

DRAFT
ADA Guidelines for UNOLS Vessels
Tele-web conference
1:00 pm Eastern (9:00am Alaskan)
June 7, 2006

Meeting Summary Report

Welcome and Introductions – A phone / web conference was held on Wednesday, June 7, 2006 to review the draft ADA guidelines document for UNOLS Regional Class Vessels. Terry Whitledge of the University of Alaska and the UNOLS Fleet Improvement Committee (FIC) opened the meeting at 1:00 pm EST. The items of the agenda <[June 7, 2006 Meeting Agenda](#)> were addressed in the order recorded below. The draft document that was reviewed during the meeting is available at <[PrelimRegional Guidelines Rev1.pdf](#)>.

Meeting participants introduced themselves. Participants included:

- Terry Whitledge (UAF) – Chair
- Amy Bower (WHOI)
- Eric Buck (SIO)
- David Chapman (UDel)
- Al Suchy (WHOI)
- Dolly Dieter (NSF)
- Mike Reeve (NSF)
- Holly Smith (NSF)
- Annette DeSilva (UNOLS)

The following Committee Members were unavailable to participate in the Conference, but contributed comments prior to the meeting:

- Jim Cochran (LDEO)
- Matt Hawkins (UDel)
- Dennis Nixon (URI)
- Joe Ustach (Duke)

Terry Whitledge explained that the main focus of the meeting it to discuss the draft document for the Regional Class Vessels. Since he sent the draft document, he has revised the format and reorganized it a bit. He received comments from various Committee Members. Terry explained that in drafting the document, he reviewed the ADA Guidelines document for Passenger Vessels and selected the sections that he thought could apply for Regional Class Research Vessels. He also referred to the information received from the designs of the *Hugh R Sharp* and the *Marcus Langseth* conversion efforts. Terry explained that he feels that it is important to maintain the level of detail as currently stated in the draft document. After discussion, this was agreed.

There was some confusion as to whether or not the draft document was to apply for just the Regional Class vessels, or for the entire fleet.

Discussion on the draft document followed:

- Suggestion: There should be a separate section for the details pertaining to the Regional class vessels.
- Amy Bower – Agreed that the details should be included, but recommended that there be a section in the beginning of the document that would provide general guidance for UNOLS vessels.
- Dolly Dieter – The document should have a section that provides general guidance.
- Terry Whitledge explained that this document was intended to focus on the Regional Class ships.
- Personnel Elevator – Matt Hawkins’ comments indicated that the requirement for an elevator should be removed from the document. Terry feels that we should keep the elevators. Innovative designs could perhaps allow this.
- Suggestion – Indicate which ADA guidelines are “required” and which are “highly desirable.”
- David Chapman expressed concern. This committee has an opportunity to request the designers to apply the ADA guidelines that the US Access board has come up with. He is concerned about defining what is required and what is desirable. If we pull things out that are too costly or unfeasible, or if we indicated that some items are not required, but “highly desirable, then it may not stand up in law.
- Terry stated that the size of the ship is a constraint and the ship design must stay within that constrain. The draft ADA guidelines for Regional Vessels should be reasonable for that size ship, but at the same time should not constrain innovative ADA solutions.
- David Chapman indicated that the existing federal document, ADA Guidelines for Passenger Vessels should be applied.
- In response, Annette reported that during a past FIC meeting the Navy PEO-Ships representative indicated that there are no ADA guidelines specifically for Research Vessels, and as a result they do not plan to implement any ADA guidelines. In turn, this Committee has been tasked by NSF to develop ADA Guidelines for R/Vs.
- Eric Buck added that although UNOLS vessels are not passenger vessels, we are making a good faith effort to implement the existing guidelines.

- David Chapman re-emphasized that UNOLS vessels are Federal assets and we are required to provide access to all who wish to work aboard them. The vessels must have ADA staterooms and access to them. Next David provided some specific comments to the draft document.
- David Chapman commented that on Page 4, the word “practical” should be defined.
- David Chapman stated that on Page 5 the “buddy system” designation singles out the disabled. Eric replied that this is intended for safety, it is not intended to discriminate. Dave Chapman indicated that this might not stand up in the court of law. Terry replied that the captain has supreme rule at sea. Dave feels that this is an issue. Amy indicated that this would be good for a workshop discussion. She has gone to sea with a buddy.
- David Chapman indicated that there are other sections that single out disabled individuals and present independence issues. Specifying use of the narrow wheel chair should be avoided. There are also issues regarding emergency procedures. Terry explained that he took the narrow wheel chair recommendation from the *R/V Sharp* guidelines. This is how they are proposing to have access in narrow corridors. Terry explained that he also has spoken with Dave Glover. Dave Glover doesn’t promote the narrow chair because it is unstable.
- Dave Chapman stated that on Page 15, the heights and reach ranges for lab counters should be provided. Ramp incline specifications are also needed and can be included as an appendix.
- David Chapman asked if access and egress from the vessel would be addressed in the document. Would there be a recommendation regarding gangways on and off the vessel? Terry replied that this could be added. *Sharp*’s solution for ADA access aboard the ship, was to board by the stern access using the loading equipment. Dave Chapman indicated that R/V *Savannah* is wheelchair accessible from the dock.
- There should be guidelines regarding Main Deck coamings and automatic doors.
- Amy Bower provided suggestions that would be helpful in carrying out science operations by disabled individuals:
 - For hearing impairments provide a clear line of sight in the lab, so that the individual would be able to see across the lab.
 - For visual impairments add tactile warning strips to deck areas.
 - Add high-contrast paint markings for avoidance of the tripping hazards. Only 10% of visually impaired individuals are totally blind. More contrast helps visually impaired.
 - Provide access to ship provided scientific equipment. Access to systems such as the IMET system, shipboard logging, and computer system are needed.

- Amy reported that she has begun discussions with SEA in regard to their ADA practices and this is on going.
- Terry asked if the alarms that are designated in the draft guidelines are sufficient. The wigglers (vibrators) come with lights and their ranges are good. Amy worries that the individual could forget to carry the wiggler, but it sounds interesting.
- Dave Chapman indicated that there are some specifications for luminations in strobes lights to avoid strokes by epileptics.
- Eric Buck raised an issue that might impact designs. If wider passageways were required, would there be any tonnage issues?
- Dave Chapman will send Terry the name of an individual who was involved with the passenger vessel guidelines.

Next the Committee discussed plans for a workshop:

- Dolly indicated that the workshop should have it sooner than later.
- Amy indicated that she would be willing to help with it as much as possible. She would like it to be at WHOI onboard a ship. Individuals with disabilities should be invited to review the document and procedures in real time.
- Annette will review the ship schedules and provide some possible dates
- Dolly asked that an invitation list for the workshop be put together.
- Terry indicated that participation might include the Coast Guard, disabled sea-going scientists, and UNOLS ship operators (each Class should be represented).
- We will get to work on the workshop schedule and invite list.

Wrap-Up:

Terry will incorporate the changes that were discussed and circulate another iteration of the draft document to the Committee for review. After another Committee review the document will be circulated to a select group.