

Research Vessel Operator Committee



Committee Report

Prepared for UNOLS Annual Meeting October 2008

Highlights of the April RVOC meeting

- Update on the world insurance market and legal issues affecting Oceanographic Research Vessels by Dennis Nixon
- New winch and wire monitoring technology
- Safe Working Load Estimator spreadsheet (by Rich Findley)

Research

Vessel

Safety

Standards



Status of revisions

**Who are the RVSS
written for and what is
the purpose?**

- **To serve as a reference for vessel operators as to where they can find applicable rules and regulations.**
- **To provide scientists with some direction relative to the safety aspects of science equipment and scientific personnel.**

- **Applies standards to all UNOLS vessels, whether or not they are USCG Inspected, based on regulations for inspected vessels and good practices.**
- **Vessels operators must adhere to the UNOLS RVSS in order to be designated as a UNOLS vessel. Inspection teams use RVSS to ensure compliance.**

PAST EDITIONS:

- **May 1976** (1ST Edition)
- **May 1981** (2nd)
- **May 1985** (3rd)
- **October 1989** (4th)
- **September 1992** (5th)
- **October 1995** (6th)
- **July 1999** (7th)
- **March 2003** (8th)

CHANGES MADE SINCE LAST REVISION:

Overall Organization: Revised the overall structure of the standards to uniformly show those requirements mandated by laws and regulations, those required by the UNOLS RVSS in addition and any further recommendations, best practices or resources. Re-Ordered Chapters.

Attempted to organize each chapter according to the following categories:

- **Required by regulations for all vessels**
- **Required by regulations for certain vessels**
 - **Inspected Vessels**
 - **Classed Vessels**
 - **Solas Vessels**
 - **Uninspected Vessels**
 - **Other regulations**
- **Required standards under RVSS**
- **Required by RVSS under certain circumstances**
- **Recommendations & Best Practices**

Chapter 5: Added chapter on Personal Safety with sections covering alcohol and drug policies, sexual harassment and accommodations for persons with disabilities.

Chapter 10: Removed chapter on explosives and inserted relevant information in Chapter 8 – Hazardous Materials.

Chapter 11: Added chapter on Human Occupied Vehicle (Submersible) Safety.

New Appendices:

Appendix A – UNOLS Rope and Cable Safe Working Load Standards.

Appendix B – UNOLS Load Handling System Design Standards; **(still under development)**

Appendix E – Sexual Harassment Brochure.

Final draft has been circulated to RVOC & RVTEC and revisions are expected to be completed in about 3 weeks, at which time they will be submitted to the UNOLS Council for approval.

**Effort to define Safe Working
Loads (SWL's) for wire use
“Appendix A”**

**It has long been recognized that there
is a need to establish consistent safe
working loads for wire ropes and
cables in the UNOLS fleet.**

One goal of this standard is to minimize damage to cables and handling equipment, and the loss of scientific equipment, while still permitting the science objective to be met.

- Appendix A defines the operating requirements, or loading limitations on wire, and are expressed in terms of Factor of Safety (FS) on the Nominal Breaking Load (NBL) and divided into three different categories:
 - FS of 5 or greater
 - FS of 4.9 to 2.5
 - FS of 2.4 to 1.5
- Appendix A also defines the **INSPECTION AND TESTING REQUIREMENTS** for wire:

