



Fishing Safety: Pilot Training Program

April 28, 2016

Fiscal Year 2016 Report to Congress



Homeland
Security

United States Coast Guard

Foreword

April 28, 2016

I am pleased to present the following report, “Fishing Safety: Pilot Training Program,” as prepared by the U.S. Coast Guard.

This report was compiled pursuant to the *Fiscal Year 2016 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act* (P.L. 114-113). The report provides a plan for carrying out a pilot training program, potentially involving an expansion of the Coast Guard’s collaboration with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.



Pursuant to congressional requirements, this report is being provided to the following Members of Congress:

The Honorable John Carter
Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

I am happy to answer any further questions you may have. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 372-4411 or the Department’s Deputy Under Secretary for Management and Chief Financial Officer, Chip Fulghum, at (202) 447-5751.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul F. Zukunft". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul F. Zukunft
Admiral, U. S. Coast Guard
Commandant



Fishing Safety: Pilot Training Program

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I. Legislative Language

This report responds to language in House Report 114-215 accompanying the *Fiscal Year 2016 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act* (P.L. 114-113).

House Report 114-215 states:

FISHING SAFETY TRAINING

Section 309 of the Coast Guard Reauthorization Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–281) authorizes competitive grant funding for Fishing Safety Training and Fishing Safety Research grants programs that support collaborative training and research into emerging and useful technologies to enhance safety on fishing vessels. The Committee directs the Coast Guard to provide, within 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, a plan for carrying out a pilot for a training program, potentially involving an expansion of the Coast Guard’s current collaboration with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health related to data on commercial fishing safety. Although no specific funding is provided for implementing a pilot training program, the Coast Guard is encouraged to use funds recovered from prior obligations for this purpose.

II. Report

Fishing Safety Training Program – Implementation Status

The *Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010* (P.L. 111-281), as amended by the *Howard Coble Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2014* (P.L. 113-281), directed the Secretary to establish a Fishing Safety Training Grant Program. This program, if funded by Congress, would provide funding for municipalities, port authorities, other appropriate public entities, not-for-profit organizations, and other qualified persons to conduct fishing vessel safety training for vessel operators and crewmembers, and for the purchase of safety equipment and training aids for use in those fishing vessel safety training programs. The grants would be awarded on a competitive basis and could cover up to 75 percent of the cost of the training. These Acts authorized appropriation of \$3,000,000 in each fiscal year from 2010 through 2017.

The Coast Guard has not established a Fishing Safety Training Grants Program as it has received no specific appropriation for this program.

Fishing Safety Training Program - Framework

Since 1991, the Coast Guard has instituted safety and survival educational outreach initiatives, including the establishment of a voluntary dockside safety examination program to enhance vessel and crew safety. Further, safety and survival training courses for fishermen were developed over time by commercial training organizations. During this same period, a national standard curriculum for training emergency drill conductors was developed, but a qualified drill conductor is not required to be a member of the crew.

Using its current resources, the Coast Guard's dedicated Commercial Fishing Vessel Examiner staffs have initiated fisherman training program support at local field offices in Coast Guard Sectors and Marine Safety Units. The direct responsibilities of these individuals include completing voluntary and mandatory dockside examinations; educating vessel operators and crews on standards; liaising with and mentoring industry and the public through industry days; attending fishing association and organization meetings; and performing other program management duties. On an ad hoc basis, they contribute to education of the vessel owners, operators, and crews by providing exercises and classes in their local ports on safety and emergency response to casualties.

Due in part to high casualty rates on commercial fishing vessels in Alaska, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) established a field office in Anchorage, Alaska, in 1990 to study fatalities and injuries in the industry and to develop interventions to reduce the casualty rate. The Coast Guard and NIOSH continue to collaborate through joint efforts aimed at casualty analysis and risk management within the commercial fishing industry. In 2008, this collaboration was formalized with a memorandum of agreement (MOA), which was renewed in 2014. While NIOSH

supports the MOA in various ways, NIOSH does not conduct safety and survival training courses.

Commercial training resources and capabilities that could provide safety and survival training to fishermen currently exist throughout the Nation. A grant program most likely would work through these pre-established entities to carry out local training programs at local venues. The steps to implement such a program would include:

- A. Awarding grants or contracts for commercial training organizations to provide programs in local port areas or fishing communities with the highest risk concentrations for fishing vessels and crewmembers in each Coast Guard District, as determined through coordination with NIOSH. As a pilot program, approximately one training course per month could be held in each Coast Guard District (nine courses per month total).
- B. Course audits by the Coast Guard to determine their effectiveness and provide a basis to modify the course content, frequency, and locations, as needed, to mitigate risk levels for the fishing fleet targeted by the training.
- C. Funding additional Coast Guard personnel to develop, manage, and process grants or contracts for the pilot training program including contracting/grant officers, training specialists/auditors, and training managers/supervisors.

The Coast Guard would collaborate with NIOSH to assess the success of a pilot program by measuring the effect of grants on training program participation and changes in casualties on commercial fishing vessels. Further, the program would evaluate the number of training courses and fishermen trained that would make a scaled-up program cost-effective. As noted above, until dedicated resources are appropriated, the Coast Guard is not planning to develop and carry out a training pilot program.