



# The Marine Assistance Industry Journal

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## **FEATURES:**

### **Turning Insurance into a Partnership**

By: Richard DeSimone, President, Travelers Ocean Marine

When a C-PORT member casts off and gets underway, the operation ahead can be as simple as providing fuel to a stalled yacht – or as tough as performing a risky rescue during a fierce storm. Regardless of the situation, smart operators know that the professionalism they demonstrate as they provide services to private vessels builds their reputation and can generate future business.

What they may not be as aware of is that the same careful approach to their operations can also pay off in their ability to tap into C-PORT's Insurance Program specifically designed for their industry sector and C-PORT members. It's an arrangement that can mean lower premiums, more complete coverage, and responsive claims handling -- all made possible through close collaboration, a "partnership" of sorts, between C-PORT, Travelers and Starkweather & Shepley.

For those who are not used to thinking of insurance as a partnership, the progress that has been made over the past few years at C-PORT should be compelling evidence that what is good for insurers is often good for the policyholders as well. Fewer claims keep an insurer's costs down, but it also means that the operators as a group face lower out-of-pocket costs, fewer disruptions to business and possibly lower premiums.

When Travelers began its relationship with C-PORT in 2003, the prior insurance program had been subject to several premium increases as a result of frequent claims. Whether they operated safely or had frequent mishaps, every operator was affected by the same rising rates.

Working together, Travelers, Starkweather and C-PORT began the process of creating risk control programs and turning around the rising tide of claims. Through a collaborative effort, they educated members about the benefits that come when safety is taken seriously and fully embedded into an operation.

An outgrowth of the close working relationship has been the Accreditation for Commercial Assistance and Professional Towing (ACAPT), an online training program that helps prepare captains and crews to handle difficult situations. Another incentive for operators to practice risk control has been an aggressive effort by C-PORT to make its insurance program available only to operators with good safety programs and fewer claims.

Today, operators who choose to take advantage of C-PORT's group insurance have access to coverage for land and waterborne exposures that has been designed specifically to meet the needs of the commercial assistance and towing industry. When claims occur, operators are assured of service from claims professionals with expertise in ocean marine issues. And with Starkweather & Shepley providing agency services, operators know they will have a quick turnaround on certificates of insurance, policy issuance, quotes and other valuable agency services.

At a sophisticated level, insurance is much more than just one more overhead expense for a business. Insurance allows people to do their jobs while transferring risk from the everyday exposures they face to the insurance company. The right insurance can make the difference between a business that survives bad luck and one that is sunk by the first mishap that comes along.

Through our collaboration with C-PORT and Starkweather & Shepley, Travelers is able to provide reasonable insurance rates and outstanding claims service to people who are involved in a perilous, but absolutely essential, industry. We're proud of our association with C-PORT, and look forward to many more years of working together to reduce risk and enhance insurance services.

(Richard DeSimone is the President of Travelers Ocean Marine. In this role, he is responsible for the overall leadership and management of the business unit. Travelers OceanMarine is a leading provider of property and casualty insurance with an extensive product portfolio including cargo, hull, liabilities and luxury yacht.

With more than 30 years of marine insurance experience, Rich joined Travelers in 2000 to lead the marine unit. Previously, he spent 24 years with Atlantic Mutual. A 1971 graduate of City University of New York – Baruch College, he received a Masters in Transportation Management from the State University of New York – Maritime College in 1977. In addition, Rich received the Associated in Marine Insurance Management (AMIM) designation in 1979 and attended the Insurance Institute of America's Advance Executive Education Program at the Wharton School – University of Pennsylvania.

He is a past Chairman of the American Institute of Marine Underwriters (AIMU), and the first Chairman from the United States to lead the International Union of Marine Insurance (IUMI). Rich has served on the Board of Directors of the American Bureau of Shipping and the National Cargo Bureau. Currently, he is the Chairman of The Water Quality Insurance Syndicate (WQIS). He served as a Lieutenant in the U.S. Navy from 1972-1975.)