



**Position on Arming
Canadian Coast Guard Vessels**

Union of Canadian Transportation Employees (UCTE) Position on Arming the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG)

1. Background

In recent years, both the Senate Fisheries Committee and the Senate National Defence and Security Committee recommended that Canadian Coast Guard vessels be equipped with armaments (of sufficient caliber) to act as a deterrent to those elements who would propose to break Canadian laws. It should be noted that most Coast Guards in the developed world are armed and Coast Guard personnel in these jurisdictions are trained to use the armaments and given the necessary legal authority to do so.

UCTE is on public record as supporting the arming of the CCG. However, there is a need to refine this position in accordance recent developments.

2. Arctic Sovereignty

With increasing maritime traffic in Canadian northern waters, there is a need for Canada to clearly exercise and demonstrate its sovereignty over these waters. This need has been recognized by the government and it has committed to new investments in facilities in the North. The government has also committed to build a minimum of 6 Arctic Offshore Patrol Vessels for the Navy. These vessels will be "ice-capable" and thus in a position to patrol waters on the Western and Eastern perimeters of the Arctic passage. Ice-Breaking in the passage will remain the responsibility of the Coast Guard. As a result, any necessary deterrent role in the passage would have to be exercised by CCG Icebreaking vessels.

3. CCG and its relationships with other agencies

The CCG has direct responsibility for important functions such as icebreaking, aids to navigation, marine search and rescue, marine pollution response, etc. With respect to interdiction and related police and security functions, the CCG works in a support role to the police and security agencies. In these instances, police or fisheries officers are often on the CCG vessel enforcing the relevant statutes. The officers may be armed with small arms.

UCTE is very supportive of the relationship between the CCG and police forces in Canada and where it is working well would encourage its continuance. UCTE is supportive of clear and unambiguous roles. Police working on CCG vessels enforcing relevant peace and security statutes makes sense to us. The CCG is responsible for Coastal and Maritime patrol, while the peace officers on the vessel are responsible for enforcing relevant criminal and related statutes.

UCTE is not supportive of police forces developing and marketing their own coastal patrol services independent of the CCG. We are particularly concerned when these developments are taking place to meet requirements within federal jurisdiction.

There are instances where channel interdiction and security have been contracted by provincial governments to the RCMP. The RCMP may be building and staffing their own vessels to meet the terms of these contracts. There may be instances where the CCG is a better fit for a particular function and we believe consideration should be given to permitting CCG to meet provincial demands where requests have been made.

The CCG- military relationship is extremely well coordinated with search and rescue. The relationship between CCG and the Navy in respect of Coastal Defence is collaborative but more complex. With the imminent deployment of the Naval Arctic Patrol Vessels, there is a need to further refine and define this relationship.

4. A New Policy Framework for the Coast Guard

UCTE believes there are clear gaps in our coastal and maritime security framework that can only be met by the CCG. These gaps are:

- Maritime security and deterrence inside the Arctic passage and resident on CCG icebreakers;
- Maritime security and deterrence on all CCG vessels when more than small arms deterrence is required;
- Maritime security and deterrence on CCG vessels where provincial governments contract for these functions and where the CCG is the best fit for that function.

UCTE adopts the policy framework that all CCG vessels directly involved in or providing services to security and police forces should be equipped with a permanent 50 caliber armament on the vessel.

Further be it resolved that a process should be in place to select CCG personnel who should be trained and fully capable of safely operating these armaments, including small arms. These trained CCG personnel should be available as crew on CCG vessels in all regions and where required.

5. The Path Forward

Should this new framework be adopted by the government, there would be a clear need to amend CCG Statutes, particularly the *Oceans Act* and the *Canada Shipping Act*. Additionally, the terms of engagement for armed CCG vessels and personnel need to be clarified in a policy and regulatory context. Last but not least, the relationship between Agencies involved in Maritime peace and security roles should be clarified and codified in Memorandums of Understanding between the parties that would include an arms allowance.