

Admiral Thad W. Allen

Admiral Thad W. Allen is Commandant of the US Coast Guard. In

September 2005, he was designated the Principal Federal Official for Hurricane Katrina response and recovery operations in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.

Admiral Allen's prior flag assignments include Chief of Staff of the Coast Guard; Commander, Atlantic Area, leading the Coast Guard's Atlantic Area forces – 26,000 military and civilian employees, and 27,900 Auxiliarists – in response to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001; Seventh Coast Guard District Commander; and Director of Resources at Headquarters.

A specialist in operations both in the coastal and offshore environments, Admiral Allen has served aboard three Coast Guard cutters and commanded several coastal operational units.

Admiral Allen holds a Master of Public Administration degree from the George Washington University, and a Master of Science degree from the Sloan School of Management of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 2003, Admiral Allen was elected a National Academy of Public Administration Fellow. Admiral Allen is a 1971 graduate of the US Coast Guard Academy.



“The development of many standards has prevented the need for additional regulations.”

ISO Focus: How would you summarize the mission of the United States Coast Guard?

Admiral Thad W. Allen: The United States Coast Guard (USCG) is a military, multi-mission, maritime service and one of the nation's five Armed Services. Its mission is to protect the

public, the environment, and US economic interests – in the nation's ports and waterways, along the coast, on international waters, or in any maritime region as required to support national security.

ISO Focus: What set of goals would you like to accomplish in your term as Commandant of the United States Coast Guard?

Admiral Thad W. Allen: We will focus our entire organization on improving and sustaining mission execution. We will do this by structuring our service as a three-pronged force: shore-based operations, maritime operations, and deployable operations. We've taken bold steps forward by creating Coast Guard Sector commands for shore-based operations. We've taken equally

bold steps by advancing the Deepwater acquisition for maritime presence, patrol, and response. And we've created truly deployable forces. We must now expand our deployable force capabilities and support them with proper doctrine, logistics, training, and exercises.

Across all of our forces, we will partner with other services and government agencies to integrate our efforts. To further optimize the mission execution of this three-pronged force, we will reassess and better organize our command and control structure. We will also re-evaluate and realign our mission support system, including organizational

structures, human resources, maintenance, logistics, financial management and information systems.

We will ensure Coast Guard men and women are the best trained and most versatile workforce in government, equipped with the most capable fleet of multi-mission ships, aircraft, boats and command and control systems available. And we will remain aligned with our partners within the Department of Homeland Security, the other four branches of the US Armed Forces and other agencies at federal, state and local levels.

ISO Focus: *Policy and guidance for the development and use of national and international standards for the maritime safety and protection programme are found in the Commandant Instruction. Why the need for this policy? In which technical committees does this USCG participate and what concrete benefits has participation in international and US standardization brought the USCG?*

Admiral Thad W. Allen: Since the mid-1960s, the Coast Guard has been very active in the development of consensus standards. The policy that you

refer to is in Commandant Instruction 5420.32. Its purpose is to highlight our agency's commitment to developing national and international recognized standards as a means to improve maritime safety, security and marine environmental protection, at the most economical cost to the public.



At one time or another, the Coast Guard has participated in more than 30 standards organizations and over 100 technical committees. While we have adopted more than 450 standards in our regulations, the development of many standards has prevented the need for additional regulations. Standards organizations in which we currently work with include: ANSI (American National Standards Institute); ASME (American Society of Mechanical Engineers); ASTM (ASTM International); IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission); ISO (International Organization for Standardization); NFPA (National Fire Protection Association).

“Maritime shipping is an international business, and we all truly need international solutions.”

The benefits of our participation are many. First, acceptance of a voluntary consensus standard reduces the burden on the Coast Guard to develop formal regulations for some of those activities. Standards are developed

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by a substantial group of individuals within a given industry. Consequently, a standard for a particular system, process or component is developed by a larger group of experts than the government could ever hope to assemble. Second, a voluntary consensus standard – developed by industry experts and affected users – is more likely to be accepted and implemented in a timely manner. Finally, a voluntary consensus standard also represents the current “state of the art.” Industry standards are dynamic, and incorporating them into the Code of Federal Regulations places our rules on the leading edge of technological advancement.



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ISO Focus: You addressed the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security regarding the Coast Guard’s role in border and maritime national security. Can you expand on your statement? What are your expectations of ISO and international cooperation? What added value would you see in the International Standard giving guidelines on supply chain security developed by ISO (ISO/PAS 28000)?



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Admiral Thad W. Allen: In my statement on the role of the Coast Guard in border security before that Subcommittee on 6 April 2006, I stated that effective border security depends substantially on effective maritime security and that the Coast Guard is the lead Federal agency, within the Department of Homeland Security, for securing our maritime border. Further, I stated that the foundation of our maritime strategy relies on three key priorities, namely to: achieve maritime domain awareness; establish and lead a seamless maritime security regime; and deploy effective and integrated operational capabilities.

It is essential for the Coast Guard to work closely with our international partners to enhance our col-

lective maritime security. The maritime domain is essentially our last global commons. Right after the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 we worked with the IMO to develop maritime security requirements. These included requirements for ships and port facilities to implement security plans and put security management systems into place. In May 2006, IMO adopted requirements for long range identification and tracking of ships. These efforts greatly improve our maritime domain awareness and will help establish greater maritime security.

“ISO clearly demonstrates the highest commitment to solving problems.”



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I commend organizations like ISO for responding aggressively in developing International Standards such as: (1) guidelines on supply chain security, and (2) maritime port facility security assessments and security plan development. ISO clearly demonstrates the highest commitment to solving problems through a dedicated and focused effort to develop mutually-beneficial risk management systems and programmes. Maritime shipping is an international business, and we all truly need international solutions to mitigate potential threats to our maritime transportation system.



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tional model for ship dismantling/recycling? Does the subject possibly necessitate the development of International Standards?

Admiral Thad W. Allen: The issue of ship dismantling and recycling is reported often in the news, and not always in a favorable light. Ship dismantling/recycling must be conducted in a safe and environmentally safe manner. Due to the nature of the work, this is a serious challenge that I believe can benefit from development of international consensus standards. This issue is an excellent opportunity for industry-led initiatives to develop guidelines on the selection of ship recyclers, guidelines



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ISO Focus: *Recent worldwide events ranging from earthquakes to hurricanes have demonstrated the need for international coordination and standards development. What are the Coast Guard's primary missions in disaster response, your strengths, limitations, and what standards would you like to see being developed in order to move forward in this area?*

Admiral Thad W. Allen: The Coast Guard has a long history of responding to disaster – both natural and man-made. We are the lead Federal agency for most incidents within the maritime domain. Our greatest strength is in our dedicated men and women who serve with such professionalism. As a multi-mission agency, we strive to remain

flexible – always ready to meet any threat or any hazard wherever that may take us. Each and every day we work hand-in-hand with our partners at the national, regional, state and local level to respond to maritime casualties, pollution incidents and enforce our laws. It is this ability to work interoperably across all levels of government, in close coordination with domestic and foreign industry partners that allows us to rise to the challenge before us in times of crisis.

Unfortunately, there will always be lessons to be learned from a disaster response. One lesson is the need for standards in many areas. Standardized first responder training in this post 9/11 world is one important lesson learned that is deservedly getting a lot of attention lately. Equally important are equipment standards for first responders – from personnel protective equipment to communications equipment.

ISO Focus: *Ship dismantling/recycling is among the issues receiving much media coverage internationally. Is there a need for an interna-*



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on the surveying of ships for hazardous materials, and guidelines on ship recycler management systems, similar to ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 management systems standards.

There are other areas that can also benefit from the development of industry consensus standards, including: training requirements for first responders, standards for equipment and protective gear used by first responders, standards for boat barriers, standards for testing and certifying marine engines to meet air pollution requirements, and guidelines for managing waste streams on ships. ■