



## **UNDERWAY FLEET INSPECTIONS**

Inspection of ship systems and observation of crew response to emergency drills conducted while a ship is underway is a critical component of the Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO) Fleet Inspection Program. Some inspection checks such as verifying proper operation of steering and navigation systems; checking the propulsion system; assessing operator familiarity with vital systems and equipment under normal and emergency conditions; and assessing personnel response to emergency drills, such as man overboard recovery, require the ship to be in actual operating conditions.

Historically, underway inspections were conducted every other year for every ship in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) fleet. In recent years, due to a number of factors including Major Repair Period scheduling, operational schedules, and reduced operating budgets, the period of time since the last underway inspection has increased to as much as 5 years.

OMAO will increase the periodicity of underway fleet inspections to evaluate the overall operating system, including both ship and crew, to ensure the highest standards of safety. A phased approach will be utilized to decrease the time-period between underway inspections.

This fiscal year, half of the NOAA fleet will undergo an underway inspection, with the rest of the fleet being inspected underway in fiscal year 2013. Thereafter, each ship of the NOAA fleet will be required to undergo an underway fleet inspection at a minimum of once every 24 months. This will result in ships on the 18-month inspection cycle, per OMAO Bulletin 2011-07, being inspected underway for every inspection.

OMAO Procedure 0251-01, Fleet Inspections, will reflect this change when it is revised.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Bailey, NOAA".

RADM Jonathan W. Bailey, NOAA  
Director, Office of Marine and Aviation Operations

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