

# Penn Maritime: CEMS Delivers Real Results

*Maritime transportation leader installs sound-proof doors, exercise equipment on tugs*

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There is always trepidation when trying out something new or different, especially when it goes against something you have been practicing for some time. That could have been said for towing vessel crews working for Penn Maritime when it came to implementing the Crew Endurance Management System (CEMS).

Just ask Don Hinson, the company's CEMS expert in charge of the Southern Division, which encompasses operations on the East Coast, Gulf Coast, and in California.

"Folks are always going to be a little skeptical, but it is always easier to swallow when it's voluntary and not mandatory," said Hinson, a Captain for 28 years, the last 20 with Penn Maritime. "But, the transition was a little easier [for Penn Mari-



time] because we were already doing a lot of things that involved CEMS."

Some of the areas Penn Maritime is addressing include improving crew sleeping environments, providing better opportunities for hydration, and making exercise equipment available so that crew members have the opportunity to keep themselves in top physical shape.

Given the size of most towing vessels and the location of sleeping quarters (usually adjacent to the machinery space and/or galley) on those vessels, it can be a difficult task to reduce the amount of noise crews hear when they are trying to

get the proper amount of uninterrupted



sleep (7-1/2 to 8 hours) recommended by sleep experts.

Penn Maritime was able to accomplish the task by installing sound-proof doors between the sleeping quarters and the galley in all 10 of the company's tugboats. This undertaking, however, did not come cheaply. According to Hinson, the cost was between \$2,800 and \$3,000 per door.

"Installing those sound-proof doors was the single biggest improvement the crews are always talking about," he said. "You want to do things for the crew to let them know you're listening to them and doing your best to take care of them."

Another beneficial change is having exercise equipment on every vessel. Be it a Bowflex machine, a multi-station gym, elliptical bicycles, stationary bicycles, or treadmills, proper exercise equipment can be a powerful incentive to help crew members exercise regularly and stay physically fit.

A second but no less important part of the fitness aspect is ensuring there is plenty of potable water on board each vessel. Having drinking water readily available has helped crew members cut down on their intake of caffeine. According to Hinson, there has been an approximately 60 percent decrease in the amount of soda consumption on the vessels.

"When you're thirsty and you see soda and water side by side, you're going to lean more toward the water," said Hinson. "The crews are going through 30 to 40 cases of water a month."

Although the crews haven't yet implemented the scheduling portion of CEMS, which is the last step in adopting the system, two tugboat crews (*Julie* and *Teresa*) are using the green light to help them get acclimated and allow them to get the proper amount of uninterrupted sleep they need each night.

"The crews in New York (two-watch system) aren't using (the green light) because they're shifting around and not on steady routes, but those down here (Gulf



Coast) on the three-watch system are using it a lot because of the longer routes they are on," he said. "They find the green light helps them the more that they use it."

In addition to overseeing CEMS efforts at Penn Maritime, Hinson has been talking up the program to other companies who are interested in it.

He said a company in New Orleans and another in New York want to get started in the near future.

"They wanted to know how to get started and how to train the coaches," he said. "I tell them about the light management, the environmental changes portion of the program and about educating their crews on proper rest, diet and hydration."