OCTOBER 2012 SAFETY MESSAGE

Seeing and Being Seen

Halloween safety and “Seeing and Being Seen” are the key points for October’s safety message. On Halloween, many children are out and about during the hours of darkness for trick or treating. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children are four times more likely to be in fatal pedestrian accidents on Halloween than on any other night of the year. Some costumes have retro-reflective material. Others do not, but cautious parents then have the children carry a glow stick so that they can be seen. If the costume has a mask, make sure that the eye holes are large enough so the child’s vision is not obscured. These tips are to help both motorists and children to see and be seen.

The Rule of Good Lookout in the Rules of the Road is similar. Rule 5 states that: "Every vessel shall at all times maintain a proper lookout by sight and hearing as well as by all available means appropriate in the prevailing circumstances and conditions so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and of the risk of collision." Essentially, this means among other things, “See and Be Seen.”

The designated lookout must see hazards at night that might not be readily seen. Therefore, the lookout must be able to see well at night. A dim light can be seen more quickly at night by first looking at the sky above the horizon and by then dropping the eyes to the horizon.

When standing lookout at night, you need to be careful that no light shines directly in your eyes. Indiscriminately blinding yourself with a flashlight shortly before or during lookout can cause temporary loss of night vision. It can take 20 minutes to readjust your eyes.

Being seen means that the vessel’s running lights are on and bright so the boat can be seen by other vessels. When reporting on the condition of the tug’s running lights, you would report “All lights are burning bright” to the Captain. If any of them are burned out or dim, immediately report this to the Captain and if possible immediately replace them.