

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

AND

AMERICAN WATERWAYS OPERATORS

OUTLINE OF QUALITY PARTNERSHIP

FOR

MARINE SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Purpose and Objective of the Quality Partnership

1. The purpose of this quality partnership between the United States Coast Guard (USCG) and the American Waterways Operators (AWO) is to strengthen the communication and working relationship between the Coast Guard and the barge and towing industry. Its objectives, for both the USCG and AWO, are to improve vessel and personnel safety within the barge and towing industry and enhance the protection of the environment along our nation's waterways. These objectives have been identified as strategic goals within the Coast Guard's "M" Business Plan and Performance Plan under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), and within AWO's strategic plan, *AWO 2000*.

Outline of the Quality Partnership

2. The quality partnership covered by this agreement is to establish a program of cooperative, informal, structured processes that will address issues of marine safety and environmental protection. These processes are not intended to subvert the legitimate role for government regulation in establishing minimum standards necessary to ensure the safety of U.S. waters, vessels and crews; nor are they intended to supplant the important role that has been and continues to be played by existing federal advisory committees to the Coast Guard (including the Towing Safety Advisory Committee, Chemical Transportation Advisory Committee, etc.). Rather, they are intended to complement these other legitimate government and industry functions by providing a flexible mechanism for joint Coast Guard-industry action in a results-oriented, non-regulatory environment.

Details of the Quality Partnership

3. The USCG and AWO agree to establish a quality partnership to further mutual goals of safety and environmental protection. This quality partnership involves creating national, regional and local Quality Steering Committees to review and act on "Opportunities for Improvement" (OFIs) received from members of the barge and towing industry, AWO, and USCG personnel. Quality Steering Committees (QSC) will identify these OFIs that are candidates for cooperative Coast Guard-industry attention and then set up Quality Action Teams (QATs) to correct the problem or improve the process identified in the OFI.

4. Quality Action Teams will operate under the guidance of the QSC and conduct their work using a quality process to analyze the issues involved and recommend process improvements including, as a minimum, the following steps:

- a. Define the scope of the problem or process improvement needed (i.e., determine the base line), utilizing statistical data, case studies, etc., as available;
- b. Analyze the data/identify root causes of the problem;
- c. Identify solutions to the problem or improvements to the process based on analysis of available data/evidence;
- d. Identify the measure(s) by which the success of proposed solutions will be judged and check the validity of the proposed solutions by measuring initial results;
- e. Refine proposed solutions as necessary; and,
- f. Develop an implementation plan (including identification of the target audience for the improvement) for submittal back to the Quality Steering Committee.

5. Quality Steering Committees will review the work of the QAT to ensure that all necessary quality steps have taken place, that proposed solutions and quality improvements are supported by the underlying analysis, and that the proposed implementation plan is complete and understandable. Having validated the QAT's work, the QSC will endorse the results and communicate proposed improvements to the target audience identified in the QAT's implementation plan.

Action

6'. To institutionalize the quality partnership described above, the USCG and AWO agree to undertake the following actions:

- a. Both the USCG and AWO will promote this Quality Partnership within our two organizations via appropriate channels.

b. The USCG and AWO will establish a National Quality Steering Committee by September 30, 1995.

c. The National QSC will establish by November 1, 1995, a National Quality Action Team (QAT) that initially will address the issue of deckhand fatalities.

d. The USCG and AWO will establish Regional Quality Steering Committees in the AWO Midcontinent and Southern Regions (Second and Eighth Coast Guard Districts) by October 1, 1995.


e. These Regional QSCs will identify by November 1, 1995, no more than two Captain of the Port Zones per Region for the establishment of Local QSCs.

f. The experiences gained by the National, Regional and Local QSCs in meeting the objectives of this quality partnership will be evaluated by the National QSC after one year's operation. Based on this evaluation, the National QSC will recommend to the USCG and AWO whether to continue and/or expand the quality partnership.

g. If a favorable recommendation is received to continue and/or expand the quality partnership, the USCG and AWO will expand the above described processes to the remainder of the AWO Regions and Coast Guard Districts and Captain of the Port Zones.

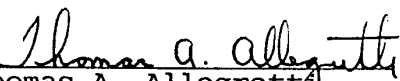
Institution of the Quality Partnership

7. This Outline of Quality Partnership is effective upon signature of this agreement. It is informal in nature and may be modified or terminated by either party by mutual agreement at any time.



J.C. Card
Rear Admiral, U. S. Coast Guard
Chief, Office of Marine Safety,
Security and Environmental
Protection

September 19, 1995
Date



Thomas A. Allegretti
President
American Waterways
Operators

September 19, 1995
Date