

MARINE SAFETY BULLETIN

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STOWAWAYS IN VESSEL RUDDER TRUNKS

The Port of New Orleans has noted a trend of foreign nationals gaining access to and hiding in rudder trunks on deep draft merchant vessels. The stowaways typically board the vessels while the vessel is in ballast and the rudder trunk is easily accessible from the waterline using small craft. However, cases have been reported of stowaways entering the rudder trunks via air pockets above the waterline on vessels that are fully loaded. The stowaways ride in the rudder compartment from port to port and present a security concern to the receiving port. The stowaways are often discovered when they emerge from the rudder compartment to roam the vessel in search of food.

COTP New Orleans may require a fax from vessel Masters that includes the following information: 1. That a thorough search for stowaways was conducted upon getting underway from a foreign port, 2. Whether or not stowaways were found on board, 3. Stowaway history in the past 24 months and 4. Whether or not the rudder compartment was checked during the search. It is the responsibility of the vessel master, agent, owner, and operator to ensure that the U.S. Coast Guard receives a complete and accurate account of any stowaways onboard to prevent denial of entry into port. Furthermore, any instances of vessels found harboring stowaways will result in denial to depart from the port and civil fines.

Some vessels have successfully prevented stowaways from hiding in the rudder compartment by: 1. Placing metal grating above the opening to the rudder compartment (see enclosed attachment for pictures) and 2. Conducting a thorough search before departing and upon getting underway from foreign ports of call.

Contact LT Keith Utley or LTJG Crecy, MSO New Orleans Port Security Division, at 504-589-4150 for further information.

CAPT F.M. Paskewich
Captain of the Port

Rudder Compartment - After Grating Installed



Rudder Compartment - Before installed grating



Grating – to be installed



Rudder Cavity – view from Port Side



Rudder Cavity Looking Forward



Rudder Cavity Open to Sea



Rudder Compartment



After Grating Installed

