

SAMS[®] Newsletter

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...and More!



John Lowe, AMS®
Immediate Past President
SAMS® Newsletter Editor

SURVEYOR AS BOAT BUYER:

Hello Everyone,

Heading into fall here in the northeast but business is more like springtime with pre-purchase and claims work keeping us busy.

I recently purchased a 31 Eastern up in Maine and was not sure about doing my own survey or having someone else perform this for me. A couple of factors helped make that decision. First, if my insurance carrier wanted a survey (which they did not), I doubt they would have accepted taking one written by me as this would be a clear conflict of interest. Secondly, no matter how experienced you are as a surveyor you are emotionally attached to the subject vessel and may be somewhat blinded by that. I always tell my clients “You see yourself with your feet up on a sunny day out on the water with no problems and I see your boat burning to the waterline, somewhere in the middle lies the truth”. I saw myself making a lot of the mistakes an excited buyer makes during the buying process like planning the trip home before the survey was complete and so on. We finally decided to have someone else do the survey so I called Brian Williams, AMS® who is local to me and my favorite diesel surveyor and off to Maine we went. Brian was willing to survey her along with me as I was not about to let him have all the fun. The broker was less than elated to have 3 different surveyors climbing all over his listing but when the onslaught of percussion sounding beeping moisture meters and an engine surveyor having his way with the machinery all went well with a few deficiencies which were helpful in negotiations were found. The bottom line for me at least is that you should have another trusted colleague look over your potential purchase. All surveyors have a different style and the more eyes the better on any job. Brian and I both found things the other didn't see but in the end were in full agreement as to her condition. I do however feel a little sorry for the broker who looked a bit pale seeing the three of us wheeling our gear down the dock towards his listing. In the end the survey went well, we closed on the boat and made the 3 day, 23 hour steam home to Stonybrook NY with one slight glitch (broken serpentine belt off Gloucester). We learned a valuable lesson with the belt failure, just because there are 2 spares on board doesn't mean they are the correct size! A quick trip to NAPA in Gloucester cured that issue but lesson learned.



**Kristoffer Diel, AMS®
SAMS® President**

Ahoy, Everyone! Welcome to November! I hope everyone is as busy as they want to be and is enjoying the fall. I am pleased to report that overall, SAMS® is doing well. Even though the New Orleans IMEC was affected by a severe weather disaster declaration, those that made it, enjoyed a great conference. Thank you, to all the presenters, and members, who made the extra effort to attend.

Also, I also want to thank the Members for approving the SAMS® dues increase. It had been several years since the last dues increase and combined with the poor economic return from the 2024 IMEC, it was a necessary move.

A shout out to the Office Staff; **THANKS!**, for managing the Society, in its' day-to-day operations. The Office Staff has been doing a wonderful job of 'steering the ship'. Ms. Jessica Manchino has settled in and is now the "Answering Voice of SAMS®". Mrs. Cheryl Roach is filling the Administrative Assistant/Membership position and Mr. Mark Shea is the Administrative Assistant/Education , and of course, a salute to "**The Boss**"; the Executive Director, Mrs. Rhea Shea.

I also want to particularly thank all the Regional Directors for their unending job of reviewing applications and annual reports and helping their Regional Members.

Thanks for his dedication and best wishes to Mr. Tom Benton, AMS® who has been succeeded by Mr. Ryan Uhlich, AMS® as the new Gulf Regional Director. Thank you, Both!

Into the future... Start planning to attend the next IMEC in Baltimore, September 9-12, 2025.

And a last thought...as we are not getting any younger...look around you and pick a new surveyor to assist/mentor. I look forward to working with anyone interested in being a Regional Director or a Board Member.

Stay safe and remember to "Eat Dessert First!".

[Merry Christmas!](#)



**Gary Frankovich, AMS[®]
SAMS[®] Executive Vice President
Ethics Chair**

As members SAMS[®] we all know the responsibilities of a marine surveyor. First and foremost to perform a thorough inspection of the vessel. Take enough time to really look at each part of the vessel, such as testing the seacocks, the bilge pumps, powering up the electronics, recording model & serial numbers, moisture testing, sounding for delamination, and more. Being sure the vessel and it's systems are in compliance with not only the maritime laws, but also the ABYC Standards, and using our common sense to report anything else that just doesn't pass the smell test. Not rushing through the inspection because we have something else to do that day. Preparing a detailed survey report that includes the things recommended by SAMS[®] Recommended Survey Report Content, AND, delivering that report in a TIMELY manner! But we all have another responsibility, which is to stand behind our survey. No one is perfect, everyone can, and sooner or later, does miss something. Sometimes it's something small and inconsequential, but it could be something expensive to repair or replace. The worst thing imaginable would be to miss something that ends up causing someone to get injured or worse. IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY, BOTH ETHICALLY AND MORALLY, TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT IF WE SCREW UP. Maybe you have enough money in your savings, or maybe you have an Umbrella insurance policy, but if you don't, and for the price, I STRONGLY RECOMMEND that you take advantage of the E&O Insurance offered in the Spring for SAMS[®] members. The cost really is negligible, in fact, adding the price of the policy and the deductible together is probably less than what a good lawyer will charge you for a retainer. Keep in mind, this is the USA, Anyone, can sue Anyone, for Anything.





Randell Sharpe, AMS®
Secretary/Treasurer

For those that braved the storm in New Orleans and attended IMEC it was a great event with Hurricane Francine passing to the west of New Orleans and not much if any damage in New Orleans with a few hours of heavy rain. It was interesting to watch the storm from the upper floors of the hotel. A highlight was watching the weather channel reporters bracing against the wind and rain while their camera man simply stood there without effort. I guess it would not be news if they couldn't sensationalize it a bit. There was some flooding and damage to the west of New Orleans and I hope those living there are able to recover quickly. We had great speakers and some fill-ins at the last minute, that worked out nicely. The hotel staff made everything run smoothly with Joe and Kenny staying sane to boot. Thank you to the members that voted for the increase in our annual dues. The measure passed and this will enable SAMS® to continue to promote our members, provide our group liability insurance policy, and cover the costs of running our organization. This needed increase will keep us financially sound.

OK enough of the mundane business stuff. I am writing this to remind everyone not to get bogged down with the details of individual devices, attachments, and parts, and in doing so miss the big picture. As you survey a vessel make sure you take the time to step back and observe systems in a broad review of the installations. Are the systems designed and installed in accordance with good marine practice? Here's a case in point; 1980's vintage Viking 43 aft cabin motor yacht. The ad talked about how the sanitation system had been recently completely refit. Here's the reality of what I found. Lifting the deck access in the lower galley floorboard found what initially appeared to be the sanitation system. But as I examined it, I found dead ended hoses, disconnected wiring, vents that went nowhere, and toilets that were original vintage manual toilets with the foot pedal and long manual pump handle. To say the least the toilets were gross with poor seals and something I would not want to sit on or even stand next to. As I looked closer the old original system remained in the vessel with the plumbing and electrics simply disconnected and left in place and new hoses attached to the toilet discharges. So where was this advertised renewed system? The original holding tank/treatment system was properly located low in the bilge of the forward accommodations. As I followed the new toilet discharge hoses from the forward toilet, they led aft. I was hoping for a holding tank in the engine room bilge, Nope. When I got to the aft head, same set up with the original manual toilet in the aft master cabin head. So where was the new holding tank? You may have guessed it. It was above the accommodation's deck mounted under the master cabin berth with the high vented loop mounted right there under the bed next to the holding tank. Sweet Dreams and Sweet Odors. For some reason the installer forgot the adage S**T FLOWS DOWN HILL. As installed the forward head toilet in the forward lower accommodations would need to pump each flush up hill all the way to the aft master cabin and the aft head toilet would also need to do the same. I suppose the installer was hoping that flushing the forward toilet did not result in the flushed water surfacing in the aft head toilet or did he even consider this? Big Picture. The installer was too lazy to remove all the old sanitation system parts and simply left them there in place and found a convenient spot for him to add a new tank. Step back and observe the entire system whatever it may be.

See Pictures on Next page



Pretty aft cabin no one suspecting what lies beneath.



Forward floorboard access old system



What lurks under the aft cabin master berth.



Keep on looking for those big picture issues.

Be safe out there.

Need CE Credits ???

Newsletter Material Deadline: Have an interesting topic? Send it in! If your article is published in the SAMS® NEWSLETTER, you not only contribute news and information, you may be eligible to receive (3) CE Credits* for your article. The cutoff date for material to be submitted for publication in the next SAMS® Newsletter is November 15, 2024. The editor must receive all articles by this deadline or they MAY NOT be published in the next issue.

If you are planning to write an article you should know the following:

1. Your article should be technical in content, and of interest to the profession of marine surveying.
2. The article should be in MS Word.
3. Please use **Times New Roman, font size 12**
4. Length of the article should be 500 to 1000 words.
5. Articles that have been published before, **MUST** have a letter of permission letting SAMS® re-publish this article.



**Kenneth Weinbrecht, AMS[®]
Education Vice President**

Considering that IMEC in NOLA was started with a hurricane it was an overwhelming success. Thanks to the members that made every effort to attend even when the hurricane was going to affect NOLA, many still made it.

Now on the Baltimore. If you've never been to the inner harbor it is a wonderfully exciting place and Joe Loble, AMS[®] has picked an excellent hotel.

While it's still in the initial planning stages here's what I'm hoping to have as programs.

NTSB / USCG - Titan submersible acceded investigation.

NTSP / USCG - Dali Bridge accident.

ABYC

Updates on lithium ion batteries and their use in the marine industry.

Yamaha

Mer cruiser

Volvo Penta

The role of the marine surveyor during fire investigations.

Composite structural repairs, i.e. Kevlar etc.

What's new in rigging.

Health & safety, possible lab analysis of bilge water from several vessels.

If you have any suggestions please feel free to email me.

Now on to CE's. I still receive quite a few emails about what qualifies for a CE. SAMS[®] has a policy manual and it's all spelled out there. Basically if you can't find what would qualify, send me an email with the information about the course or what you did and I'll review it. Did you visit a vessel manufacture and take a tour of the facility? Did you take an engine course, or electrical? Did you take an online course that is marine related or maybe renew your USCG license. They all qualify.

On another note, I had the opportunity to meet with a VP of underwriting for a large marine insurance company and they were very interested in the RSRC. If you don't have a copy of it, the office would be happy to email you one. Looks like it could be a growing trend in the industry to rely heavily on it. Remember, the format of your report has nothing to do with the content, the RSRC is just that content that has been reviewed by your peers every 5 years since 1996.

Lastly, I wish everyone a joyous holiday season, may 2025 find you and your family healthy and prosperous.



**Joseph Lobley, AMS®
Meeting / Conventions
Vice President**

This year's IMEC in New Orleans was a challenge to say the least. Ken did a fantastic job of getting last minute speakers to fill in for the ones that had to cancel. The hotel was great to work with and they handled all of our needs and then some during the meeting. Despite the Hurricane, we had a decent turnout with most attendees arriving on Tuesday without incident. The hotel we stayed in was a safe center for first responders and emergency power crews to stay and be fed while doing their great work.

IMEC 2025 at the Hyatt Hotel Inner Harbor Baltimore, September 9-12, 2025. We were here in 2013 and had an excellent event. The room rate is \$180.00 per night. This will be our first departure from the typical week day format of starting Wednesdays and ending on Saturday. We are moving the format to start on Tuesday and finish with the business meeting on Friday. This has been suggested by several hotel sales people in the past as a way to lower the room rates since we are not occupying rooms on Friday night. The hotel has been remodeled and has all the usual amenities and is in a very good location with lots to do close by.

IMEC 2026 will be in Tampa at a beautiful Hyatt property September 1-4. The room rate is \$170/night with free parking and waived resorts fees. September seems to be the magic month in the lower states to get a decent room rate which is obviously risky. October is the earliest in the fall for North States. We try to work around other events like IBEX and the Ft. Lauderdale Boat Show.

At the last General Membership meeting, it was voted on by a majority to have the IMEC 2027 in Las Vegas. This will be a challenge to get speakers there but it looks like a place for inexpensive rooms, off the strip, and cheap flights. I will also be looking at San Diego and Seattle since they came in 2nd and 3rd in voting.

Happy Holidays to you all.



**Angel Zeno, AMS®
Testing Vice President**

I hope that you all had a great season and were as busy as you wanted to be. Personally, I had a very hectic year, both professionally and personally.

Professionally there was a lot of boat activity in Northern Michigan and I hope that carried over to the areas that you work in. Personally, my wife went through a major health issue which has put a toll on my available time.

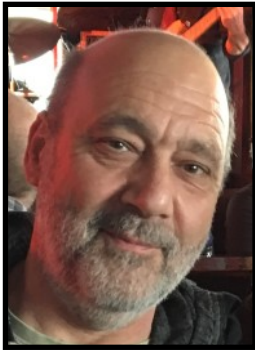
As I write this, all the boats in northern Michigan have all been hauled out and put into winter storage, but that hasn't slowed the phone from ringing from folks looking to buy a boat and have a survey done by a SAMS® surveyor. I don't know about you, but being a SAMS® surveyor has been instrumental in building my surveying business.

I was speaking to a group of fellow surveyors in Northern Michigan the other day and I gave them a heads up that they may be seeing a spike in demand over the next few months as boaters that have been impacted by the multiple hurricanes in the south go shopping in the Great Lakes to replace the boats that were lost to those devastating storms.

As the SAMS® Testing VP, I wanted to share with those preparing for the AMS® upgrade exam that it seems that being familiar with the ABYC standards for electrical equipment would be instrumental in achieving a passing score in your AMS® upgrade exam. ABYC offers several online courses on standards and it might be helpful if you fully understood the standards, or participated in a refresher course before tackling your AMS® upgrade exam.

If you are sitting for your AMS® exam and encounter a question that just doesn't resonate with you, feel free to jot a note in the side bar, as to what confused you. All comments written on the exam are reviewed and evaluated, so scribble away.

Remember to always work safe, let someone know when you head out on an assignment along with some information on where you are going, and when to expect you back. And always tie up that ladder. I don't know if you have noticed this in your area but I have experienced an increased awareness on the part of the boat yards to tie up any ladder that they setup, this includes extension and 'A' frame ladders which is a refreshing change. Remember, you are responsible for your own safety and should never take short cuts when it comes to your safety.



Eddy Assaf, AMS®
Public Relations
Vice President

Hi all,

Well, winter is around the corner and for most, a slow time of the year coming up, but for me it's the time where I can relax and enjoy more of my other pleasures outside the boating world. That is one of the bonuses I get from this trade. Most of us living in the northern sections where boating season is about 7 months long, work really hard during the summer with long hours, but winter is mainly time off to enjoy life, travel and do what you like to do without being under a heavy working schedule. Claim work usually keeps me busy until end of year but most of that is office work and the occasional disaster that can happen with winter weather.

Enough about me, IMEC went well this year considering the last minute storm, I was lucky and got in a day earlier while all was still nice, but it had been 25 years since I saw a hurricane. It luckily took a turn at the last minute, and we didn't get hit all that hard, the presidents reception went off without a hitch (a little water leaking from the roof) and no way to get to Bourbon St. after, but the following morning all was back to normal and Ken was able to pull rabbits out of his hat and gave use a great venue.

On advertising, all is running smoothly, dropped one advertiser and acquired two more, and we are running new ads for most of the 19 advertisers we have going now.

The new website seems to have gone without to many problems, some minor adjustments were made, and some get modified also most every month, trying to make it as simple as possible for users.

Pretty much it for now, as usual if you have any questions about advertising in your area, I sure would like to hear from you along with any suggestions you might have.

Cheers



**Charles W. Solarek, AMS®
Membership Vice President**

Was great to see everyone in New Orleans! A lot of good information was presented. Thank you to all who made it possible, behind the scenes and in front.

I want to talk about the future of our society. One of the main things that attracted me to SAMS® was the willingness of the members to help each other, and to share experiences. I was fortunate to become involved with a small group of “seasoned” marine surveyors in my area that frankly helped me get to where I am today. It was a very fruitful relationship and still is. None of them saw me as a threat to their business. I was not looked down upon in any way. They answered all my questions, even the ones with an answer that was most obvious. We shared ideas, conversations on “how to” or “what do you do if...” were invigorating to say the least. These discussions were almost always give and take. As the old saying goes, “there is more than one way to skin a cat.” But, you can teach an old dog new tricks.

In today’s rapidly changing world you really need to have those conversations with those behind you. Technology, changing word definitions, regulations & standards! So much information! Another set of eyes and ears can go a long way.

Where am I going with all this? MENTORSHIP ?

I was approached at IMEC about Surveyor Associates seeking mentorship and the lack of response by our AMS® members. Phone calls not being returned, Emails with no reply, and flat out telling Surveyor Associates to look elsewhere. To me this is unacceptable on so many levels. Granted, not everyone has the time to work with a protégé, and some of us, me included, can have type “A” personality and want to be in as much control of the survey process as possible. HOWEVER, are you missing out? When I worked with my mentor, Dave Wilson, we could finish a decent sized boat survey in half the time it takes me now alone. An extra set of eyes made things easier for both of us. Since Dave was unable to get in and out of the engine compartments most of the time, that was my area. He took care of the interior. Our customers just loved that they had two professionals working for them. Dave was able to keep surveying because he had a bilge rat, me! The point is, having a protégé does not mean you are going to lose business most of the time. You potentially could get MORE business. You are most likely going to learn from each other. And you will be training that Surveyor Associate in their progression towards becoming an AMS® and a valuable member of SAMS®.

And mentoring does not necessarily mean going on a survey with you. Maybe just reviewing a report or two. Meeting for lunch to discuss the business. It can take on many different forms.

The only way our society continues to grow and prosper is with new professionals. And we are only going to attract new people if we are willing to share our experiences and knowledge with them.

Stay safe out there!



**Michael A. Terminel, AMS®
Pacific Regional Director**

Greeting from the Pacific Northwest. In Alaska we received snow the first week of November. That usually triggers all the last-minute surveys that our clients put off till the end of the season and it's hard to get them all scheduled and to get them done in a timely manner; especially from our balcony on Maui. The only way I knew it snowed was looking at our Ring camera. Even though you're maybe on a short hiatus, make sure you keep in touch with your clients. This boat the Vida Mia was a boat that I started my sailing career on. It was in Maui in the last 70's doing dinner cruises and sunset sails out of Lahaina. I was merely a deck hand and dock ticket taker.



Before hibernating on Maui, we attended the Mariners Club down in Fort Lauderdale. For those not aware, it's a convention made up of underwriters, lawyers, brokers and yes, a few surveyors. I believe there were 561 attendees. By reviewing the sign-up sheet there were about 30 surveyors. For those who are looking to meet underwriters and insurance representatives, this is where they congregate. I handed out at least 30 cards to various agents and met with current clients. Ken Weinbrecht and others were present and in my opinion, is very worthwhile and it's 8 CE credits. He came from New York and I flew all the way from Alaska. I was assigned a job the very next day by a new client. These functions are important. They advance our exposure in the industry, allow the opportunity to network, and it's a SAMS® sponsored event.



While in Hawaii or wherever I travel, I try to get the feel for the business, opportunities and pitfalls of the industry. When I travel I try to meet with different surveyors in different Pacific Regions. We may be created equally, but I guarantee we all have different challenges. Different regions, different issues. I can guarantee what a surveyor in Arizona deals with is totally different from what Hawaii sees. Although we are all working from the same SAMS® playbook. Unless I attend, meet and communicate with all of you, it's not easy to figure out what we have to work on. For example, look at South Florida, granted, Roland has way more applications than I have to review, but he can nearly see from one coast to another. The Pacific Region is huge with a lot of geographic vessel diversity. San Diego is still catching tuna where the bays in Alaska are freezing over.



Unless we have open communication it's hard to bring to the board challenges we face. Let me know if there are issues or challenges and let's try to make this easier for all of us. I made a statement to the board in Florida earlier this year, "that just because it worked 20 years ago doesn't mean that it still works now". Let us know what troubles you are having and don't wait till IMEC to vent.

One catch all sentence I'm seeing a lot of is: " unless otherwise noted, all electronics were tested and found in good condition and operational" . So if the boats on the hard and you wrote this in your survey, this is what Garmin states: "You will not be able to test out the transducer's ability to read depth when the boat is not in water. Air dissipates the sound waves produced by the transducer and will cause the transducer to not be able to produce a reading." So basically if you end up in court, this is what the lawyer will start with. They proved you wrong, you lied, and you just made every other single statement you've made in your survey questionable to the judge. They can then go through a list of every piece of equipment and function and prove that you did not do what you said. Is it in your best interest in your survey to state that all electronics, electrical, plumbing, safety equipment were "tested and found in good condition and operational" when it really wasn't?



Things are getting tough out there. If all you do is pre purchase surveys you may see them not so frequent. If you're happy with what you have, hats off to you. If you're not happy about your current workload, then look at what's in your area. There may be business opportunities that are available. Checking the US Government website for what opportunities are out there is just one avenue. I've been very lucky with a couple of these contracts. They are usually low-ball quotes, but when things are slow, it's better than nothing.

Education is another avenue in increasing your portfolio. There are a lot of classes out there to increase your toolbox and advance your career based on what work is available in your area. You also need CE's so it's a win, win situation.

Don't be afraid to talk to other surveyors that you know and let them know you're available. I've subbed work out to surveyors in California, Oregon, Washington and Alaska just this year. Networking is a great tool.

End of the year should be when we visit our survey formats. Things to consider just like your garage: clear the junk, do you really need that? Are the photos clear, formatted, centered and do they represent what you're trying to say? Does that Boiler Plate statement really pertain to your survey content? That was the first thing my first Regional Director did was help me clean the garage. Remember, you have to be able to defend every word in your survey in court. Refresh the SAMS[®] minimum survey content and make sure everything is included. If not, state why it's not in your survey.

We will have an opportunity at the Seattle Boat Show for a few credits coming February 1st, 2025, from 0800 to 1000 (tentative). As we get this confirmed we will send out a blast email.

The Pacific Region is zeroing in on a location soon for our 2025 Regional Meeting. We are still looking at the 19th and 20th of February. We've had a lot of calls on the surveyors side of inverters especially with the new battery technology out there. Not so much on engineering the system, but what a surveyor needs to be able to identify of the system is compliant and safe. In addition, I'd really like to get someone that can give us a class on flying drones and photography, If you know anyone, let me know. I use them in a lot of my cargo surveys and for the high-end yachts may be extremely beneficial. The photos above are from cargo surveys I did last month. My clients are very appreciative of the added visual aspects. I've also invested in an underwater ROV. I'm still learning to operate it but I see a big advantage in these in the future. That's a little steeper learning curve.



**Richard Reichelsdorfer, AMS®
Great Lakes Regional Director**

With the boating season winding down in the Great Lakes region and boats are being put away for the winter I feel its time to discuss some winter safety. I think the biggest one is not to work on a boat that is covered in snow and ice. Not only can you not actually survey anything, but there is also a serious risk of slipping and falling. Speaking of boats being frozen, do not attempt to take any conductive (moisture) readings on a frozen hull or deck, your readings will be inconclusive. Percussive soundings on a frozen deck will not reveal any laminate damage because the laminate is frozen together. I generally ask that the temps be above freezing for a minimum of 24 hours before I look at a boat that is outside. The next item is that of ladder safety. Be sure that your ladder is sound both in construction and footing as well as tying it up prior to going up the ladder. Speaking from experience, it is not pleasant when you find yourself falling from a ladder. It is always a good idea to check in with the boat yard prior to going to survey a vessel and let them know where you will be and also to check back when done. This can be done in person or with a simple text. If you don't check out with them, they should come and look for you prior to closing. The last bit of advice is to just take assignments where the vessel is stored in a heated building.

For more information about workplace safety, contact our safety chair Stephen Heinrich, AMS®

As far as a Regional Meeting, I am working on putting one together for mid-winter. If anyone has topics that they would like to have presented or would like to help plan, please let me know. I have a brand new Protometer Reach Master that I will give a very good deal on (i.e, the more help, the better the deal not that I'm begging) should anyone help with the Regional Meeting.





**William Robinson, AMS[®]
Mid - Atlantic Regional Director**

I am greeting you from (somewhat) sunny Florida, where I am currently working on Hurricane Helene and Milton claims. I hope for a slowdown soon so I may address my Regional Director duties more quickly.

I take great honor in being recently appointed Mid-Atlantic Regional Director.

I want to thank Jared Houghtalen for an excellent job over the past years. It will indeed be hard to fill his shoes.

I would like to address the New Surveyor Associates mainly, although I would also ask the AMS[®] to think about this.

The Proverbial Hot Seat

I always advise every new Surveyor Associate to approach every survey with the assumption that an attorney will review your work. With no state or federal agency licensing surveyors in the US, a common joke in the industry is all it takes to be a Marines Surveyor: "a business card, paper & someone who will believe you." On a serious note, if you stay in this business long enough, sooner or later, your work will be scrutinized because someone on the other side does not agree with you. Of the different types of surveys performed by my company, pre-purchase/ Condition and value tend to receive more consistent scrutiny.

It's important to practice extreme care during every stage of the survey and document every piece of information collected. I log observations during vessel attendances in a hardbound notebook, so I'm not tempted to tear the pages out upon completion. I then make PDFs of the pages to be filed away with the survey report. Some of this data may not appear relevant at the time of the survey and isn't included in the final report, but it can be worth its weight in gold in the event of a dispute. When you're tired, hungry, cold, or nursing a nasty bug, it's easy to be tempted to take a shortcut. Mistakes happen but can be minimized by stopping at strategic points and reviewing what you have written, e.g., stopping after inspecting the lazarette before moving on to the engine room. I tend to make far fewer mistakes when performing the paperwork by hand rather than relying on a computer. Although there's no argument that surveying software is a valuable tool for a surveyor, it can reduce an inspector down to a data entry clerk. In summation, practice diligence by documenting every step of the survey, taking comprehensive notes, and doing your own work. You'll sleep much better when you find yourself in the proverbial "Hot Seat." Your customer will remain happy and assured of your competence.

Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

Best Regards,
Will



**Christopher Day, AMS[®]
North Florida Regional Director**

Hello from the northern portion of the “Sunshine State”. First off I hope that everyone and their families are recovering from BOTH Hurricanes Helene and Milton. Both were powerful storms that had horrible devastation within the Southeast.

Between both Hurricanes, IBEX was still held and was reportedly rather successful. I wanted to thank all that chipped in to set-up the booth, man the booth, and tear the booth down. At the booth, a group of eight (8) surveyors took time out of their schedule to promote SAMS[®]. Those (8) received a SAMS[®] Pad Folio as a token of appreciation and were entered into a drawing for a SAMS[®] tool bag. I would like to give a special thanks to: Chet Stephens for set-up, tear down and the hours spent manning the booth, Keith and Diane Douglas for the multiple session of booth manning, Chris Casey for the behind the scenes shuttling materials to the show, Marc Redshaw for giving an interview to WKRMS 1150 AM who puts on a Boating Safety show on Saturdays in the Lake Of the Ozarks, Michael Hartline/ Jorge Cortes for filling in the gaps where needed. Again, thanks to all that helped this year and looking forward to any input for next years. Next years IBEX is scheduled for October 7- October 9, 2025.



Keith and Diane Douglas



Chris Casey

As for what is going on in the rest of the region, we may have seen a shift in the type of surveys that we are doing this time of the year. There may not be as many pre-purchases and may be doing more Insurance/Re-Insurance surveys or appraisals. Be sure to tune your reports accordingly so service the needs of the clients. This may help prevent the “Selling” of your survey to future prospective buyers. Personally, I have run into a lot of people requesting “Insurance Surveys” AND they have their vessels listed with active offers on them. I do understand that Insurance is still required on the vessel during a sales process, but makes me nervous that MY survey will be used for pre-purchase purposes for the prospective buyer. So, I make sure that I label my surveys accordingly and I make those labels very obvious.

I am sorry that I missed those at the SAMS[®] IMEC in New Orleans. It was just a year that I could not attend. As for the North Florida Regional Meeting, we do have it scheduled for March 15th at the Pelican Yacht Club in Ft Pierce. More to come as the date gets closer.

So for now, keep answering the phone calls and finish the year strong. Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and Happy Chanukah to you and your family.



Ryan Uhlich, AMS®
Gulf Regional Director

I have taken on my new role as Gulf Regional Director. This position offers a unique opportunity to engage with SAMS® Officers as well as Regional Surveyors and of course potential newbie's interested in becoming Surveyor Associates and AMS's. I am hoping my initiatives can significantly impact our organization. While I am new to being part of SAMS® leadership, I am not new to surveying or the marine industry as a whole. My designation is Tug and Barge as I am a steel hull surveyor. I am a second generation SAMS® as my father was a SAMS® Senior Surveyor AMS®-SMS. I was present when Jim Robbins along with Si Williams (another AMS®-SMS) approached us in the late 80's to be part of SAMS®.

Regarding the Gulf Region, as most of us know, the IMEC was here in New Orleans in September. The attendees that arrived on the Wednesday were treated to observing Hurricane Francine from the safe confines of their hotel window. Although the storm was only a category 2, the weather event was still fairly significant. I was contending with a couple downed trees at home and by the last two days of the conference, the damage claims began pouring in. So while our yearly business meeting was going on, I was scheduling inspections and trying to pay attention to the meeting at the same time.

For my first newsletter entry, I am taking the advice of our President to be brief and introductory.

I will make myself available to anyone seeking assistance from the commercial end of the industry and especially for potential Surveyor Associates or new AMS® of any designation with questions.

Thank you for opportunity so serve...

While we fondly remember the departed.....



Thomas Eve Member: 1/17/2004 - 1/6/2024



Thomas J. Laskey Member: 2/10/2000 - 2/12/2024

Jim McDougal Member: 7/13/2003 - 2/10/2024

Gary Swearengin Member: 11/8/1995 - 4/19/2024

Donald Walwer Member: 8/31/1987 - 6/6/2024



**Rolando Santos, AMS®
South Florida Regional Director**

As the year wraps up and the Holidays approach I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year. I think 2025 will be a great year.

I will be planning the next Regional Meeting which at this time I plan on holding at the same location in Lake Placid, FL. Moose Lodge. I have not set the date and for my northern snow bird members that winter in South Florida. I will likely try to do it in February if I can get a good slate of speakers arranged.

For those of you that are looking to expand your business beyond Pre-Purchase work you may want to consider the following areas:

Infrared Thermography – I was trained in this art many years ago and use it on many assignments for my investigations. The use of this technology along with the proper use of a phenolic hammer is invaluable and a well accepted means of non-destructive testing. I personally do not perform the IR thermography myself. I instead hire people that I consider to be technically competent and experienced such as **Mr. Bill Trenkle, AMS®**. FLIR offers three different levels of infrared training courses if you are interested in pursuing this field. However, please note that merely taking the training classes and owning the proper equipment does not make you competent; Experience and time will, and you should seek out experienced thermographers that are willing to help.

Fire – cause & origin – This is a specialized area. If you are interested in getting involved in this area there are several organizations that offer training and certifications. The three main organizations I frequently come across are the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI), National Association of Fire Investigators (NAFI), and International Association of Marine Investigators (IAMI). These organizations have different requirements to become a certified fire investigator. If you are interested in this field, I recommend you visit the individual organizations and explore what training they offer (some of which offer free online training). For example, my son, Captain Rolando E. Santos, AMS®, recently took the IAAI Marine Fire Investigations course earlier in the year that included actual live fire burns. Training and experience are critical to being competent in any job that you do.

Accident Investigations – If you are interested in pursuing a field in marine accident investigations, the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) offers courses in boating incident investigations and GPS forensics.

In closing I want to say that I hope that all our members understand that SAMS® is one of two Nationally Recognized Marine Surveyor Organizations. This is great distinction that stands head and shoulders above all those other organizations.

I encourage all members to take classes, continue to train and raise your level of expertise beyond the norm. Invest in yourself, invest in owning the proper equipment, stay in your wheelhouse, do not misrepresent yourself, hire subject matter experts to help you and your client and above all stay safe.

Greetings everyone,

My name is Alain and I am pleased to be serving as the new SAMS[®] Regional Director for the Canadian Region. It is an honor to receive the torch from the hands of Mr. John Hines, AMS[®] and the legacies of all the Canadian Regional Directors before him.

This is a return for the Canadian Director to the beautiful Pacific Northwest region after a long period of time. I am located in Vancouver, BC but intend to assist all surveyors across Canada. I was appointed earlier this September. I have been familiarizing myself with the work and responsibilities that comes with the position.



**Alain Pascal Routhier, AMS[®]
Canadian Regional Director**

My first inclination is to thank everyone at SAMS[®] HQ. SAMS[®] surveyors know well what these folks do for us and our association. The newer and prospective members will soon realize the great support they provide. As Regional Director, I now come to realize that this great work is only a fraction of what that team does as they support the entire Board of Directors and everyone involved in participating in the association activities. So to Rhea, Cheryl, Jessica, Mark, and everyone else, a heart felt thank you. I have only discovered how valuable a resource you are, and I intend to use all of it!

As surveyors in Canada we survey in the rain, in the snow and, on occasions, on a sunny day in our glorious summers. Surveying is a great career and it comes with challenges and responsibilities. The association and myself are here to support and guide. I am glad to have already received calls from surveyors with questions on how to handle certain situations or how to address certain issues. Canada is a big region geographically and a relatively small region in terms of membership. This creates some interesting challenges. We also have a healthy relationship and friendly competition with the other major surveyor associations in our area.

In my tenure what do we want to achieve, is to address and improve our position in the areas mentioned above. To do so, one of my first orders on the agenda is to create the position of assistant director for the Canadian Region.

There is provision within SAMS[®] by-laws to create such a position, as it was intended to assist directors that have large amount of surveyors and prospects. I want to adapt this position so it can address our Canadian geographical challenges. Under the umbrella of the Canadian Director, the assistant has a great opportunity to learn the mechanics of SAMS[®]. This position will also potentially reduce costs as the Canadian Director will not have to travel as much at great expenses to our very limited budget. I know some of you have already expressed interest and I welcome you to “stay tuned”.

Next on the list is a much needed Regional Meeting in the Canadian Pacific Northwest. We haven't had a meeting here since I was involved back in 2017. All members are welcome to suggest potential speakers and why they think their presentations would be valuable. Next, I would like to do the same for the Canadian central area.

To this extent I would like to call every members of SAMS[®] : Surveyor Associates, AMS[®] and prospective members to forward contact information of any non-affiliate surveyors they know. I will compile a list so we can reach-out to these surveyors and promote the multiple advantages of becoming a SAMS[®] member. There is strenght in numbers!

All related Canadian Director correspondences can be sent to : Canadian Director.sams@gmail.com

All business correspondences can be sent to my surveyor email : Alain@discoverymarinesurveys.com



**Brian Williams, AMS®
Northeast Regional Director**

Surveying for a surveyor!

After returning from IMEC and getting back into the swing of things, returning calls answering emails, I got a call from a fellow surveyor, not unusual at all as some of us will call when we need a sounding board for a claim or client.

This was no ordinary call of, hey I just surveyed this boat and saw this and what do you think, or I just got a call from a guy and I'm too busy to take care of him, do you have time and are you interested. No, I got a call from a fellow surveyor and past president John Lowe. He explained that he just sold his boat and was looking at a boat in Maine and he wanted someone to survey it that had no interest in the boat or the deal. To say the least I took it as a compliment and immediately told John I'm in. Dates were tossed around, and plans were made. John had an engine surveyor lined up as well. We headed out on Wednesday midday, caught the New London Ferry and we were off to Maine. Got into Maine late in the day and found the boat had a quick look. Hotel, dinner and a good night's rest. First thing in the morning we were at the boat. The poor broker, three knowledgeable boat people six or seven bags of tools with hammers, meters, hand tools and gauges. He was a little nervous to say the least.

It is always good to work alongside good people. John and I tapped, tested, metered and inspected the vessel together. At the end of the day as always, some issues and concerns were found, the buyer John and I had some discussion. Negotiations were made between the buyer and the seller "business as usual". John proceeded with the purchase of the boat and made arrangements to bring it back to his home port in Stony Brook. My one wish is that I would have been available to make the trip back with John, but I had some other commitments. In the end it was a good trip, and I realized that a job is a job, it doesn't matter about the client, the boat or the location. Don't get overwhelmed and do your job to represent your client as best you can.

On an aside not we all wanted to get some Maine Lobster to bring home to our wives but could not find a local place that was open and selling them. Go figure we were in Maine!

Winter is coming so hopefully you all will get a little break and try to enjoy some Down Time.

Joseph A. Derie, AMS®
SAMS® Commercial Workboat Chair
SAMS® Tug & Barge Chair



CAPT Joseph A. Derie, NAMS-CMS; AMS®, SAMS®; CMI
Chair, SAMS® Commercial Workboat Committee
Chair, SAMS® Tug & Barge Committee
Southwest Passage Marine Surveys, LLC

This is the third of a three-part series of articles about OSHA and confined spaces. Part 1 of this series of articles, *OSHA And Confined Spaces – Part 1 Surveying Commercial Fishing Vessels and Barges* was published in the SAMS® Spring 2024 Newsletter. Part 2 *OSHA’s Permit Required Confined Spaces* was published in the SAMS® Summer 2024 Newsletter.

OSHA has regulatory authority on commercial vessels under two CFRs. 29 CFR 1910 *Occupational Safety and Health Standards* and 29 CFR 1915 *Occupational Safety and Health Standards for Shipyard Employment*. OSHA also has authority on all commercial vessels, whether un-inspected or inspected, and recreational vessels while they are in a shipyard.

As I have written before, the US Coast Guard has regulatory responsibility regarding safety aboard uninspected commercial vessels at all times. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) also has regulatory responsibility regarding safety aboard these vessels while they are in US waters (OSHA Instruction, Directive Number: CPL 02-01-04, effective date: 02/22/2010, Subject: *OSHA Authority Over Vessels and Facilities on or Adjacent to U.S. Navigable Waters and the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS)*). Due to this memorandum, surveying uninspected commercial vessels should be done using the required standards of the USCG, general OSHA, 29 CFR 1910 *Occupational Safety and Health Standards*, and if the vessel has a crane or derrick, OSHA 29 CFR 1919 *Gear Certification*.

There are three general areas in 29 CFR 1915 *Occupational Safety and Health Standards for Shipyard Employment* that marine surveyors should be familiar with and pay particular attention to when they are in a shipyard:

29 CFR § 1915.7 - Competent person. According to OSHA, a competent person is someone who can:

- Recognize and evaluate employee exposure to hazards or unsafe conditions
- Specify the necessary precautions and protection to ensure employee safety
- Take prompt corrective measures to eliminate hazards

In addition to these general requirements, competent persons must meet additional requirements for subparts B, C, and D of 29 CFR Part 1915. These additional requirements include the ability to:

- Inspect, test, and evaluate spaces
- Maintain records
- Ensure that the person performing the test and inspection records the following:

- Location
- Time
- Date
- Location of inspected spaces
- Operations performed
- Test results
- Any instructions

Cont.

Employers must make the roster of designated persons available to employees, their representatives, the Director, and the Assistant Secretary upon request.

Exceptions: The employer may designate any person who meets the applicable portions of the criteria set forth in paragraph (c) of this section as a competent person who is limited to performing testing to the following situations:

- (i) Repair work on small craft in boat yards where only combustible gas indicator tests are required for fuel tank leaks or when using flammable paints below decks;
- (ii) Building of wooden vessels where only knowledge of the precautions to be taken when using flammable paints is required;
- (iii) The breaking of vessels where there is no fuel oil or other flammable hazard; and
- (iv) Tests and inspections performed to comply with §§ 1915.35(b)(8) and 1915.36(a)(5).

OSHA 3923 Fact Sheet: *Evaluating Shipyard Competent Person Programs* has a *Checklist for Assessing Shipyard Competent Person Programs*.

Areas covered in this checklist are Training, Testing Equipment, General Knowledge and Recordkeeping.

These are the areas covered in the three-day course: *Shipyard Competent Person* given by the North Pacific Fishing Vessel Owner's Association (NPFVOA) and other maritime trainers. NPFVOA gives these classes on a regular basis at a reasonable price.

29 CFR 1915 Subpart B Confined and Enclosed Spaces and Other Dangerous Atmospheres in Shipyard Employment. This subpart applies to work in confined and enclosed spaces and other dangerous atmospheres in shipyard employment, including vessels, vessel sections, and on land-side operations regardless of geographic location. This subpart includes sections entitled:

29 CFR 1915.12 *Precautions and the order of testing before entering confined and enclosed spaces and other dangerous atmospheres.* The employer shall ensure that atmospheric testing is performed in the following sequence: oxygen content, flammability, toxicity.

29 CFR 1915.13 *Cleaning and other cold work.* The employer shall ensure that manual cleaning and other cold work are not performed in the following spaces unless the conditions of paragraph (b) of this section have been met:

- (1) Spaces containing or having last contained bulk quantities of combustible or flammable liquids or gases; and
- (2) Spaces containing or having last contained bulk quantities of liquids, gases or solids that are toxic, corrosive or irritating.

29 CFR 1915 *Hot work.* The employer shall ensure that hot work is not performed in or on any of the following confined and enclosed spaces and other dangerous atmospheres, boundaries of spaces or pipelines until the work area has been tested and certified by a Marine Chemist or a U.S. Coast Guard authorized person as "Safe for Hot Work".

29 CFR § 1915.15 - *Maintenance of safe conditions.*

(a) *Preventing hazardous materials from entering.* Pipelines that could carry hazardous materials into spaces that have been certified "Safe for Workers" or "Safe for Hot Work" shall be disconnected, blanked off, or otherwise blocked by a positive method to prevent hazardous materials from being discharged into the space.

(b) *Alteration of existing conditions.* When a change that could alter conditions within a tested confined or enclosed space or other dangerous atmosphere occurs, work in the affected space or area shall be stopped. Work may not be resumed until the affected space or area is visually inspected and retested and found to comply with §§ 1915.12, 1915.13, and 1915.14 of this part, as applicable.

Appendix A to Subpart B of Part 1915—*Compliance Assistance Guidelines for Confined and Enclosed Spaces and Other Dangerous Atmospheres.* This appendix is a non-mandatory set of guidelines provided to assist employers in complying with the requirements of this subpart. This appendix neither creates additional obligations nor detracts from obligations otherwise contained in the standard. It is intended to provide explanatory information and educational material to employers and employees to foster understanding of, and compliance with, the standard.

Cont.

29 CFR § 1915.76 Access to cargo spaces and confined spaces.

Important areas of this section are:

(a) *Cargo spaces.*

(1) There shall be at least one safe and accessible ladder in any cargo space which employees must enter.

(2) When any fixed ladder is visibly unsafe, the employer shall prohibit its use by employees.

(b) *Confined spaces.*

(1) More than one means of access shall be provided to a confined space in which employees are working and in which the work may generate a hazardous atmosphere in the space except where the structure or arrangement of the vessel makes this provision impractical.

(2) When the ventilation ducts required by these regulations must pass through these means of access, the ducts shall be of such a type and so arranged as to permit free passage of an employee through at least two of these means of access.

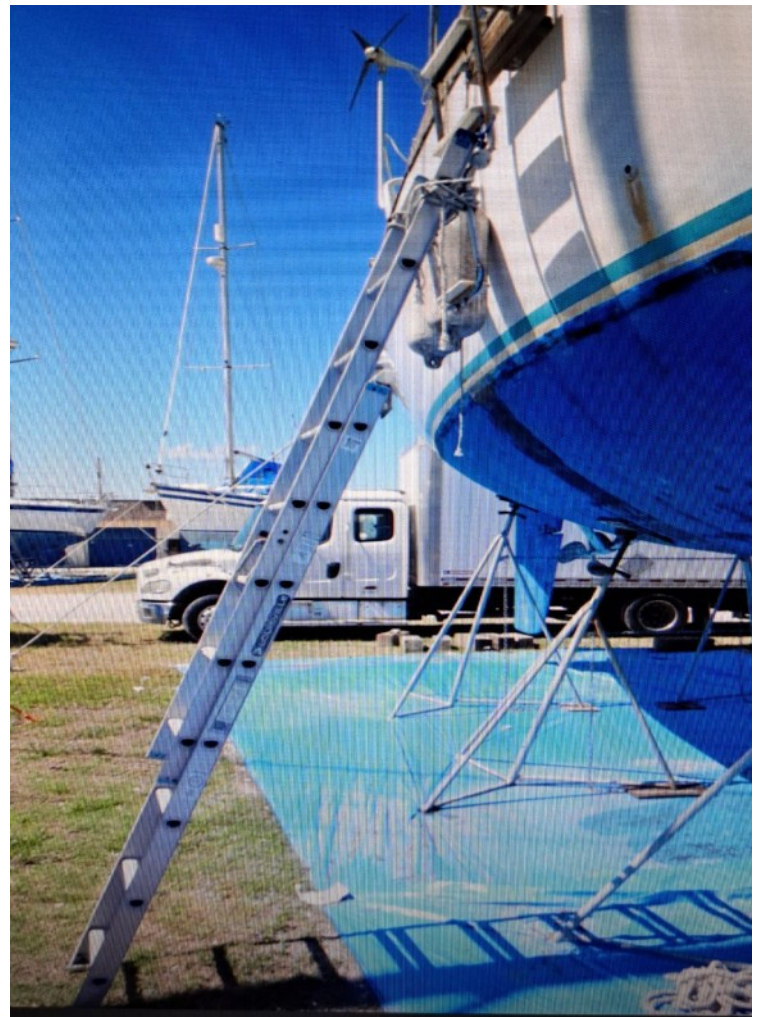
Surveyors surveying in shipyards should be intimately familiar with 29 CFR 1915 especially the sections discussed above. Surveyors should also seriously consider taking the Shipyard Competent Person class to ensure they are competent to assess whether entry into a confined space is safe or not.

My next column on confined space safety will be in a future newsletter and will discuss NFPA 350 *Guide for Safe Confined Space Entry and Work*.

As always, I hope anyone who wants to discuss this column or has questions about surveying commercial workboats, tugs, barges or 46 CFR Subchapter M should contact me at 503-236-6818.

Photo submitted by Christoffer Day, AMS[®] Florida South Regional Director.

I am not sure that this is a proper way to secure a ladder for boarding while doing an "on the hard" inspection.





**Steve Heinrich, AMS[®]
Safety Committee Chair**

The Importance of Portable 4-Gas Monitors for Ensuring Surveyor Safety during Confined Space Entry.

While surveying confined spaces, dangerous gases can pose serious risks to the surveyor's health and well-being. Vessels contain areas that are considered "confined spaces" because, while they are not necessarily designed for people, they are large enough for a surveyor to enter and inspect. A confined space has limited or restricted means for entry or exit and is not designed for continuous occupancy. Confined spaces include engine rooms, bilge spaces, and anchor lockers. To protect yourself from the risks of toxic, flammable, and oxygen-deficient atmospheres, portable gas monitors—specifically the 4-gas monitor—are invaluable tools. These devices are designed to detect and alert you to the presence of hazardous gases in real time, allowing for quick action before dangerous situations develop.

What is a Portable 4-Gas Monitor?

A portable 4-gas monitor is a compact, wearable device designed to continuously measure and detect the concentration of four key gases in the air:

1. Oxygen (O₂) – The monitor detects oxygen levels to ensure the atmosphere is breathable. Low oxygen levels (below 19.5%) can cause dizziness, confusion, and unconsciousness, while elevated levels may pose a fire risk.
2. Carbon Monoxide (CO) – This colorless, odorless gas can be deadly at high concentrations. Carbon monoxide is typically emitted during incomplete combustion and can be lethal when inhaled in confined spaces.
3. Hydrogen Sulfide (H₂S) – Known for its distinctive rotten-egg smell, hydrogen sulfide is highly toxic and can cause respiratory issues, unconsciousness, and even death in high concentrations. It is often found in sewer systems and could be present on a vessel with a failing waste system or decaying organic matter.
4. Combustible Gases/VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds) – Combustible gases, including methane, propane, and gasoline vapors, are measured to detect the risk of fires or explosions.

These monitors are designed to be worn by workers directly on their person, allowing for continuous monitoring of the air quality in their immediate environment.

Key Benefits of Portable 4-Gas Monitors

1. Real-Time Monitoring and Early Warning

Portable 4-gas monitors provide “real-time data” on the gas concentrations in the air. In case of dangerous levels of gases, the device can issue both visual and audible alarms, alerting a surveyor to take immediate action. This early warning can be the difference between a minor incident and a major disaster, such as asphyxiation, poisoning, or explosion.

2. Increased Surveyor Protection

Cont.

By continuously measuring critical gases, these monitors ensure that surveyors are always aware of their environment. This is especially crucial in confined spaces where air quality can change rapidly, and the surveyor may not be able to detect hazardous conditions on their own.

3. Compliance with Safety Regulations

Many industries are governed by strict safety standards that require companies to monitor hazardous gas levels in the workplace, and this includes some shipyards and cargo facilities. Regulatory bodies like OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration), have guidelines and standards for air quality monitoring. Using a portable 4-gas monitor allows the surveyor to comply with these regulations.

4. Portable and Easy to Use

One of the main advantages of portable 4-gas monitors is their portability. These devices are lightweight, compact, and can be easily worn on a worker's belt, vest, or harness. They are designed for ease of use, with simple controls, digital displays, and battery-operated functions, making them practical for use in a wide range of environments.

Features to Consider When Choosing a 4-Gas Monitor

When selecting a portable 4-gas monitor, several factors should be considered:

- Calibration and Maintenance: Regular calibration is necessary for accurate readings, so choose a monitor with easy calibration and maintenance features.
- Alarm System: Look for clear, loud alarms with both visual (flashing lights) and audible signals, ensuring that you will be alerted in all environments.
- Battery Life: Choose a monitor with a long battery life to reduce the need for frequent recharges.
- Durability: Ensure the monitor is built to withstand tough working conditions, such as extreme temperatures, moisture, and physical impact.
- User Interface: The monitor should have an intuitive interface with easy-to-read displays and simple controls for ease of use.

I recently purchased a 4-gas monitor, an RKI Instruments model GX-3R. The brand and model I chose was based on the criteria listed above. This is not an endorsement for a specific manufacturer and model.

1. Cost: 4-gas monitor with AC charger: \$476. Calibration kit with a single cylinder of calibration gas, tubing and calibration-cup: \$323. Shipping, insurance, and HAZMAT fee: \$99.69. TOTAL: \$898.69. These items were purchased from the same distributor as a "starter kit".
2. The GX-3R must be calibrated every 180 days and tested before every use. Calibration and testing are performed using the cylinder of calibration gas. A link to a video describing these procedures: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKYreBVH0y4>
3. The GX-3R dimensions are 2.6"H x 2.3" W x 1.0" D and weighs 3.5 ounces. An alligator clip is installed on the back of the GX-3R which can be used to attach the GX-3R to clothing or a belt.
 1. I found the GX-3R user interface and functions easy to use. When the GX-3R senses a gas concentration level that is outside the safe range, visual, audible, and vibratory alerts will trigger. A link to a video describing powering-up and using the GX-3R: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IR_9Of_Iqf8
 2. The GX-3R is rechargeable and will last 25 hours on a charge.
 3. The GX-3R will survive a drop of 23 feet, and is tested and certified to both IP66 (Waterproof Protection) and IP68 (Total Submersion Protection).

Portable 4-gas monitors are a vital safety tool for confined space entry. By continuously monitoring the presence of oxygen, carbon monoxide, hydrogen sulfide, and combustible gases, these devices provide real-time alerts that protect surveyors from potentially deadly hazards. Wearing a portable 4-gas monitor can make the difference between life and death, helping to prevent accidents, injuries, and fatalities on the job.





UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

MARINE SAFETY ALERT

Inspections and Compliance Directorate

August 26, 2024
Washington D.C.

Safety Alert 03-24

WARNING: ENSURE A GAS-FREE ENVIRONMENT PRIOR TO CONDUCTING HOT WORK

Coast Guard Sector Honolulu and Hawaii State Fire Investigators are examining a recent marine diesel fuel tank explosion on an uninspected commercial fishing vessel (CFV) moored for maintenance at a state-regulated facility. The explosion injured five individuals and resulted in one fatality.

Preliminary findings reveal that the vessel did not adhere to the “Hot Works” permit guidelines issued by the State Department of Transportation (DOT), which authorized work on a water tank hatch, engine room stairs, and spotlights. Witnesses confirmed welding was performed on a fuel tank vent pipe that was neither certified gas-free nor “Safe for Hot Work” by a certified marine chemist, as required by the permit. Consequently, diesel fuel vapors ignited, causing the explosion.



Figure 1-Left: Fuel tank vent pipe (soot residual from explosion), Center: Bulkhead between fuel tank and engine room (ballooned/explosion), Right: Ruptured bulkhead (fractured from explosion).

Uninspected CFVs, regulated under 46 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Subchapter C, are subject to limited oversight by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) or recognized class societies. Therefore, CFV owners and operators play a critical role in ensuring that safe marine practices are adhered to during repairs.

The following industry standards and regulations are critical for ensuring safety during hot work operations:

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). OSHA regulations under 29 CFR 1915 Subpart B require personnel conducting hot work on or around fuel tanks to comply

with safety measures, including certification of spaces as “Safe for Hot Work” and issuance of a “Gas Free” certificate.

- National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA). NFPA standard 51B covers fire prevention during welding, cutting, and other hot work, providing critical safety standards to prevent injury, loss of life, and property damage. Guidance in the standard includes, but is not limited to hot work permits, fire watches, fire suppression, and safety measures for hot work in confined spaces where explosion risks may be elevated.

To prevent similar incidents, the Coast Guard **strongly recommends** the following actions for the CFV industry:

- Verify that personnel conducting hot work are familiar with and adhere to 29 CFR 1915 Subpart B regulations, including proper atmospheric testing and certification for safe hot work conditions.
- Ensure in-depth understanding and compliance with NFPA standard 51B to prevent fire or explosion risks during hot work. The NFPA has this document available for purchase at [NFPA 51B](#).
- Fully comply with the “Hot Works” permit requirements, ensuring no unauthorized deviations from the approved scope of work. Obtain prior approval for any changes from the relevant authority.
- Employ welders qualified by entities such as the USCG, American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), American Bureau of Shipping (ABS), or certified by the American Welding Society (AWS).

This Safety Alert is provided for informational purposes only and does not relieve any domestic or international safety, operational, or material requirement. Developed by Sector Honolulu and distributed by the Office of Investigations and Analysis. Questions may be sent to HQS-SMB-CG-INV@uscg.mil.



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

MARINE SAFETY ALERT

Inspections and Compliance Directorate

October 28, 2024
Washington D.C.

Safety Alert 06-24

UNINSPECTED COMMERCIAL VESSEL STABILITY
AWARENESS

A 30-foot uninspected work boat capsized while transporting cargo on Bayou Chene, Louisiana. The vessel was carrying three portable tanks with a combined weight of 7,776 pounds. During the transit, the vessel soft grounded on a mud flat and subsequently capsized, resulting in the tragic drowning of one crew member.

The investigation revealed that the vessel was severely overloaded, carrying cargo that exceeded the vessel's safe stability limits, which included stacked cargo. The vessel did not require Coast Guard inspection or official stability tests, and the crew was unaware of the vessel's maximum safe loading capacity. A post-casualty stability analysis determined that the vessel's maximum safe deck capacity was 7,000 pounds on a protected route. The cargo exceeded this limit, significantly reducing the vessel's stability, leading to the capsizing.

Additionally, there was no formal loading plan or stability guidance provided to the crew, who had received no formal training on safe loading practices. The vessel's owner had advertised a cargo capacity of 8,000 pounds, a figure that was not based on any documented stability tests or calculations.

This incident underscores the critical need for vessel owners to accurately determine and communicate the maximum cargo capacities and safe loading plans to prevent similar tragedies.

The Coast Guard **strongly recommends** that owners, managers, and operators of uninspected vessels:

- **Determine Maximum Cargo Capacity:** Conduct formal stability tests or calculations to determine the maximum safe cargo capacity for each vessel. Use marine engineers or qualified professionals to ensure accuracy.
- **Display Cargo Capacity and Loading Plans:** Clearly display the maximum cargo capacity and a recommended loading plan on the vessel in a location easily visible to the crew. Include instructions for cargo placement to maintain optimal stability.
- **Develop and Implement Training Programs:** Establish mandatory training programs for crew members on vessel stability and safe loading practices. Ensure all crew are familiar with the vessel's specific stability characteristics and loading limits.

- **Review and Update Safety Policies:** Regularly review and update safety policies to incorporate best practices for vessel loading and stability. Ensure that all crew members are aware of and adhere to these policies.
- **Verify and Document Compliance:** Maintain records of stability tests, loading plans, and crew training. Periodically verify that all vessels in your fleet are operating within their safe loading limits and that crew members are following the established loading plans.

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UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

MARINE SAFETY ALERT

Inspections and Compliance Directorate

October 28, 2024
Washington DC

Safety Alert 07-24

OPEN ROTARY MACHINERY HAZARDS

A recent Coast Guard investigation into a fatality on a commercial fishing vessel highlights the serious risks of working near open rotary machinery. The incident occurred when the vessel's operator was manually adjusting a winch's cable guide. This practice exposed the operator to significant danger, placing him near moving parts and risking entanglement. The cable guide, weakened by excessive corrosion, broke in half, causing the operator to fall into the winch. The investigation also revealed that the winch lacked essential safety features, such as a guard or an auxiliary stop device, which significantly contributed to the fatality.

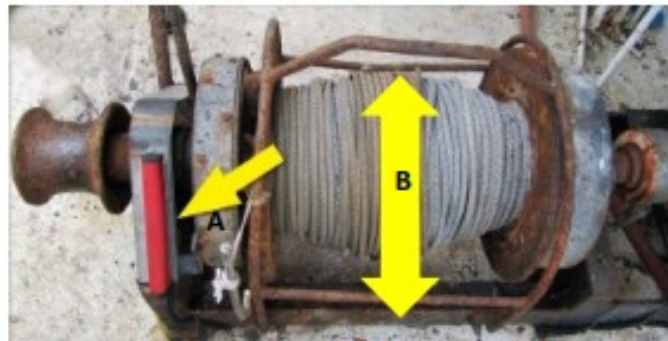


Figure 1. A – Auxiliary-stop device; B- Winch safeguard. ¹

The Coast Guard **strongly recommends** that owners, managers, and operators of uninspected vessels:

- Install guards around winches and other rotating machinery, ensuring the barriers are of sufficient height and strength to effectively block access to moving parts, and always maintain a safe distance.
- Install auxiliary-stopping devices to automatically de-energize winches and other rotating machinery during emergency situations.
- Regularly inspect all components of the winches and other rotating machinery, including the cable guide, drum, motor, and related machinery. Look for signs of wear, corrosion, cracks, or any damage that could compromise the equipment's integrity or functionality.

Investigations and inspection personnel are encouraged to maintain an acute awareness to these issues and initiate corrective actions as needed.

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¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015, December 7). Reducing Winch entanglements with auxiliary-stop device. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2016-105/default.html>



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

MARINE SAFETY ALERT

Inspections and Compliance Directorate

October 28, 2024
Washington, DC

Safety Alert 08-24

CORROSION OF LIFEBOAT SELF-CONTAINED AIR SUPPORT SYSTEM CYLINDERS CAN BE DANGEROUS

This Safety Alert is intended to raise awareness of potential hazards with insufficiently inspected compressed air cylinders used in lifeboat self-contained air support systems for fire-protected lifeboats.

During a routine inspection of an OCS unit that was unmanned and awaiting decommissioning, company personnel discovered a large hole in one of the facility's lifeboats (Figure 1). Further examination revealed that a cylinder from the self-contained air support system had ruptured, causing the damage. The rupture sent fragments into the overhead flotation chamber of the lifeboat (Figure 2), and one of the three cylinders was lost to the sea, with its condition unknown. The third cylinder remained in its stowage location but showed signs of severe corrosion.



Figure 1: Lifeboat damage sustained from ruptured compressed air cylinder.

Many lifeboats with these systems store air cylinders horizontally in or just above the bilge area beneath the centerline seats. Although lifeboat canopies are required to be watertight, water ingress/accumulation in the bilges and cylinder storage compartments can be a common occurrence¹. The lifeboat involved in this incident was designed with a separate compartment to isolate the cylinders from the bilge, but this compartment was also not watertight and had collected several inches of water. Accessing the compressed air cylinders in this lifeboat required the removal of the center divider and seats.



Figure 2: Severely corroded remnants of compressed air cylinder shell. Note the distinct line of deep pitting.

An inspection of the intact cylinder and the ruptured cylinder fragment showed significant corrosion (Figure 2). While the exact cause of the corrosion is unknown, it is suspected that the cylinders were partially submerged in water and subjected to accelerated corrosion due to the

¹ This condition was likely exaggerated in this case due to the facility being in an unmanned state for an extended timeframe with the out-of-service lifeboats not receiving the routine readiness inspections and maintenance that is normally applied to in-service lifeboats.

presence of dissimilar metals. Although stray electrical currents were considered as a potential cause, they were deemed unlikely given the lifeboat's electrical configuration and the OCS unit's secured power.

This incident could have been fatal or caused severe injuries if personnel had been nearby. Despite the cylinders having undergone an annual inspection 14 months prior and being within their hydrostatic testing period, the corrosion went undetected. The cylinders were only five years old, but their condition suggested significant deterioration.

The Coast Guard **recommends** that owners, manufacturers, operators, and service providers:

- Verify the physical condition of the entire cylinders during annual lifeboat inspections.
 - Consider inspection methods that provide for visual inspection of all air cylinders **in their entirety** (e.g. fully accessing the storage compartment or using inspection cameras to view all cylinder surfaces while in their stowage location).
- Ensure air cylinder stowage compartments are maintained in a dry condition.
- Ensure that the air cylinders are inspected and maintained in accordance with [46 CFR 147.60](#), applicable to USCG approved lifeboats through [46 CFR 160.135-7\(b\)\(25\)](#).
 - These cites invoke [49 CFR 180](#) that addresses corrosion and abraded areas, among other signs of defect or damage.
- Implement training for all personnel responsible for lifeboat maintenance or operation to provide awareness of the necessity for proper maintenance and inspection of lifeboat compressed air cylinders for all types of cylinder construction.
- Consider approved design changes that provide for routine access to all portions of the cylinders for proper inspection and maintenance.
- The Coast Guard also recommends that appropriate safety measures are implemented for any lifeboats that are not in active service (e.g. spare boats or boats removed from service for maintenance) or are part of an inspected vessel or unit that is no longer in active service. Safety measures could include, but are not limited to, bleeding pressure from the cylinders, removal of the cylinders from the lifeboat, or continuing regular inspection of the cylinders.

This safety alert was prepared by the Outer Continental Shelf National Center of Expertise, is provided for informational purposes only and does not relieve any domestic or international safety, operational, or material requirements. Address questions to HQS-SBM-CG-INV@uscg.mil or OCSNCOE@uscg.mil.



UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
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MARINE SAFETY ALERT
Inspections and Compliance Directorate

October 28, 2024
Washington, DC

Safety Alert 09-24

CHAFING ON FUEL HOSES CAN CAUSE CATASTROPHIC FIRES

A recent fire onboard an inspected towing vessel has highlighted a critical safety concern involving fuel hoses on main engines. While it is standard marine practice to install protective chafing gear on areas prone to wear, there are currently no statutory requirements for inspected towing vessels to install such protections on fuel lines. Failure to prevent chafing on these hoses can lead to fuel leaks, which may spray onto the engine and ignite, causing a fire.

The U.S. Coast Guard has noted that while many inspected towing vessels include fuel hose inspections in their maintenance routines, crew members may not be adequately trained to recognize substandard conditions. The location of the fuel hoses on main engines can also make thorough inspections challenging. It is essential that companies provide proper training to ensure crew members can effectively inspect fuel hoses during routine checks. Additionally, installing fire-retardant hose coverings on critical fuel system hoses is recommended. These coverings not only protect against chafing but also help prevent fuel from spraying onto the engine by directing it into the bilge.



Figure 1 – Main Engine Dry Exhaust

Although these measures may seem minor, compromised fuel hoses can pose significant risks to the vessel's crew, the environment, and the vessel's seaworthiness. In the incident cited, the vessel was underway when the port main engine's fuel hose sprayed fuel onto the exhaust, resulting in a fire that caused over \$100,000 in damages and injured a crew member due to smoke inhalation.

To mitigate the fire risks on inspected towing vessels, the Coast Guard **strongly recommends** that vessel owners and operators:

- **Install fire-retardant hose coverings and chafing protection:** Consider standardizing installed equipment across fleets to ensure consistent protection and crew member familiarity.

- **Conduct thorough inspections:** Inspect fuel hoses regularly as part of a standard maintenance routine. This should include visual inspections for signs of wear, such as cracks, abrasions, or any other indicators of deterioration.
- **Install flange spray shields:** Where pressurized fuel piping is flanged or threaded, spray shields or anti-spray tape should be installed to prevent leaks from contacting hot surfaces or other ignition sources. The document [*IMO MSC.1/Circ. 1321*](#), published by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), provides detailed guidelines on installation of spray shields, proper hose installation, and other measures to prevent engine room fires.
- **Maintain detailed inspection records:** Document hose conditions, maintenance performed, and the next scheduled inspection date to track conditions and identify recurring issues that need to be addressed.
- **Implement comprehensive crew training programs:** Ensure crew members, particularly those involved in vessel maintenance and engine operation, receive thorough training on the importance of fuel hose integrity. This training should be part of both initial onboarding and ongoing professional development. Training should include detailed instructions on how to identify signs of chafing, wear, and other early warning signs of hose failure, as well as potential consequences of ignoring these signs.

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Surviving Irma in Tortola: Todd Duff's First Person Account

BWS: When you knew Irma was going to hit Tortola, what precautions did you take for your boat, your house and yourselves?

Todd Duff: Up until just a day before the storm we all were led to believe that the eye was going to pass over Anegada Island, about 20 miles to the north of Tortola, and several of the computer models had the eye going even farther north. Having been through several hurricanes of up to Category 4 that had passed north or east of us, I expected winds of 100 to 120 knots, which is totally survivable. Indeed, right up until we lost internet, some of the weather websites were predicting that we would only receive winds of a little over a hundred knots. The most popular computer model, the GFS, was showing, right up until the final hours, that we were going to miss the eye.

Nevertheless, everyone here prepared as if we could get the worst case scenario. However, I knew in my heart of hearts that if this storm ramped up any more and did in fact nudge south, that the damage would be significant. Little did we know just how significant it would be! We tied our boat up with 15 one-inch dock lines and chafe gear and 13 fenders and had her centered in a slip near the bulkhead in what I considered to be the most protected spot in Nanny Cay Marina, six feet from the nearest dock and over eight feet from the closest neighbor.

What we didn't count on was that all the docks in marina would break free and as the winds from what I now call "Super Hurricane Irma" topped 200 mph with recorded gusts to 256 and one unconfirmed report of a gust to 270, none of the docks or boats in the marina or boatyard were able to escape damage. It was during that initial eyewall passage that 40 or so boats broke the docks to windward of my boat and came down upon her, crushing and sinking her.

The evening before the storm, with all preparations in place aboard my boat *Ocean Life*, I went to a friend's house directly across from Nanny Cay to help with final preparations there.



BWS: Where were you when Irma hit and what was it like to weather a Cat 5 hurricane?

TD: Despite storm shutters and boarded up windows and doors, the four of us ended up hiding under a steel staircase with couches and mattresses covering us as the roof exploded and windows were blown out. The entire six-unit concrete building we were in was shaking violently as if we were experiencing an earthquake and our ears repeatedly popped as the air pressure fluctuated wildly. We learned later that several tornadoes had formed in the second eyewall and one went right over our neighborhood, destroying my car, ripping up trees and tearing roofs away. As Super Hurricane Irma entered the BVI, she had intensified to be stronger than

a Category 5 by at least a factor of one. The winds exceeded 185 mph for the entire passage of the eyewalls and the second eyewall was the worst as the mountains of the island had caused tornado-like eddies and williwaw-type effects that lifted 60-foot boats out of the water and threw them on roadways and on top of buildings. One of our friends reported seeing a glimpse of a catamaran powerboat over a hundred feet in the air in front of his house on the side of a nearby hill in West End, Tortola.

BWS: When Irma passed, what did you find in her wake?

TD: By 4:30 PM the fast-moving storm had calmed enough to allow us to go outside. With no roof and clearing skies we all walked down to the Nanny Cay Marina. I foolishly expected that my well secured boat would have survived, and I believe it would have had the docks not broken free. But, as we approached the marina and boatyard, we realized there was little hope for that.

Powerlines and trees were strewn across the roads and a 60-foot catamaran was upside down across the driveway at the marina. A few startled people wandered about looking as if they were in shock. The destruction all around us appeared as if a nuclear bomb had been set off. Not a single bit of green vegetation, save a few palm fronds, had survived. Entire hillsides were cleared of all greenery and only shattered stumps and branches were left. The few frame houses were erased with lumber strewn far up hillsides. Many houses had lost roofs and there were dozens of overturned cars. Mangled roofing material littered the hillsides and roads.

My friends and I carefully picked our way through all this and eventually made it to the marina basin only find my two masts sticking up out of the water. “Well, at least she kept her rig up” was the sardonic comment I apparently made.



In the coming days many of us boaters and business people threw all our waking hours into trying to clean up and dig out, and to attempt to get a few of the systems and infrastructure on Nanny Cay up and running. The watermaker plant had been hit by something huge which had broken a lot of the piping and the electronics were all waterlogged. Missing doors and a damaged water outlet pumps meant there was no more water available and the 40,000-gallon reservoir was now standing empty.

I took on the job of getting that water plant back in operation and thankfully Nanny Cay’s two generators had survived, so within a couple of days electricity was restored to some sections of the boatyard and over the following week, with the help of a good friend who ran the main watermaker plant for Tortola,

Cont.

we got the watermaker running and power was restored to the hotel and condos.

We then ran a water pipe out to the street so that the adjoining neighborhoods could get clean drinking water. As part of the process of getting the watermaker plant back up and running, I had the opportunity to be one of the first to drive the length of Tortola as the only watermaker repair supplies were all the way across the island at the main watermaker plant, which was also at this point not operational. Driving across the island that second day after the storm took hours. The level of devastation was epic and passing through Road Town we saw the Scotia Bank completely ripped open and we observed looting taking place in many of the stores in the business district.

In the ensuing days in my capacity as a marine surveyor, I traveled to Virgin Gorda and was one of the first to get to West End and Trellis Bay. Everywhere I went the devastation was the same; nearly complete destruction was in plain view everywhere you could look.

BWS: What about your boat?

TD: Alas, my beautiful little *Ocean Life* sank and because of the huge number of boats sunk within the marina basin, piled up on the shores and crammed all around my boat, she was not raised for nearly a month. With raw sewage from the adjacent neighborhoods and muddy polluted runoff from the denuded hillsides filling Nanny Cay, by the time they finally did raise her, it was almost impossible to save anything. We lost virtually all our personal possessions and cruising momentos of over 30 years of living aboard and cruising. Although we had insurance on the boat, we had neglected to get personal effects coverage and in any case, you can't replace memories. We were not alone either. Several other liveaboards lost their boats and are in the same predicament that we are in: Homeless and with essentially only the clothes on our backs.



BWS: Where are you now and what is going on in the recovery process?

TD: Many expats and workers left the island after Irma and then two weeks later another category five storm came by. Hurricane Maria passed about 35 miles south of us and so was not nearly as big a deal as Irma for us although Puerto Rico was not so lucky. We only experienced winds of about 120 mph and after what we had been subjected to with Irma, it was barely noticeable. Although a few additional boats were damaged, just a few days after Maria, and despite another outflow of people giving up and leaving the islands, those of us who stayed behind were working hard and the cleanup was back in full swing.

Although I was tempted to leave a few times, my passport had been aboard my boat and so was not recoverable. And because there was so much that needed to be done, I found and still find that assisting restoration efforts by moving things along towards a full recovery here has been a very fulfilling, if mentally and physically exhausting, undertaking.

Because I hold credentials as an accredited marine surveyor, and with by some estimates of over 700 damaged or destroyed boats here in the BVI, I quickly changed roles and have been busy surveying damaged boats for the various insurance companies since about a week after the first storm. As I write this, The Nanny Cay Marina basin has been largely cleared of wrecks and docks are beginning to go back in.

Power has been restored to some areas of the island and after over a month of having raw sewage seeping from the sewer systems in Road Town and East End, this problem appears to be well on its way to becoming just another bad memory.



BWS: As a yacht broker, what is the scene in the BVI for buying and selling boats?

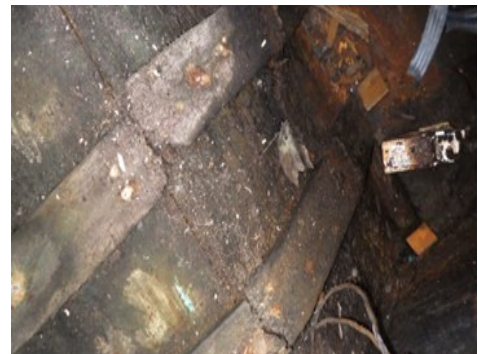
TD: The British Virgin Islands, as well as some of the adjacent islands such as St Martin, St Barts, Anguilla and of course the USVI and Puerto Rico all received damage of epic proportions from these two devastating hurricanes and it will surely be some time before things return to anything like normal. That having been said, judging by the level of activity we have seen here in the BVI, I am fully confident that the yacht brokerage businesses here will survive and that the charter companies will bounce back as well. The BVI is, and will remain, the most active market for chartering, buying and selling boats in the Caribbean basin and not all the boats listed were destroyed.

Surely business will be a bit slower in the coming months, but I have full expectations that the charter and related marine industries, including yacht sales, will all fully recover and for those bargain hunters out there, I am certain some really great deals will be found as the various companies and insurers release boats for sale and charter companies offer reduced rates to entice people to return to these special islands.

This article was in the Bluewater Sailing Magazine March 9, 2018.

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BAD BOAT PICS



If you have any bad boat pics send them into the editor.

John Lowe - captursa@aol.com



IMPORTANT MEMBER INFORMATION



2025 SAMS® International Meeting & Educational Conference (IMEC) September 9 - 12 Hyatt Regency, Baltimore, MD

CE Credits:

Don't forget to check the website under "Education" for ideas to obtain CE's.

Legal Liability Insurance from the International Office

One of the important benefits that you receive from being a SAMS® member is the Legal Liability insurance. I felt a little clarity would be helpful especially for our newer members. It is important that you understand what this in-surance covers and more importantly, what it does not cover. The simplified description comes from a more detailed explanation provided by our insurance agent Roanoke Brokerage Services, Inc. This pol-icy covers your legal liability for physical damage to property or bodily injury to per-sons, as a direct result of your actions while you are actually in the act of performing a survey. Examples of such incidents might be:

- the vessel catches fire or sinks during or immediately after your survey, which is the direct result of something you damaged;
- you accidentally spilled something onto the deck or in the bilge that results in an expensive repair or clean-up;
- you break an engine part while climbing around the engine room;
- or your client trips over your tool bag resulting in serious injury.

These are a few examples, but the policy is not limited to these types of incidents. Now, the policy does not cover incident's which are considered "Errors and Omissions" in nature or in other words, incidents where you are held responsible for overlooking, misjudging, or mistaking something during your survey. Several examples would be: a client sues you because he or she purchases a boat on your advice and later discovers the vessel needs significant repair or a vessel sinks because you missed a bad sea water hose.

There will be times that a marina will ask to be named as a "certificate holder". All requests must go through the International Office and not directly to Roanoke. All you need to do is send us their company name, address and requester's email. We in turn send Roanoke proof that you are a current member, and they usually complete it within a few hours. They will send the "Accord" certificate to the requester with a copy to you. Due to unforeseen circumstances, we kindly ask that you do not wait until the day of the survey to request an insurance certificate.

Also, there has also been some confusion lately with a few marinas asking to be listed as an "Additional Insured". Please note, this is usually for "General Liability" which we do not offer at SAMS® and Roanoke cannot provide that for you. As always, please feel free to contact us with any questions you may have.

Happy Holidays to all!!



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Hodgins, Kenneth, St. Thomas, VI
Files, Robert D., North Richland Hills, TX
Wright, Geoffrey, Toronto, ON, Canada
Ralston, Mark, Nanoose Bay, BC, Canada

“HULL & MACHINERY”

NONE

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accepted into SAMS® as:

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Asia Pacific Region.....	Ruchin C. Dayal, AMS®	ruchin@edot-solutions.com	+91-832-2501715
European Region.....	Roberto Scalvini, AMS®	robby@msb-palma.com	+34-971-403-370

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American Boat & Yacht Council	Kenneth Weinbrecht, AMS®	oceanbaymarine@yahoo.com	631-924-4362
National Fire Protection Association.....	Kenneth Weinbrecht, AMS®	oceanbaymarine@yahoo.com	631-924-4362

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For More Information Contact:
Society of Accredited Marine Surveyors[®], Inc.
800-344-9077 / 904-384-1494
samshq@marinesurvey.org / www.marinesurvey.org