

New York City Department of Transportation
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DOT Announces More Ferry Safety Improvements

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DOT Announces More Ferry Safety Improvements

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New York City Department of Transportation Commissioner Iris Weinshall and DOT is continuing safety improvements at the Staten Island Ferry by hiring a Federal maritime transportation group to review all existing Ferry operations.

Commissioner Weinshall said the Global Maritime and Transportation School the professional and education training arm of the United States Merchant Marine Academy - will begin its assessment of Ferry operations on Monday, November 3. GMATS has agreed in principal to a contract with the DOT.

"The Global Maritime and Transportation School will perform an immediate assessment of the Staten Island Ferry - including four key areas: vessel operations, human factors, safety issues and management operations," Commissioner Weinshall said. "To gather information and reports about the accident on October 15, and they will coordinate with the Coast Guard reports regarding past incidents. GMATS will make recommendations including additional safety procedures, if warranted. We expect some preliminary findings within one month."

Headquartered in Kings Point, GMATS consists of more than 300 experts from the federal government as well as executives from the maritime and transportation industry. For further information about GMATS, please contact the following website: www.gmats.com.

In other developments, the Commissioner outlined seven more measures - all of which will take effect shortly:

- **Comprehensive Staff Review of new Procedures.** Last week, Commissioner Weinshall announced other safety measures, the most prominent being a requirement for at least three people in the pilot house during embarking and disembarking. Accordingly, addendums will be issued to the existing standard operating procedures to all Ferry staff - detailing enhancements and reinforcing pilot house staffing requirement for docking. All Ferry staff will review this with their supervisors within five days.
- **Passenger Safety at Landings.** Last week, the Commissioner announced that a new bow would be roped off to further avert any possible injuries associated with landings. The rope is in place, and the Commissioner announced that additional signs will be posted near the bow and steps area to also dissuade passengers from standing or sitting on steps during landings. DOT will work with the Police to enforce this new directive.
- **Interim Compliance Program:** For the past week, other DOT staff has been constantly surveying boats at all hours to ensure that Ferry staff is visible, the pilot house is properly staffed and new enhancements are in place. Such monitoring will continue.

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continue for an indefinite period of time.

- **Improvement of Public Address Systems.** The public address systems boats need improvement - particularly on the three Kennedy class boats. and speakers will be replaced and a new wiring system will be installed weeks.
- **Enhance public announcements.** Beginning early next week, each Cap include in his welcoming announcement further directions in case of an er such as location of lifejackets and fire extinguishers. Public information bc posted throughout the boat regarding these safety enhancements, and th also will outline the location of these public information boards.
- **Emergency instructions.** A comprehensive list of emergency instruction passengers will be located throughout the boat in about two weeks.
- **Uniforms.** Within two months, all deckhands will be required to wear full t shirts, jackets, caps and pants - to ensure that Ferry staff is easily identifia deckhands currently wear shirts, sweaters or jackets with a Ferry insignia

These safety enhancements supplement others announced by Commissioner on October 22.

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