

so. In making this determination, the OCMI will consider the vessel's overall condition, its history of safe operation, and any other factors that serve to mitigate overall safety risks.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(g) A preventative maintenance plan for your vessel's hull, its related systems and equipment.

[USCG-2000-6858, 67 FR 21085, Apr. 29, 2002, as amended at 69 FR 47384, Aug. 5, 2004]

**§ 176.635 Preliminary examination requirements.**

(a) If you exclusively use divers to examine the underwater hull plating, you must arrange to have a preliminary examination conducted by a third party examiner, with the assistance of qualified divers. The purpose of the preliminary examination is to assess the overall condition of the vessel's hull and identify any specific concerns to be addressed during the underwater hull examination.

(b) The preliminary examination is required only upon the vessel's entry or reentry into the AHE program.

(c) If you use an underwater remotely operated vehicle (ROV) as the predominate means to examine your vessel's hull plating, a preliminary examination and the participation of a third party examiner will not be necessary.

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

**§ 176.640 Pre-survey meeting.**

(a) In advance of each AHE, you must conduct a pre-survey meeting to discuss the details of the AHE procedure with the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI). If you exclusively use divers to examine the underwater hull plating, the third party examiner must attend the meeting and you must present the results of the preliminary examination. If you use an underwater remotely operated vehicle (ROV) as the predominate means to examine the vessel's hull plating, then the pre-survey meeting must be attended by a representative of the ROV operating company who is qualified to discuss the ROV's capabilities and limitations related to your vessel's hull design and configuration.

(b) A vessel owner, operator, or designated agent must request this meeting in writing at least 30 days in advance of the examination date.

(c) The pre-survey meeting may be conducted by teleconference, if agreed to in advance by the OCMI.

[USCG-2000-6858, 67 FR 21086, Apr. 29, 2002, as amended at 69 FR 47384, Aug. 5, 2004]

**§ 176.645 AHE Procedure.**

(a) To complete the underwater survey you must—

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(1) Perform a general examination of the underwater hull plating and a detailed examination of all hull welds, propellers, tailshafts, rudders, and other hull appurtenances;

(2) Examine all sea chests;

(3) Remove and inspect all sea valves in the presence of a marine inspector once every five years;

(4) Remove all passengers from the vessel when the sea valves are being examined, if required by the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI);

(5) Allow access to all internal areas of the hull for examination, except internal tanks that carry fuel (unless damage or deterioration is discovered or suspect), sewage, or potable water. Internal sewage and potable water tanks may be examined visually or by non-destructive testing to the satisfaction of the attending marine inspector; and

(6) Meet the requirements in § 176.650 of this part.

(b) A marine inspector may examine any other areas deemed necessary by the OCMI.

(c) If the AHE reveals significant deterioration or damage to the vessel's hull plating or structural members, the OCMI must be immediately notified. The OCMI may require the vessel be drydocked or otherwise taken out of service to further assess the extent of damage or to effect permanent repairs if the assessment or repairs cannot be completed to the satisfaction of the OCMI while the vessel is waterborne.

[USCG–2000–6858, 67 FR 21086, Apr. 29, 2002, as amended at 69 FR 47384, Aug. 5, 2004]

**§ 176.650 Alternative Hull Examination Program options: Divers or underwater ROV.**

To complete the underwater survey portion of the AHE, you may use divers or an underwater remotely operated vehicle (ROV).

(a) If you use divers to conduct the underwater survey, you must—

(1) Locate the vessel so the divers can work safely under the vessel's keel and around both sides. The water velocity must be safe for dive operations;

(2) Provide permanent hull markings, a temporary grid system of wires or cables spaced not more than 10 feet apart and tagged at one-foot intervals, or

any other acoustic or electronic positioning system approved by the OCMI to identify the diver's location with respect to the hull, within one foot of accuracy;

(3) Take ultrasonic thickness gaugings at a minimum of 5 points on each plate, evenly spaced;

(4) Take hull plating thickness gaugings along transverse belts at the bow, stern, and midships, as a minimum. Plating thickness gaugings must also be taken along a longitudinal belt at the wind and water strake. Individual gaugings along the transverse and longitudinal belts must be spaced no more than 3 feet apart;

(5) Ensure the third party examiner observes the entire underwater examination process;

(6) Record the entire underwater survey with audio and video recording equipment and ensure that communications between divers and the third party examiner are recorded; and

(7) Use appropriate equipment, such as a clear box, if underwater visibility is poor, to provide the camera with a clear view of the hull.

(b) You may use an underwater ROV to conduct the underwater survey. The underwater ROV operating team, survey process and equipment, quality assurance methods, and the content and format of the survey report must be accepted by the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI) prior to the survey. If you choose this option, you must—

(1) Locate the vessel to ensure that the underwater ROV can operate effectively under the vessel's keel and around both sides; and

(2) Employ divers to examine any sections of the hull and appurtenances that the underwater ROV cannot access or is otherwise unable to evaluate.

(3) If the OCMI determines that the data obtained by the ROV, including non-destructive testing results, readability of the results, and positioning standards, will not integrate into the data obtained by the divers, then a third party examiner must be present during the divers portion of the examination.

[USCG–2000–6858, 67 FR 21086, Apr. 29, 2002, as amended at 69 FR 47384, Aug. 5, 2004]