

is being completed, may approve an underwater survey instead of a drydock examination at alternating intervals. You must submit an application for an underwater survey to the OCMI at least 90 days before your vessel's next required drydock examination. You may be allowed this option if—

(1) The vessel is qualified under paragraphs (a)(2) through (4) of this section;

(2) Your application includes the information in paragraphs (b)(1) through (b)(8) of this section; and

(3) During the vessel's drydock examination that precedes the underwater survey, a complete set of hull gaugings was taken and they indicated that the vessel was free from appreciable hull deterioration.

(d) After this drydock examination required in paragraph (c)(3) of this section, the OCMI submits a recommendation for future underwater surveys, the results of the hull gauging, and the results of the Coast Guards' drydock examination results to the cognizant District Commander for review.

[USCG-2000-6858, 67 FR 21077, Apr. 29, 2002]

**§ 71.50-15 Description of the Alternative Hull Examination (AHE) Program for certain passenger vessels.**

The Alternative Hull Examination (AHE) Program provides you with an alternative to a drydock examination by allowing your vessel's hull to be examined while it remains afloat. If completed using only divers, this program has four steps: the application process, the preliminary examination, the pre-survey meeting, and the hull examination. If the vessel is already participating in the program or if a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) is used during the program, the preliminary exam step may be omitted. Once you complete these steps, the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI), will evaluate the results and accept the examination as a credit hull exam if the vessel is in satisfactory condition. If only divers are used for the underwater survey portion of the examination process, you may receive credit for a period of time such that subsequent AHEs would be conducted at intervals of twice in every five years, with no more than three years between any two AHEs. The OCMI may waive an underwater

survey in accordance with § 71.50-29(d) provided that the interval does not exceed five years between any two underwater surveys. If an underwater ROV is used as the predominate method to examine the vessel's underwater hull plating, you may receive credit up to five years. At the end of this period, you may apply for further participation under the AHE Program.

NOTE TO § 71.50-15: The expected hull coverage when using an ROV must be at least 80 percent.

[USCG-2000-6858, 69 FR 47382, Aug. 5, 2004]

**§ 71.50-17 Eligibility requirements for the Alternative Hull Examination (AHE) Program for certain passenger vessels.**

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

(1) It is constructed of steel or aluminum;

(2) It has an effective hull protection system;

(3) It has operated exclusively in fresh water since its last drydock examination;

(4) It operates in a reduced risk environment such as a river or the protected waters of a lake; and

(5) It operates exclusively in shallow water or within 0.5 nautical miles from shore.

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

(1) The overall condition of the vessel, based on its inspection history;

(2) The vessel's history of hull casualties and hull-related deficiencies; and

(3) The AHE Program application, as described in § 71.50-19 of this part.

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

[USCG-2000-6858, 67 FR 21077, Apr. 29, 2002]