

step may be omitted. Once you complete these steps, the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI), will evaluate the results and accept the examination as a credit hull exam if the vessel is in satisfactory condition. If only divers are used for the underwater survey portion of the examination process, you may receive credit for a period of time such that subsequent AHEs would be conducted at intervals of twice in every five years, with no more than three years between any two AHEs. The OCMI may waive an underwater survey in accordance with §176.655(d) provided that the interval does not exceed five years between any two underwater surveys. If an underwater ROV is used as the predominate method to examine the vessel's underwater hull plating, you may receive credit up to five years. At the end of this period, you may apply for further participation under the AHE Program.

NOTE TO §176.620: The expected hull coverage when using an ROV must be at least 80 percent.

[USCG-2000-6858, 69 FR 47384, Aug. 5, 2004]

§ 176.625 Eligibility requirements for the Alternative Hull Examination (AHE) Program for certain passenger vessels.

(a) Your vessel may be eligible for the AHE Program if—

- (1) It is constructed of steel or aluminum;
- (2) It has an effective hull protection system;
- (3) It has operated exclusively in fresh water since its last drydock examination;
- (4) It operates in rivers or protected lakes; and
- (5) It operates exclusively in shallow water or within 0.5 nautical miles from shore.

(b) In addition to the requirements in paragraph (a), the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI) will evaluate the following information when determining your vessel's eligibility for the AHE Program:

- (1) The overall condition of the vessel, based on its inspection history.
- (2) The vessel's history of hull casualties and hull-related deficiencies.
- (3) The AHE Program application, as described in §176.630 of this part.

(c) When reviewing a vessel's eligibility for the AHE program, the OCMI may modify the standards given by paragraph (a)(5) of this section where it is considered safe and reasonable to do so. In making this determination, the OCMI will consider the vessel's overall condition, its history of safe operation, and any other factors that serve to mitigate overall safety risks.

[USCG-2000-6858, 67 FR 21085, Apr. 29, 2002]

§ 176.630 The Alternative Hull Examination (AHE) Program application.

If your vessel meets the eligibility criteria in §176.625 of this part, you may apply to the AHE Program. You must submit an application at least 90 days before the requested hull examination date to the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI) who will oversee the survey. The application must include—

(a) The proposed time and place for conducting the hull examination;

(b) The name of the participating diving contractor and underwater remotely operated vehicle (ROV) company accepted by the OCMI under §176.650 of this part;

(c) The name and qualifications of the third party examiner. This person must be familiar with the inspection procedures and his or her responsibilities under this program. The OCMI has the discretionary authority to accept or deny use of a particular third party examiner;

(d) A signed statement from your vessel's master, chief engineer, or the person in charge stating the vessel meets the eligibility criteria of §176.625 of this part and a description of the vessel's overall condition, level of maintenance, known or suspected damage, underwater body cleanliness (if known), and the anticipated draft of the vessel at the time of the examination;

(e) Plans or drawings that illustrate the external details of the hull below the sheer strake;

(f) A detailed plan for conducting the hull examination in accordance with §§176.645 and 176.650 of this part, which must address all safety concerns related to the removal of sea valves during the inspection; and