



The Marine Assistance Industry Journal

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Chairman's Address



Recently, Tina and I attended NASBLA's Annual Conference, and I thought the lesson I took away from that was worth sharing.

C-PORT and NASBLA have a friendly working relationship that goes back many years. In addition to the numerous friendships we've developed over the years, we have reciprocal association memberships, a permanent position on their Boat Program Advisory Panel, and a working MOU.

For years, it's been easy to trust that our mutual aims and understandings were well known and understood. We've been able to sit back, expecting that this would continue, without question well into the future. However, as with all groups and associations, staff retire, new staff is hired, membership turns over, and faces change.

As we scanned the room last week, we realized that the number of new faces was quickly outnumbering those we had grown used to seeing. Luckily, by being present at their conference, and active in our ongoing participation, we were able to not only continue our current relationships, but forge new connections, and strengthen the bond between our associations.

So, that begs the question: Are we doing that in our businesses? Are we actively fostering our current relationships, building new ones, and ensuring continuity as people and positions change?

The relationships that benefit our business operations run the gamut from the Coast Guard to the local Harbor Patrol, and from legislators in Congress to the young kids who work the fuel docks. These links and alliances can make our lives easier, and the loss of them can make our lives far more difficult.

It takes time and energy to forge and maintain these connections, but when it's 2:00am and you need something done RIGHT NOW, all that work and effort suddenly becomes worth it.

Fair winds and following seas,

P. LeBlanc

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**Thank You, C-PORT,
for 37 Years of
Preserving the legacy,
and Promoting the
future of the Marine
Assistance Industry.**



- The Safe/Sea Crew

Registration is open for the 38th C-PORT Conference and Membership Meeting being held at Paris Las Vegas, located Center-Strip. The event runs from January 27 - January 29, 2025 and is immediately followed by the TowBoatU.S. conference.

The C-PORT Conference opens on Monday, January 27 with a welcome reception. Informative sessions with guest speakers run all day Tuesday and half day Wednesday. Planned sessions include presentations from US Coast Guard leadership, topic specific mini-sessions, risk management core principles recertification, salvage techniques, a legal perspective, reports, board elections, and more. There is plenty of time to visit with vendors and enjoy socializing at the receptions, luncheon, and awards banquet/gala.

The hotel room block is available for booking now. Visit the [C-PORT Conference webpage](#) for more information.



C-PORT presented LCDR Eduardo “Eddie” Oropeza with its Distinguished Service Award which states in part:

The highest of distinctions is service to others.

As stated in the Memorandum of Understanding between the United States Coast Guard and C-PORT: “The purpose of the partnership is to improve the effectiveness of maritime safety, security, and response, and to promote and strengthen the communication and working relationship between the United States Coast Guard and C-PORT”. Lieutenant Commander Oropeza, through his deeds and actions, has exemplified both the purpose and intent of this long-standing partnership to the benefit of both parties as well as the boating public.



His dedication to safety, training, open communication, and the building of professional relationships, resulted in the furtherment of the partnership between C-PORT and its members and the United States Coast Guard, most importantly at the Station and Sector levels where interoperability is essential.

C-PORT wishes LCDR Oropeza fair winds and following seas as he embarks on the next chapter of his career.

National Maritime Center

Keep 'em Safe, Keep 'em Sailing



Verification Scan Code for Merchant Mariner Credentials

On September 18, 2024, the U.S. Coast Guard began issuing Merchant Mariner Credentials (MMCs) with an embedded credential verification scan quick-response (QR) code.

The QR code, located in the upper-right corner of each MMC photograph/personnel page, can be scanned using a smart phone camera. The unique code, when scanned, will open the U.S. Coast Guard's Homeport credential verification page of the mariner associated with the MMC. This new feature will allow you to quickly and easily determine the validity of the credential in hand without the need for any data entry beyond the initial code scan.

To validate an MMC without a smart phone, use the U.S. Coast Guard's credential verification tool ([MMLD Credential Verification \(uscg.mil\)](https://mmlc.uscg.mil)). For a document search, select “MMC” as the document type and enter the document number. On the new MMC, the document number can be found on the cover beneath the corresponding barcode and will have the prefix “Z”.

If you have any questions, contact the NMC Customer Service Center by e-mailing IASKNMC@uscg.mil or calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

Sincerely,

/B. W. Clare/

Bradley W. Clare
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Commanding Officer

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Lessons: Landing A Full Value Salvage Award



We recently kept a good salvage claim on the hook and landed a Blue Marlin!

What happened was one of those big center consoles with the quad-outboard setup grounded on an ocean coastline. It was nighttime. The salvor ended up having to put a swimmer in the water to get its hawser and bridle to the yacht. The salvage took most of the night.

When arbitration commenced (you can conjure up the things being said in response to the claim!), the Salvor emphasized several key factors: the risks they faced during the operation, the value of the yacht and the overall difficulty of the salvage.

The arbitrator's decision reflected a thorough analysis. These are the main points we think landed this fish:

1. **Post-Casualty Value:** A big element that influenced the reward was the yacht's high post-casualty value. Basically, the more valuable the vessel, the larger the potential reward. (Some of you will have heard me explaining why your good efforts won't yield a great salvage award . . . you didn't salve something with decent salved value!)
2. **Risk to Salvors:** The degree of danger the Salvor encountered was also important. Generally, if the salvage involves high risk, whether due to environmental conditions or the complexity of the salvage, it'll typically increase the salvage award – we call it an “accelerant”. In this claim, the arbitrator considered the risks faced by the Salvor, such as potential hazards from the distressed vessel and the surrounding conditions during the endeavor.
3. **Skill and Effort:** The level of skill and the resources required for the salvage also played a role in the award. Maritime law rewards efforts that involve skill or require the deployment of specialized equipment. The arbitrator acknowledged the Salvor demonstrated significant expertise in securing the yacht and preventing further damage.
4. **Outcome of the Salvage:** The ultimate success of the salvage operation was another important consideration. In this claim, the arbitrator noted the Salvor was successful in securing and protecting the yacht, justifying the salvage reward. Had the operation been unsuccessful or caused additional damage, the award would likely have been reduced.

And then there's this, the Salvor worked with us. Anything we wanted (basically, more fuel to spill atop the salvage fire), the Salvor struggled to get it to us. Maritime lawyers don't have secret weapons and we're only as good as the artillery shells you supply. Yea, we can walk the rounds in, but we need you to give us rounds like how the Salvor gave us a picture of the owner signing the salvage contract under the wheelhouse lights and like how the Salvor helped us hunt up non-party witnesses. That's just key. You want to win, put into evidence non-party witness statements.

If you want a copy of the arbitration award, just email us at john@saltwaterlaw.com. We would be pleased to send you a copy. And remember, don't ever hesitate to call us. Ask us questions about an approach or a salvage award amount or what have you . . . we don't need to open a file to have a chat!

Underway and making way.

This article is provided for your general information, is not legal opinion and should not be relied upon. Always seek legal counsel to understand your rights and remedies.

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Hello C-PORT Members,

It's hard to believe that it is already Fall and we are moving on to the next period of the boating season. It has been a year of change and growth. The seas can be a little rough during times like this, but storms pass, and we all hope to have learned something in the aftermath. In the past year I have been able to get to know some of you better. I appreciate the time some of you have taken to let this happen. I look forward to continuing to build those relationships and creating new ones with many more of you. That said, I want to take this time to let you know that we continue to build on our program and would like to introduce the latest additions to our C-PORT Program Team. We have added two more people to reinforce the strength of this program and make sure that this is the right program for you.

Many of you have already been introduced to Sara Mariani. Sara will be handling the day-to-day functions of the C-PORT program. Renewals, COIs, billing, endorsements, etc., will be handled by Sara. If you have any questions regarding your current program, you can reach out to Sara. I am always available also.

Sara's Background: Sara Mariani turned her love for boating into a career in the marine industry. After her first job as a dockhand at a yacht club Sara quickly realized that she wanted to combine her love of boating and the water with her future career endeavors. After earning a degree in Coastal and Marine Policy, Sara began working in the Newport Harbormaster Office where she spent 15 years as Administrative Assistant and Deputy Harbormaster. In addition to working on the waterfront, Sara is an active member of the Rhode Island Marine Trades Association and helps organize the Newport Harbor Lighted Boat Parade each year. Currently Sara is part of the marine division at Starkweather & Shepley Insurance brokerage where she is now focusing on working closely with clients to service their C-PORT policies.

Sara may be contacted at:
Email: smariani@starshep.com
Phone: 401-709-7568

Our second addition to the program is a name that many of you may already know from his time at Travelers, Charlie Pugliese. For those of you who don't know Charlie, his last role at Travelers was President of Ocean Marine and he has been instrumental in making sure that the C-PORT Insurance Program is the program that has the coverages your towing and salvage companies need. We are extremely happy that Charlie has strengthened our team even more to give C-PORT the support it should have.

We are happy to welcome both Sara and Charlie to the team, and we all look forward to helping all C-PORT Members with their 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:

Email: noberg@starshep.com
Mobile: 401.408.6877



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**OFFERING AN EXCLUSIVE INSURANCE PROGRAM
FOR C-PORT MEMBERS**

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 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 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.

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 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 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 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 or call us at 954-261-2012.



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>.

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