
6. CONCLUSION

This current period marks a watershed point in the towing vessel industry's history that will serve to protect the marine environment, improve operational efficiencies and cultivate a strong culture of safety. The towing vessel industry plays a vital role in the health of the U.S. economy so these improvements will have a profound effect on many. Operators are the true industry experts and must be heard when it comes to examining current vessel activities and effecting measures to improve performance. Most importantly, the operators, TPOs and USCG must maintain and nurture continued dialogue to work through challenges and meet USCG expectations for the towing vessel industry.

The available resources discussed should be leveraged by vessel owners to bring vessels into inspected status. A TPO should not just attend owner assets to carry out required audit and survey work, but should act as a shepherd through the entire certification process to relieve the vessel owner of as much burden as possible. The TPO-client relationship is a true partnership, as what is good for one is good for the other. It is the TPO's responsibility to determine how to meet the intent of the new regulation with as little financial burden to the owner as possible and without compromising the desired factor of safety. There will be an initial cost to owners to meet some of the new requirements, yet these initial investments will pay big dividends to owners and result in growth.

ABS is currently assisting owners in developing their individual timelines to obtain COIs in line with the required compliance dates. ABS understands that each operation is unique so we dedicate the requisite time and resources to each operator to support their success. The ABS Towing Vessel Center of Excellence's close proximity to the USCG Towing Vessel National Center of Expertise in Paducah, Kentucky, provides convenient access to the most current industry information and allows us to respond to our customers' inquiries in a timely fashion. Our ABS Towing Vessel Center of Excellence is an invaluable resource to our customers nationwide as it serves as a one-stop shop for all of your Subchapter M questions and needs. We value all of our compliance partnerships and look forward to serving the marine towing industry in the years to come.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A native of the Washington, D.C. area, Paul Hite is a senior surveyor and auditor and has been with ABS for four years. Prior to ABS, Paul sailed as a deck officer for seven years, five of which were spent on towing vessels. Paul graduated from the United States Merchant Marine Academy in 2006 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Logistics and Intermodal Transportation. Paul is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Project Management from Georgetown University.

