



For Immediate Release

25 October 2016

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ABS Earns Auditor Status in AWO Responsible Carrier Program

AWO qualifies ABS to perform towing safety management audits.

(Seattle, WA) ABS, a leading provider of classification and technical services to the marine and offshore industries, has been approved by the American Waterways Operators (AWO) to carry out audits of its Responsible Carrier Program (RCP). The RCP, a safety management system for tugboat, towboat and barge companies, requires AWO member companies to undergo periodic management and vessel audits conducted by an independent third party.

Towing vessel operators serving the inland waterways, coasts and harbors are looking closely at their fleets to determine the best way to meet the new U.S. Coast Guard Subchapter M regulations establishing vessel safety and inspection requirements. Vessel owners and operators can choose whether to opt for annual Coast Guard inspections or adopt a Towing Safety Management System (TSMS). AWO has submitted the RCP for Coast Guard acceptance as a TSMS and anticipates final approval this fall.

“ABS recognizes that with new Subchapter M requirements in place, towing vessel owners need a trusted technical advisor that understands their unique operational challenges and can help navigate regulatory requirements,” says ABS Chairman, President and CEO Christopher J. Wiernicki. “Gaining RCP auditor status adds to our wide-ranging solutions which are supported by a team of technical experts located strategically across the country and include a comprehensive suite of Rules and Guides that demonstrate our steadfast commitment to safety and environmental protection.”

“This agreement with ABS expands the pool of well-qualified, well-trained third-party auditors who can conduct RCP/TSMS audits,” said AWO President & CEO Tom Allegretti. “This is consistent with AWO’s longstanding goal of facilitating member compliance with Subchapter M and raising standards of safety and environmental stewardship throughout the tugboat, towboat and barge industry.”

“As we meet with towing vessel owners, we hear repeated requests for help in identifying compliance options that best fit their fleet needs,” says ABS Americas Division President James Watson.

“Achieving RCP approval expands ABS’ offering and increases the portfolio of services we can offer towing vessel owners and operators on inland waterways, coasts, and harbors.”

Located in every major U.S. port city, ABS’ team of technical specialists is prepared to guide owners and operators to develop a compliance plan that meets and exceeds their individual needs.

AWO has a 72-year history as the national advocate for the tugboat, towboat, and barge industry and is a recognized leader in maritime safety and environmental stewardship. Aligning AWO’s industry expertise and robust safety management system with the safety culture and experience of ABS will support AWO’s membership in meeting the technical, operational and regulatory challenges associated with the Subchapter M requirements.

About AWO

The American Waterways Operators is the national trade association representing the tugboat, towboat and barge industry, which operates on the rivers, the Great Lakes, and along the coasts and in the harbors of the United States. Barge transportation serves the nation as the safest, most environmentally friendly and most economical mode of freight transportation. For more information about AWO, please visit www.americanwaterways.com.

About ABS

Founded in 1862, ABS is a leading international classification society devoted to promoting the security of life and property and preserving the natural environment through the development and verification of standards for the design, construction and operational maintenance of marine and offshore assets. For more information about ABS, please visit www.eagle.org.