

U.S. COAST GUARD REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AUTOMATIC INFORMATION SYSTEM AND VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEM

The United States Coast Guard (USCG) has issued a notice of rulemaking to expand the Automatic Identification System (AIS) to include coverage of any fishing vessel with a length overall greater than 65 feet (Agenda Item E.1, Attachments 1 and 2). This satellite based system would be in addition to the satellite based vessel monitoring system (VMS) system required for trawl vessels beginning in 2004.

The action would be pursuant to the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 and is intended to enhance the USCG ability to identify and track vessels, detect anomalies, improve navigation safety, and heighten our overall maritime domain awareness. Concern has been expressed about the additional burden represented by these requirements, in particular for vessels already carrying VMS units. The USCG will make a presentation on this proposal and respond to Council questions.

AIS is a requirement for all commercial vessels 65 feet or greater as of November 2003. The "new" rule for carriage in commercial fishing vessels is actually an implementation of the 2003 rule, expanding it to all of the vessels contemplated under the initial regulation.

Fishing vessels were initially "deferred" in the carriage requirement to allow time for the USCG to review the more than 200 comments it received from the commercial fishing industry during the public hearings and public comment period associated with the proposed rule in 2002 and 2003. The USCG considered the comments, notified Congress of the content of the comments and was given direction to move forward with complete implementation of the carriage requirements for AIS, as contemplated under the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002.

Also included in this agenda item is a letter from Dr. William Hogarth in response to concerns of the Council regarding the distribution of Fiscal Year 2006 funding for VMS units.

Council Task:

Discussion and guidance, as needed.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item H.1.a, Attachment 1: Automatic Identification Systems and Mandatory Use Aboard.
2. Agenda Item H.1.a, Attachment 2: Notice of Rulemaking: Vessel Requirements for Notice of Arrival and Departure, and Carriage of Automatic Identification System. Federal Register: 70(209) 64171-64172, October 31, 2005.
3. Agenda Item H.1.a, Attachment 3: Letter from William Hogarth to Donald McIsaac in response to Council letter regarding VMS funding, March 7, 2006.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. U.S. Coast Guard Report
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. Council Discussion

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