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Coast Guard Develops *America's Waterway Watch Program*

In past issues, I have spoken to some of the responsibilities associated with the Coast Guard's transition into the Department of Homeland Security. One of these higher profile missions has been our participation in the implementation of the Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA) and the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code.

MTSA helps strengthen and adds defense to our nation's port security, and it is designed to protect our ports and waterways from terrorist attack.

The ISPS Code establishes cooperation between governments, government agencies, and shipping and port industries to help protect against security incidents affecting ships and port facilities utilized in international trade.

Both of these laws have far reaching implications and are extremely complicated. The regulations that spawned out of these laws focus on homeland defense and national security, and they affect the nation's major ports, waterways and facilities. Many of you are probably already directly involved with MTSA and ISPS Code implementation, working with Harbor Safety Committees and assisting with the development of harbor, vessel or facility security plans.

Today I would like to address an issue of homeland security on a somewhat smaller, but equally important scale: *America's Waterway Watch*.

America's Waterway Watch is the culmination of the many regional harbor, river and other waterfront watch programs. This initiative is intended to bring all of the local "watch" initiatives together under a national umbrella. It is designed to complement existing programs and help ensure uniformity in reporting procedures, including telephone numbers and indicators of suspicious activity.

Many agencies have helped make this program a success to date, including the Coast Guard's Office of Port Security, Office of Auxiliary,

Office of Boating Safety, and the National Response Center.

Although prevention is difficult to measure, the additional partners now involved with the *America's Waterway Watch* program will make prevention efforts more recognized.

The program not only encourages the reporting of suspicious activities but it also gives examples of what suspicious activities look like. For instance, what is suspicious in one area may not be suspicious at all in another. Under *America's Waterway Watch* program, 77 million adult recreational boaters are encouraged to report suspicious activity they see on our nation's 95,000+ miles of shoreline. In addition to helping the first responders, it is also an answer to the question many Americans have asked, "How can I help?"

Hopefully, most mariners are now aware of Naval Vessel Protection Zones, especially those in areas where there is naval vessel traffic, and the requirements to operate at minimum speed within 500 yards of a U.S. Naval vessel and

- People appearing to be engaged in surveillance of any kind.
- People attempting to buy or rent fishing or recreational vessels with cash for short-term, undefined use.
- Unusual night operations.

Second, "where to look." Sensitive locations include:

- Under and around bridges, tunnels or overpasses.
- Near industrial facilities such as power plants and oil, chemical or water intake facilities.
- Near military bases and vessels, other government facilities or security zones.

And third, "what to do":

- Secure and lock your boat when not aboard.
- Disable the engine on stored or trailered boats.
- Do not approach or challenge anyone acting in a suspicious manner.
- Call the National Response Center at 800.424.8802, 877.24WATCH or 911.

Remember these are just a few of the things to be aware of. Many more are included in the *America's Waterway Watch* program literature. You and those around you are best suited to determine what is and what is not unusual for your particular area.

Brochures, wallet cards and posters are available for your use. You may already have seen them posted at your local marina.



For further information about the program or to order any of the available literature, please contact Chief Petty Officer Penny Collins at 202.267.0724 or pcollins@comdt.uscg.mil. Chief Collins would also appreciate receiving any feedback on the program.

In closing, I would like to say that these waterway watch programs, and especially *America's Waterway Watch*, are an excellent way for all of us to stay involved in our nation's homeland security efforts. They provide a means for all of us to report possible terrorist activity and help keep our waterways safe.



keep outside the 100-yard protection zone unless given permission to enter.

America's Waterway Watch, while not specifically addressing the naval vessel protection zones, will help make this and related issues common knowledge among recreational boaters.

An important component of the program involves providing specifics on suspected terrorist activity – what to look for, where to look, and what to do if you see something suspicious.

First, "what to look for." Suspicious activities can include: