

# Southern Towing Company

Newsletter

June 2006

## TWIC

This is important to every crewmember. Once these regulations become effective you will not be able to work without a TWIC. The Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) proposed regulations have been published. This is a program that will be administered by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). As proposed, all crewmembers and some other employees will be required to carry a TWIC. It will have your photo, an electronically embedded thumbprint and a personal identification number. As proposed you cannot board a vessel or enter a facility unless you have a valid TWIC. All boats and facilities will have a TWIC reader. We are not sure of the exact time frame for implementation.

## Reports to the Coast Guard

Some, not all, accidents are required to be reported to the Coast Guard. Some need to be reported immediately, some require written reports within a short time frame, while others do not need to be reported to at all. Southern Towing Company has always reported all required incidents (and most incidents that are not required to be reported) to the Coast Guard. The regulations require the owner or operator to make the necessary reports. The burden is on the owner to be sure the reports are properly completed. For these reasons Southern Towing Company's policy is that crewmembers are to report accidents to office personnel, not to the Coast Guard. We know the information required to be reported and we have the correct forms on which to make the reports.

## Position/Departure Reports

For those boats with ammonia tows be sure to make the trip origination reports

4 hours prior to the start of a voyage for any trip beginning within the Regulated Navigation Area (anywhere north of Baton Rouge). (We missed a 4 hour departure report recently and the Coast Guard did an investigation wanting to know the pilot's name.) Make another report when you actually get underway. If you stop along the way for any reason (for instance at the shipyard for repairs) make an additional report to update the IR-VMC. When getting underway again make another report. These reports are in addition to the regular position reports. If you have any questions contact Mike Slack.

## New Drug & Alcohol Rules

As of June 20, 2006 the Coast Guard requires us to conduct alcohol tests within 2 hours and drug tests within 32 hours of a serious marine incident. This includes injuries where more than simple first aid is required. Other serious marine incidents include damage in excess of \$100,000 or pollution in excess of 10,000 gallons. Alcohol test kits have been sent to the boats with instructions. Contact Mike Slack if you have questions.

## Fire on Board

The Mary Elizabeth recently had a fire that started from an electrical short. The crew acted quickly and put the fire out in a matter of minutes. The result was some minor damage to the boat. The important lesson learned here is that participating in all those monthly fire drills pays dividends. If have a fire you need to know how to deal with it before it causes serious damage.

## This From the Coast Guard

Medical waivers: The conditions for which an REC can grant a local medical waiver is shrinking and may soon decrease to nothing beyond the need to

wear glasses. So please inform your staff, customers, students, marine employees, etc. that if they have **any medical conditions** that they should submit applications for renewal of their USCG credentials a minimum of 6 months before expiration (12 months would be safer) to ensure adequate time to forward any medical waiver issues to Washington for review.

Fingerprint reminder - If a mariner needs fingerprints taken as part of their credential transaction, we need to see the original document showing their citizenship (e.g. birth certificate, passport). To be acceptable a birth certificate must be issued by the state/county/parish health department or vital records agency and have the agency raised seal on it. A certificate issued by a hospital is NOT acceptable. We see too many mariners show up either without proof of citizenship or with a copy that is not acceptable. We hate to see people have to make two trips to get fingerprinted.

## Nautical Trivia

**Port and starboard:** Port and starboard are shipboard terms for left and right, respectively. Confusing those two could cause a ship wreck. In Old England, the starboard was the steering paddle or rudder, and ships were always steered from the right side on the back of the vessel. Larboard referred to the left side, the side on which the ship was loaded. So how did larboard become port? Shouted over the noise of the wind and the waves, larboard and starboard sounded too much alike. The word port means the opening in the "left" side of the ship from which cargo was unloaded. Sailors eventually started using the term to refer to that side of the ship. Use of the term "port" was officially adopted by the [U.S. Navy by General Order, 18 February 1846.](#)

### **EMD School**

Congratulations to Mike Malone, Joe Marshall, James Malone, Doug Beyers and James Edwards for recently completing EMD school and Person-in-Charge training.

### **Crossing the Bar**

Jerry Radcliff passed away on March 22<sup>nd</sup> after a battle with cancer. Jerry was a pilot on the Charles Southern. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family.

### **License/MMD/Fingerprinting**

The USCG in Louisville will be open from 0800-1100 for fingerprinting, oaths and certification of identification. You will need to bring your application or letter from the REC with you and proper ID. Contact Mike Slack if you have questions.

### **Relying on AIS**

Solely relying on information from AIS is not a good idea. AIS is only required on tows that enter a VTS controlled area. Not all boats, especially on the upper river systems are equipped with AIS. As an aid to navigation they are great,

however you must also rely on your radar, radio, lookout and any other means to determine oncoming traffic.

### **Signatures**

When you sign an invoice or an expense voucher print you name as well as signing your name. We need to be able to read your name to verify the invoice or expense voucher. If there is a question regarding the document we need to talk to the person who signed it.

### **Heat Exhaustion**

Remember, it's hot out there. Keep your head covered in the sun and drink plenty of fluids. Don't be a victim of heat exhaustion.

### **Service Awards**

Congratulations to Walter Kinnebrew, Charles Spradling and Chris Shaw for completing 5 years and to Mike Newsom and Mike Emison for completing 20 years of service with Southern Towing Company.

### **Near Miss**

Recently on one of our boats a crewmember started cooking bacon in the oven

getting ready for breakfast. Shortly after he started it he was called on deck to help get through a lock. He left the bacon unattended. Fortunately another crewmember found the bacon burning and took it out of the oven just before it burst into flames. This could have been a bad fire. He should have turned off the oven before he left the galley. Pay attention and THINK.

