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CG-BSX
Policy Letter
September 4, 2015

CLARIFICATION ON SIZE OF CERTIFICATE OF NUMBER ISSUED TO VESSELS

ISSUE: Issuing authorities desire some flexibility regarding the issuance of a certificate of number that is of a different size than that which is currently required under 33 CFR § 174.25, while at the same time meeting the spirit of the regulation.

BACKGROUND: The Code of Federal Regulations states that no person may operate a vessel to which this part applies unless it has on board a valid certificate of number or temporary certificate issued for that vessel by the issuing authority in the State in which the vessel is principally operated (33 CFR § 173.21). It further states that the certificate shall be presented to any Federal, State, or local law enforcement officer for inspection at his or her request (3 CFR § 173.23). The language in 46 U.S.C. § 12304 stipulates that the certificate of number be pocket-sized, and 33 CFR § 174.25 stipulates that the size of the certificate of number must be approximately 2 1/2 by 3 1/2 inches in order to meet the statutory requirement.

DISCUSSION: Pocket-size is a desired feature on vessels that lack a cabin or other suitable storage location. The Coast Guard is agreeable to allowing alternative sizing provided the certificate of number can be folded such that it can retain the pocket-size as required by statute. For this reason we intend to retain the original intent that the certificate be pocket-sized while allowing issuing authorities some flexibility.

POLICY: Issuing authorities are authorized to issue a certificate of number as stated in 33 CFR 174.25 as long as "Each certificate of number must be either approximately 2 1/2 by 3 1/2 inches, or capable of being folded to those dimensions."

/P.F. Thomas/
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