



# The Marine Assistance Industry Journal

A Quarterly Newsletter - Volume 56 - May 2025

## Chairman's Address



Over the last few years, as Tina, myself, and the C-PORT Board have been planning for our annual conference, we made sure to pay close attention to our history as an industry. Of special importance were those individuals who, through their efforts and steadfast determination, made it possible for us to exist as we do today.

We did this, knowing that many of those industry pioneers were growing older. Our fear was that their stories, experiences, and hard-fought knowledge might be lost one day, and we would find ourselves making the same mistakes they did many years ago.

Sadly, over the last month, we lost three individuals who helped shape our course over decades. In just a few short weeks, we lost Richard Spoth, Larry Tieman, and my business partner and mentor, John Andrews.

Each of these men spent years not only growing and developing their businesses and the industry, but also guiding others in doing the same. They intuitively knew that it was not enough to be successful in their own little corners of the country, but that it was incumbent upon them to take a broader view and help others do the same.

I cannot count the number of times John would call me after seeing a post on social media, or hearing a story from some small harbor hundreds of miles away. "What the hell is this all about?" he'd ask. "Do you know them? You had better call them before we all get in trouble and find ourselves having to beat back the Coast Guard again."

As a founding member of our industry and one of our original Chairmen, he never lost sight of the industry as a whole. He had that unique ability to know each and every small detail about what was going on in our business every day, as well as what was happening throughout the country, and what larger challenges we faced as an industry. I still marvel at the sheer amount of information he could keep stored and catalogued in his brain.

So that begs the question "What now?". I think it's safe to say that, if John were standing in front of you right now, as he did for years, he would say "It's up to you." It's up to all of you to continue as he did.

If you're new, reach out to someone you trust, and use that individual and their knowledge. No question is silly, no problem is too small, and every phone call is worth making. Don't make the same mistakes we did.

If you've been around a while, put yourself out there. We're all guilty of the same thing. We go to the conference, stand around in the same familiar groups, and tell the same old stories. Reach out to the new company in your area and introduce yourself. Check back in regularly. Make sure they know you're a resource.

Like many of you, I sometimes feel like I was born into this industry. On top of that, I had (and still have) some amazing mentors. It's easy to forget that we didn't always know this stuff, and we made some pretty big mistakes along the way.

We all need to remember that we're one industry, and a small one at that. The mistakes and successes of others can have an immense effect on our own businesses. Our founders knew that, and rose up to the challenges of leadership. If we want another forty years of success, it's vitally important that we do the same.

*P. LeBlanc*

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**To C-PORT, we thank you for  
38 Years of representing  
the Marine Assistance Industry.**

**To our new members, we  
welcome you to the industry,  
and wish you many years of  
safety and success!**



**- Phil, Pete, John,  
and the Safe/Sea Crew**



## SAVE THE DATE!

**39<sup>th</sup> C-PORT Conference and Membership Meeting**  
**January 26 – 28, 2026**  
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## *The Marine Assistance Towing and Salvage Industry Mourns the passing of one of its founders.*



Captain John D. Andrews passed peacefully after a brief illness at age 88. Seizing the opportunity to expand his passion, John became one of the founders of C-PORT. On October 15, 1982, PL 97.322 (1983 Coast Guard Authorization Act) called for the U.S. Coast Guard to focus on its higher missions of lifesaving and security, opening the door for the new industry. “The commandant of the Coast Guard shall review Coast Guard policies and procedures for towing and salvage of disabled vessels in order to further minimize the possibility of Coast Guard competition or interference with private towing activities other commercial enterprise.”, stated the Act. He helped guide the growth and development of the industry through his advocacy and vision, signing the Articles of Incorporation of C-PORT in 1987. John remained a steadfast mentor and leader throughout his lifetime. He will be missed.

### [The Obituary of John D. Andrews](#)



## *The U.S. Coast Guard National Maritime Center, NMC, has been undergoing changes and upgrades.*

Citing NMC is no longer experiencing MMC issuance delays, the Coast Guard has stated the mariners must have a valid credential and medical certificate in hand to sail. With online verification tools no longer available, C-PORT urges all employers to properly inspect the credentials of new hires and captain renewals.

### Marine Safety Information Bulletin 06-23 Canceled

On April 22, 2025, Marine Safety Information Bulletin Marine Safety Information Bulletin (MSIB) 06-23 titled “Merchant Mariner Credentialing Delays” was canceled. The National Maritime Center (NMC) is no longer experiencing merchant mariner credential (MMC) issuance delays, therefore the verification of authority afforded in MSIB 06-23 is no longer required. All mariners sailing under the authority of their credential should have a valid MMC and medical certificate with them.

As a continued reminder, it is strongly recommended all mariner applicants apply for any credential at least 90 days in advance. Also, an MMC can be renewed at any time and may be post-dated up to 8 months in advance with no change between expiration and renewal dates. For inquiries related to application status or credential verification, please see our recent [NMC bulletin](#) dated April 14, 2025.



### *More from NMC:*

On April 12, 2025, the U.S. Coast Guard's online public access portal, Homeport, was taken offline permanently. Listed below are the primary mariner credentialing services affected by this change and the alternate methods for service currently available:

- **Merchant Mariner Application Status:** To check on the status of an application for a merchant mariner credential or medical certificate, contact the National Maritime Center (NMC) at 1-888-427-5662, [IASKNMC@uscg.mil](mailto:IASKNMC@uscg.mil), or via Live Chat. NMC customer service agents are available M-F, 8:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. eastern time zone. The NMC experiences its busiest times around midday. To avoid longer wait times, we recommend calling early in the morning when phone lines are less busy or using our Live Chat service, which will connect you with our support team during normal hours. If e-mailing for application status, include 'Status' in the subject line of your email along with the mariner name(s) and mariner reference number(s) in the body of the e-mail. Note, processing times at the NMC will vary based on e-mail volume.
- **Merchant Mariner Credential Verification:** To verify the authenticity of a merchant mariner credential, e-mail [IASKNMC@uscg.mil](mailto:IASKNMC@uscg.mil). To aid in providing a faster response, include 'Credential Verification' in the subject line of your e-mail along with mariner name(s) and mariner reference number(s) in the body of the e-mail. Note, processing times at the NMC will vary based on e-mail volume.

### *Inflatable Life Jacket Maintenance:*

Those who attended the C-PORT Conference in January were treated to an interactive inflatable life jacket maintenance session. Lili Colby from Mustang Survival walked us through the importance of maintaining our inflatable life jackets, and showed us how by doing so, they will be reliable for years. She provided C-PORT with a maintenance checklist for our members' use. Anyone wanting a copy of the checklist is to contact Tina at 954-261-2012 or email her at [tcardone@cport.us](mailto:tcardone@cport.us).

### *USCG Captains Courses Available Online:*

The ability to take USCG captains courses is available online. Doing so saves time and is a great benefit for those who don't live near any sea schools. As a reminder for C-PORT's inland members, you are not barred from a credential based on time on non-navigable waters. Time will count toward an Inland OUPV or tonnage master credential.

Confident Captain has offered a 20% discount for C-PORT members when taking their online captains courses. Members may contact Tina at 954-261-2012 or email [tcardone@cport.us](mailto:tcardone@cport.us) for the discount code. Additional information on the courses offered are found at <https://confidentcaptain.com/>

### *C-PORT Partner Relationship News:*

**NASBLA, National Association of Boating Law Administrators:** Phil LeBlanc, C-PORT chairman, and Tina Cardone, C-PORT executive director attended the spring NASBLA BLA Meeting in Lexington, KY. This meeting is attended by NASBLA partners and boating law administrators from around the country. LeBlanc and Cardone met with members of the executive board and with Tom Guess, NASBLA's newly appointed CEO, renewing the associations commitment of partnership on the water.

**ASA, American Salvage Association:** C-PORT and ASA have agreed to formalize their affiliate relationship. A new partner agreement is in the works and will be signed soon.

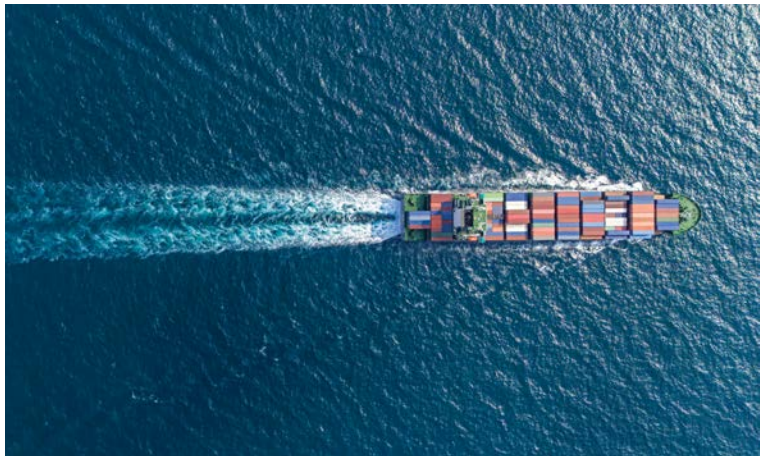
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## INSURANCE CORNER



Hello C-PORT Members,

As we move into the Spring season, I know everyone is ramping up to do what they do best within the towing and salvage business, and here at Starkweather & Shepley we want to make sure that you have a policy that covers what you do in this field.

We also know that many of you operate other businesses within the marine industry and beyond. I want to take some time here to let you know that we can help you here with all your insurance needs. Here's a little background on who we are at Starkweather & Shepley and what we can provide.

Established in 1879, Starkweather & Shepley has continuously worked with local and national businesses to provide coverages related to their line of work. We at Starkweather & Shepley work to fulfill the ever-evolving insurance needs of all businesses and work offer specialized industry services with industry practice groups.

In our Marine Practice Group, we also offer coverages for Marinas, Boatyards, Builders, Yacht Clubs, Boat Dealers, Marine Contractors & Technicians, Marine Construction, and pretty much anything with a marine exposure. We can assist with coverages including, but not limited to:

- Workers Compensation and USL&H
- Commercial Auto
- Vessel Pollution
- Commercial Property
- Inland Marine
- Marine General Liability
- Marina Operators Legal Liability
- Ship Repairers Legal Liability
- Manufacturing
- Hospitality to name a few.
- We also can offer HR Consulting, Risk Advisory, and Loss Control Services.

Headquartered in East Providence, RI, Starkweather has additional branch offices in Providence and Middletown, & Westerly, RI, Bristol, and Shelton, CT; Westwood, Sturbridge, and Martha's Vineyard, MA; Palm Beach Gardens and Naples, FL. We continue to grow with branch offices, but as you all know we work nationally and can even offer services internationally, through our partnership with Assurex Global. We also have the added benefit of being a trust-owned, which means we will not sell to a larger brokerage.

There are many great things about Starkweather & Shepley, but what makes us is our clientele. We look forward to continuing to serve you with your C-PORT Insurance policies, but we hope you will think of us with any other of your insurance needs.

Please remember that as a benefit of your C-PORT Membership, Starkweather & Shepley will provide a free consultation and review of your current insurance program to ensure completeness of coverage. Please feel free to reach out to Nate directly.

Contact Info below:

Email: [noberg@starshep.com](mailto:noberg@starshep.com)

**Risk Management Training Courses** are available on the C-PORT website, <https://cport.us>. The program centers on these concepts:

- Risk: “possibility of loss or injury”
- Risk Management: “The identification, analysis, assessment, control, and avoidance, minimization, or elimination of unacceptable risks.

C-PORT is committed to encouraging its member’s growth and development through education and is dedicated to providing good business practices throughout its membership. With the increase in accidents and economic pressures facing our industry, many companies have lost sight of the importance of training and proper risk management skills. Our mission is to provide our members with programs that will enable their growth and development into the future, while minimizing the impact of looming USCG regulation in response to Congressional directive and safety records.

Contact Tina Cardone at [tcardone@cport.us](mailto:tcardone@cport.us) or 954-261-2012 with any questions regarding this program. Captain and crew special pricing is available.

**Marine Assistance Company Operations Guideline**, exclusively for C-PORT company members. These guidelines promote safe operations and provide regulatory guidance. C-PORT company members may obtain access to this document at the C-PORT website, <https://cport.us> or contact Tina Cardone at [tcardone@cport.us](mailto:tcardone@cport.us) or 954-261-2012.

**Insurance Program for Marine Assistance Companies** - Administered by Starkweather & Shepley Insurance Brokerage, Inc. - Designed and underwritten by Travelers for organizations dedicated to marine assistance and towing. This Program offers an extensive portfolio of quality insurance products and services to address a wide range of marine exposures. -Contact Nate Oberg: 401.408.6877 [noberg@starshep.com](mailto:noberg@starshep.com).

**ACAPT- Accredited for Commercial Assistance and Professional Towing-** The ACAPT program provides best practices guidance for the marine assistance towing and salvage industry. Participants are highlighted as having taken the initiative to meet or exceed their own company qualifications against industry best practice criteria and government regulations. Visit the C-PORT website at <https://cport.us> or contact Tina Cardone at [tcardone@cport.us](mailto:tcardone@cport.us) or 954-261-2012 with any questions regarding this program.

**BOSAR for Commercial Assistance-** Created through the support of NASBLA’s BOAT program and the USCG Office of Boat Forces, is designed for the marine assistance operator, providing reinforcement of knowledge gained by virtue of their captain's license and experience. It also enhances their ability to work as a true partner with local agencies and the US Coast Guard. This course is open to any marine assistance company who wants to host the training. Instructors and course materials are provided by C-PORT. Contact Tina Cardone at [tcardone@cport.us](mailto:tcardone@cport.us) or 954-261-2012 if you have an interest in hosting a class.

**Mentor Program**, exclusively for C-PORT company members. Virtual roundtable discussions with guest speakers. Second Tuesday of the month. Information is emailed to all company members prior to the sessions. If you are a member and not receiving these emails, contact Tina Cardone at [tcardone@cport.us](mailto:tcardone@cport.us) or 954-261-2012

What to be more involved? Let us know! We want to hear from you! Reach out to Tina at [tcardone@cport.us](mailto:tcardone@cport.us) or call us at 954-261-2012.



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C-PORT was founded in 1985 to act as a liaison between the marine assistance industry and public agencies and organizations involved with boating safety, marine assistance, marine salvage and other marine-related operations. Its mission is to represent, promote, protect, and defend its member companies through communication, relationship development, and education. Our members are dedicated to providing prompt, professional and timely assistance to all boaters and to actively partner and cooperate with local law enforcement and U.S. Coast Guard. They are professionals, dedicated to the growth and development of their respective businesses and committed to furthering the advancement of our waterways and the boating community. For more information, contact C-PORT at (954) 261-2012 or visit <https://cport.us>.

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C-PORT (Conference of Professional Operators for Response Towing)  
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