as by all available means appropriate in the prevailing circumstances and conditions so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and of the risk of collision."* What is a proper look-out? A proper look-out could be a person placed on the bow of the lead barge to relay information to the pilot. It could mean that the pilot, by himself, using his radar is sufficient as a look-out. A proper look-out could mean that the pilot needs someone else in the wheelhouse whose undivided attention is as a look-out. It is the responsibility of the person in charge of the navigation of the vessel to provide a proper look-out. If you need someone to help as look-out, get the help. If an accident occurs 'because you did not see' something in your path, you are at fault for not having a proper look-out.

## Sleeping Better

Caffeine (in sodas and coffee) and nicotine may make you feel more awake and alert, but the effects wear off after a couple of hours. Cutting down on

caffeine and nicotine 3-4 hours before bed will help you sleep much better.

## Nautical Terminology

Red Sky At Night... The origin of the saying is unknown, although a form of it appears in the bible (Matthew 16:2-3). It has some basis in science and is a fairly good predictor (though no guarantee) of weather. The mid latitudes in the Northern Hemisphere is where storm systems generally follow the jet stream from west to east. A red sky in the morning indicates a sun rising in clear eastern skies casting its rays on storm clouds approaching from the west. At night the clear sight of the red setting sun would tell a sailor that no storms are to the west. *"Red skies at night, sailor's delight; red skies in the morning, sailors take warning."*

## Vessel Security

We have been at MARSEC (Maritime Security) Condition One for almost 2 years. Although the Coast Guard has been busy with response to hurricanes lately they have not slacked off, nor should we, on security concerns. Remember to check the ID of anyone wanting to board our boats and barges; check packages coming on board and keep an eye out for suspicious activities.

## Safe Food Handling

- Before putting away leftovers wash your hands and use clean utensils.
- Date leftovers so they can be used in a safe period of time (usually 2 to 3 days).
- Leftovers must be put in shallow containers for quick cooling, and refrigerated within two hours.
- When storing products rotate the boxes so the "first in, first out" inventory method can be used.

- Make sure refrigerators are set at 40° and freezers at 0°.
- Never taste test a leftover: if in doubt, throw it out.
- Reheat leftovers until hot and steamy.
- In microwave ovens, cover food and rotate so it heats evenly.
- When putting raw meats or poultry in the refrigerator place them on the bottom shelf below ready to eat items.
- Check storage areas periodically for any signs of rodent or insect infestation.

## EMD School

Congratulations to William Rendleman, Michael Vaught, Bob Killingsworth, Paul Schelinski and Ronell Lewis for recently completing EMD School and Person-In-Charge of Fueling Operations training.

## Drug Tests

During a recent random drug test a deckhand on the M/V Dennis Collins tested positive for cocaine. A deckhand on the Charles Southern provided a diluted sample, which is considered the same as a positive test, and one of our pilots refused to take a test resulting in a two year suspension of his license by the Coast Guard. We are required to continuously conduct random drug tests. We can also test someone if we have justification such as erratic behavior. Southern Towing Company is a Zero Tolerance company. We do not allow anyone to work here who does drugs.

## Slippery Decks

It's that time of year when you can expect to encounter snow and ice on the decks of your boat and barges. Be careful not to slip, trip or fall. A good quality pair of work shoes can help to

prevent injuries. Read the STOP Manual to find what is required and see Paula for a voucher to get new safety shoes if you need them.

### **License & MMD Renewals**

If you have any medical issues that might require a medical waiver before your license or MMD is renewed, plan ahead. It has recently taken over four months to get the waiver request through USCG headquarters.

### **EXPENSES**

Please write your name clearly or PRINT, and especially make sure that you sign it. Please put the name of the boat you are going to or from and the date. If you have receipts they MUST be attached in order to get reimbursed.

### **Moderate Weight Loss a Benefit**

Don't get discouraged if you need to lose weight. Modest amounts of weight loss can have a beneficial impact on your health, according to the nonprofit coalition Partnership for Healthy Weight

Management. Losing five to 10 percent of your weight, and keeping it off, can lower your blood pressure and help reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes. If you are 5 feet 6 inches tall, for instance, and weigh 160 pounds, losing five to 10 percent of your weight comes to eight to 16 pounds.

### **401k Plan**

Our last newsletter apparently caused some confusion. STC will match \$.25 for every dollar you put into the plan up to the annual limit of 8% of your earnings. There are other limits established by the IRS. For 2006 you can save \$15,000 if you are under 50 and \$20,000 if you are over 50. Contact Paula with questions.

### **Tankerman School**

Congratulations to Timothy DePriest, Bryan Worthington, Kevin Lang, Ross Taylor, Richard Mercer, Eric Raborn and Thomas Kelly for recently completing the Anhydrous Ammonia Tankerman school and Fire Fighting Training.

### **Service Awards**

Congratulations to Michael Vaught and James Kilpatrick for completing 5 years of service to Mark Whitehead, Bobby Snyder and Stephen Shiver for completing 10 years and to Lloyd Ervin for completing 20 years of service with Southern Towing Company.

### **Merry Christmas And Happy New Year**

The staff here at Southern Towing Company all wish you and your families a happy and safe holiday season.

