



The American Waterways Operators

www.americanwaterways.com

Southern Region

522 North New Hampshire Street
Suite 8
Covington, LA 70433

PHONE: (985) 674-3600
CELL: (985) 222-5230
FAX: (866) 457-9354
EMAIL: mwright@vesselalliance.com

Mark A. Wright
Vice President – Southern Region

August 24, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mid-America Regional Quality Steering Committee

FROM: Mark Wright

RE: Training & Orientation Quality Action Team Report

The Training & Orientation Quality Action Team (QAT), as chartered under the Mid-America Regional Quality Steering Committee (RQSC) during the January 2011 meeting, has produced the following report.

The members of the Training & Orientation QAT representing industry are Ken Albee, Marquette Transportation Company; Jack Buri, Crouse Corporation; Les Grimm, Ingram Barge Company; Steve Huttman, G&H Towing Company; and, Mark Wright and Caitlyn Stewart, AWO. The members from the U.S. Coast Guard are CDR Chris Woodle, Eighth Coast Guard District Inspections and Investigations Branch; CDR Mark Moland, LTJG Ryan Gomez, and CWO Justin Coder, Sector Lower Mississippi River; BMCM Bradley Vandiver, CGC OUACHITA; Chad Davison, MSU Lake Charles; LT Nicolette Travland, MSU Texas City; and, CWO Bobby Conners, MSU Port Arthur. The Training & Orientation QAT held four conference calls in December 2011 and January, April, and August 2012.

The Training & Orientation QAT was established following a series of meetings in 2006 and 2007 in which leaders of the inland towing industry and senior staff of the Eighth Coast Guard District agreed that in order to support a safe, secure, and environmentally sound inland marine transportation system, it is necessary to build, maintain, and continuously work to improve the Coast Guard-industry relationship and to transcend industry and Coast Guard personnel changes. The Mid-America RQSC revised the QAT's task statement in 2011 to identify best practices for advancing the Coast Guard-industry partnership and establishing greater continuity through personnel changes.

The QAT's recommendations to the Mid-America RQSC, the Coast Guard, and AWO and its members are the following:

- Disseminate guidance for, expand, and encourage participation in facility visits and ride-along initiatives, especially in known “problem areas,” for Coast Guard personnel, and allow industry members opportunities to ride on cutters. Develop a point-of-contact list of both industry and Coast Guard representatives that can arrange these opportunities.
- Afford Coast Guard personnel more opportunities to engage the industry outside the agency, including through the Merchant Marine Indoctrination (MMI) Ship Rider Program and more intensive industry trainings. Allow members of the Coast Guard to attend the orientations that AWO member companies give new hires. Offer Coast Guard personnel dealing with specific operations (i.e., crew changes, etc.) a simple, informal orientation to those practices and procedures.
- Encourage Coast Guard personnel and industry members to take training courses offered to both groups together, including professional training opportunities and just-in-time trainings.
- Encourage involvement in preparedness, law enforcement, and security training exercises conducted by the industry, the Coast Guard, and other federal agencies.
- Continue to conduct regular meetings, such as AWO-initiated Sector Luncheons, between Sector staffs and local AWO members to discuss shared concerns and opportunities to work together.
- Continue to stage Coast Guard industry days, which allow industry members to meet the Coast Guard personnel they will be working with. Consider expanding industry days with more directed audiences specific to certain segments of the industry.
- Ensure that information about opportunities for engagement, such as Coast Guard-AWO Safety Partnership and working group meetings and AWO regional and safety committee meetings, are disseminated among Coast Guard personnel and industry members in advance to maximize participation. Consider utilizing the QAT to distribute information down the chains of command.

Excellent existing forums for relationship-building and information-sharing identified by QAT members that should be supported by the Coast Guard and industry included:

- The Western Rivers Orientation Course
 - The Western Rivers Orientation Course is attended by Coast Guard personnel who are newly assigned to a Western Rivers duty assignment, held at sectors throughout the Eighth District.
- Brownwater University at the Seamen’s Church Institute
 - Brownwater University in Houston is a cooperative effort between the Coast Guard and the inland barge industry designed to provide an overview of the industry and the Coast Guard functions and activities related to the industry. It is targeted to Coast Guard personnel who interface with the industry,

employees new to the industry, and legislators and regulators who impact the barge industry.

- The Merchant Marine Indoctrination Ship Rider Program
 - The Coast Guard MMI Ship Rider Program is a cooperative educational program between the Coast Guard and participating host ship companies that provides opportunities for apprentice Marine Inspectors to join a vessel's crew while underway and act as riding observers, giving them practical knowledge of the performance and operating characteristics of various vessels, equipment, waterways, and crews.
- Towing Vessel National Center of Expertise and Bridging and Implementation Team working groups/examiner trainings
- The Inland Waterways Conference
 - The Inland Waterways Conference is an annual meeting that brings together industry and government agencies, including the Coast Guard, who are involved in the inland marine transportation system.
- Coast Guard Industry Days
- River industry stakeholder groups, including (but not limited to):
 - The Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association (GICA)
 - The Huntington District Waterways Association (HDWA)
 - The Central Ohio River Maritime Industry Group (CORMIG)
 - The Greater New Orleans Barge Fleeting Association (GNOBFA)
 - The Texas Waterways Operators Association (TWOA)
 - The Illinois River Carriers' Association (IRCA)
- Coast Guard Area Maritime Security Committee (AMSC) meetings