Sea Machines, MARAD Partner to Demonstrate Autonomous Technology on Spill-Response Vessel

A Marine Spill Response Corp. vessel like the one that will be used in cooperation with the U.S. Maritime Administration to demonstrate Sea Machines Robotics' autonomous oil-spill response technology. MSRC

BOSTON – Boston-based Sea Machines Robotics has entered into a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD) to demonstrate the ability of Sea Machines' autonomous technology in increasing the safety, response time and productivity of marine oil-spill response operations, the company said July 24.

To make the on-water exercises possible, Sea Machines will install its SM300 autonomous-command system aboard a skimming vessel owned by Marine Spill Response Corp. (MSRC) and will train MSRC personnel to operate the system.

Then, on Aug. 21, Sea Machines and MSRC will execute simulated oil-spill recovery exercises in the harbor of Portland, Maine, before an audience of government, naval, international, environmental and industry partners.

The response skimming vessel is manufactured by Kvichak Marine Industries of Seattle and is equipped with a MARCO filter belt skimmer to recover oil from the surface of the water. This vessel typically operates in coastal or near-shore areas. Once installed, the SM300 will give the MSRC vessel these new capabilities:

- Remote autonomous control from an onshore location or secondary vessel
- ENC-based mission planning
- Autonomous waypoint tracking
- Autonomous grid line tracking
- Collaborative autonomy for multivessel operations
- Wireless remote payload control to deploy onboard boom and other response equipment
- Obstacle detection and collision avoidance

> *“The ability to use autonomous technology … furthers our mission of response preparedness.”*
>
> *John Swift, vice president of MSRC*

Additionally, Sea Machines enables minimally manned and unmanned autonomous operations. Such configurations allow operators to respond to spill events 24 hours a day, seven days a week depending on recovery conditions, even when crews

are unavailable
or restricted. These configurations also reduce or eliminate exposure of
crewmembers to toxic fumes and other safety hazards.

> *Sea Machines and MARAD Enter into Agreement to Demonstrate Capabilities of Autonomous Tech Installed Aboard an MSRC Spill-Response Vessel*[*https://t.co/Q8VorrIR8c*](https://t.co/Q8VorrIR8c) [*#MARAD*](#) [*#SeaMachinesRobotics*](#) [*#AutonomousTechnology*](#) [*#KvichakMarineIndustries*](#) [*pic.twitter.com/0LNuqC5n3S*](pic.twitter.com/0LNuqC5n3S)
>
> *— VesselFinder (@VesselFinder)* [*July 24, 2019*](#)

“Autonomous technology has the power to not only help prevent vessel accidents that can lead to spills but can also facilitate better preparedness [and] aid in safer, efficient and effective clean-up,” said Michael G. Johnson, CEO of Sea Machines. “We look forward to working closely with MARAD and MSRC in these industry-modernizing exercises.”

“Our No. 1 priority is the safety of our personnel at MSRC,” said John Swift, vice president of MSRC. “The ability to use autonomous technology – allowing response operations to continue in an environment where their safety may be at risk – furthers our mission of response preparedness.”