



July 19, 2016

Coast Guard Public Affairs Detachment Astoria
Contact: Petty Officer 3rd Class Jonathan Klingenberg
Email: Jonathan.S.Klingenberg@uscg.mil
Office: (503) 861-6132
Mobile: (206) 391-5864

News Release

CREW OF 1,000-FOOT CONTAINER SHIP RESCUE SAILOR IN DISTRESS 990 MILES WEST OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER

WARRENTON, Ore., — The Coast Guard coordinated the rescue of a sailor in distress more than 990 miles west of the Columbia River by utilizing the Automated Mutual-Assistance Vessel Rescue system, Tuesday.

Responding to the AMVER request, the crew of the 1,098-foot container ship Oocl Utah altered their course to retrieve the distressed sailor, safely took him aboard the ship and is currently transporting him to their next port of call in Busan, South Korea.

Watchstanders at the Coast Guard 13th District Command Center received the notification of distress from the operator of the 37-foot sailing vessel Sea Sweeper stating that weather had torn his sails on the vessel's lower mast, was having issues with its engine and batteries and was running low on potable water. During his transit the operator was also battling 30 mph winds and 8-foot seas.

Due to the great distance of the sailing vessel, the Command Center personnel issued the AMVER broadcast asking any mariners in the immediate area to assist the operator of the Sea Sweeper.

The crew Hong Kong flagged Oocl Utah responded to the request for assistance and proceeded with the rescue of the sailing vessel operator.

"The AMVER system was created for events just like this one," said Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Brown, an operation specialist at the Coast Guard 13th District Command Center. "Thanks to the merchant mariners who volunteer for this program, help can be provided to those in need even when they are hundreds of miles away from traditional assistance."

The operator of the sailing vessel was reportedly found without proper safety equipment including a life raft and emergency beacon onboard his vessel. The lack of essential equipment was a factor which prompted the AMVER assist. Boaters are reminded to always have proper safety equipment such as an Electronic Position Indicating Beacon, life raft,

lifejackets or mustang suits, signaling and communication devices onboard their vessel before getting underway.

A message has been issued to all mariners operating in the area notifying them of the adrift vessel.

The AMVER system is an assistance and rescue program with vessels from all over the world to participating in the program. AMVER helps provide assistance in areas beyond the reach of Coast Guard assets. Vessels participating in the AMVER program agree to have their general positions tracked by the AMVER system and volunteer to assist vessels in distress that may be in their area.

For more information about the AMVER program, click here: <http://www.amver.com/default.asp>
(<http://www.amver.com/default.asp>)

***Saving Lives and Guarding the Coast Since 1790.
The United States Coast Guard -- Proud History. Powerful Future.***