



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

July 6, 2010

SIGN AND RETURN

MEMORANDUM FOR: Northeast Fisheries Observer Program
Observers and At-Sea Monitors

FROM: Amy S. Van Atten
Branch Chief, Fisheries Sampling Branch

SUBJECT: Safety Equipment Handling While Onboard
Fishing Vessels and Instructional
Review for Completing the Pre Trip
Vessel Safety Checklist (PTVSC)

In recent months there have been some complaints from fishermen and other industry members in regards to Observers and/or At-Sea Monitors handling, and in some cases breaking safety equipment, primarily the Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) while trying to obtain the expiration dates to complete the Pre Trip Vessel Safety Checklist (PTVSC). It is of the utmost importance to not handle a vessel's EPIRB and to always ask the captain or a designated crew member to handle the EPIRB if needing to obtain the expiration dates of the EPIRB battery and hydrostatic release. Observers are NOT to remove EPIRB housings or handle EPIRBs directly. The captain or crew must assist so that observers can visually inspect the EPIRB to record expiration dates. Observers and At-Sea Monitors may be subject to decertification if it is determined that they handled a vessel's EPIRB, regardless if the captain gave him/her permission to do so.

Acceptable methods for obtaining the EPIRB expiration dates (All documents must be no more than 90 days old) are:

- Visual inspection with assistance from captain/crew
- EPIRB Visual Inspection Card (EVIC) previously issued to the vessel
- United States Coast Guard (USCG) documentation (e.g. Fishing Vessel Safety Examination Form) WITH expiration dates

Always issue an EVIC whenever you visually inspect an EPIRB. Carefully record expiration dates on the front of the PTVSC.

When you issue an EVIC, explain the purpose to the captain and ask that it be retained in a convenient location for 90 days.

Completing the Pre Trip Vessel Safety Checklist (PTVSC) should not be an inconvenience to you or the captain. In most situations, besides adverse weather conditions, the PTVSC should not take more than 10 minutes to complete. If you know that you will be observing on a day trip vessel that leaves very early in the morning, try to arrange to meet the captain the day before to complete the checklist or at least remind the captain that you will need approximately 10 minutes to complete the PTVSC prior to departure.

If you feel that you may need some additional training in order to locate the expiration dates for the EPIRB, life raft or the USCG Safety Examination Decal, or have any questions regarding the PTVSC please contact Mike Tork (508-495-2339) or Lauren Marcinkiewicz (508-495-2212). Also, please refer to the December 9, 2009 memo (Instructions for Completing the Pre Trip Vessel Safety Check List and EPIRB Visual Inspection Card) or the Quick Reference guide (Protocols for Completing the PTVSC) to review the instructions for completing the PTVSC.

You are required to sign and return this page stating that you have read and understand this memo and that you will not directly handle a vessel's EPIRB unless required to do so in an emergency.

I, _____ (PRINT NAME) have read and understand the July 6, 2010 Memorandum for Northeast Fisheries Observer Program Observers and Northeast Fisheries At-Sea Monitors; Safety Equipment Handling While Onboard Fishing Vessels and Instructional Review for Completing the Pre Trip Vessel Safety Checklist (PTVSC).

SIGNATURE

ID #

DATE

ENCLOSURES: 2 COPIES OF THE MEMO (ONE FOR YOUR RECORDS AND ONE [YELLOW COPY] TO SIGN AND RETURN), 1 EPIRB VISUAL INSPECTION CARD (EVIC) AND A COPY OF AN EXAMPLE OF A USCG FISHING VESSEL SAFETY EXAMINATION FORM.



MARINE SAFETY DETACHMENT NEW BEDFORD FISHING VESSEL SAFETY EXAMINATION FORM 508-991-6812

VESSEL NAME: _____ OFFICIAL NUMBERS: _____

OWNER/OPERATOR: _____ VESSEL TYPE/HULL CONST: _____

O/O ADDRESS: _____ VESSEL LENGTH/REGULATORY TON: _____

ZIP _____

YEAR BUILT: _____

PHONE NUMBER: (____) _____ - _____

HOMEPORT: _____ EXAM LOCATION: _____ EXAM DATE: _____

MAXIMUM DISTANCE OPERATED OFFSHORE: _____ WARM WATER: COLD WATER:

EXAMINER: _____ UNIT: _____ DECAL #: _____

As a result of the examination of your vessel, the following deficiencies were noted that prevented the issuance the Fishing Vessel Compliance Decal:

Table with 2 columns: Deficiency description and Documentation status. Includes rows for EPIRB, RAFT, FLARES, and PFD LTS.

When these items have been corrected, please call _____ to schedule a follow-up examination to receive the Fishing Vessel Safety Compliance Decal. You should keep this letter on your boat.

Congratulations! Your vessel is in full compliance with all applicable U.S. Coast Guard Fishing Vessel Safety regulations in 46 CFR 28 at this time. You have been issued Fishing Vessel Safety Compliance Decal number _____ and it has been affixed to your vessel. You are urged to maintain the high standards required to receive this decal and to have a new examination conducted one year from this date. If you sell the boat you are obligated to remove the decal.

NOTE: DOCUMENTED VESSELS THAT OPERATE BEYOND THE BOUNDARY LINE ARE REQUIRED TO CONDUCT EMERGENCY DRILLS MONTHLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH 46 CFR 28.270. BY SIGNING THIS FORM THE DOCUMENTED VESSEL REPRESENTATIVE HAS ASSURED THAT EMERGENCY DRILLS ARE CONDUCTED MONTHLY.

Fishing Vessel Safety Examiner

Vessel Representative

EPIRB VISUAL INSPECTION CARD
NMFS NORTHEAST FISHERIES OBSERVER PROGRAM

On _____ (mm/dd/yy), onboard the F/V _____ (vessel name), I verified (visually inspected) the expiration dates for the Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) hydrostatic release and EPIRB battery. These items will NOT expire during the next 90 days, which will be on _____ (mm/dd/yy).

-- OR, IF ITEMS WILL EXPIRE WITHIN 90 DAYS --

EPIRB hydrostatic release expiration date: _____ (mm/yy)

EPIRB battery expiration date: _____ (mm/yy)

Observer Id: _____ Observer signature: _____

This card is for the vessel's records and may be presented to subsequent observers when completing their PRE TRIP VESSEL SAFETY CHECKLIST and safety orientation. Observers are not to open or handle the EPIRB to obtain these dates. The captain or other designee must handle the EPIRB. The USCG encourages monthly inspections of your EPIRB.
OMB Control No. 0648-0593 thru 9/30/12