



CAPT. MARK KNOWLES

MARINE OPERATIONS EXPERT WITNESS & CONSULTANT

Knowles Maritime Consulting | Florida / Nationwide | 904-362-0177 | captainmark242@gmail.com | MarineOperationsExpert.com

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

USCG 200-Ton Master, USCG Approved Instructor, marine surveyor and accident investigator with 32+ years of professional maritime experience across recreational boating, passenger vessels, ferries, excursion and tourism operations, yachts, dive vessels, boat-club training and marine consulting. Provides expert consultation on marine operating practices, captain and crew conduct, passenger safety, training and supervision, renter and tour-operator procedures, vessel handling, and standard-of-care questions within marine operations. Focuses on practical operations rather than engineering or accident reconstruction. Available to plaintiff and defense counsel nationwide.

AREAS OF EXPERT CONSULTATION

Jet Ski / PWC Rentals & Tours

Renter orientation, competency, safety instruction, tour procedures, supervision and operating restrictions.

Boat Rental Operations

Renter screening, familiarization, vessel handover, competency assessment and operating procedures.

Tour & Passenger Vessel Operations

Sightseeing, dolphin/wildlife, excursion, ferry, water-taxi and other passenger operations.

Captain & Crew Conduct

Lookout, safe speed, navigation, vessel handling, decision-making, passenger management and crew duties.

Passenger Safety

Boarding, disembarkation, passenger movement, warnings, supervision, safety briefings and emergency procedures.

Fishing & Dive Charters

Captain and crew responsibilities, diver/passenger safety, instruction, supervision and vessel operation.

Training & Supervision

Captain, crew, employee, renter and customer training, competency evaluation and supervision.

Navigation & Vessel Handling

Lookout, safe speed, collision avoidance, docking, close-quarters maneuvering and operational judgment.

Marina, Dock & Boat-Ramp Operations

Operational hazards, inspections, warnings, maintenance practices and practical facility use.

Marine Accident Investigation

Evidence review and identification of operational factors, contributing circumstances and marine-practice issues.

LITIGATION SUPPORT SERVICES

- Initial case screening and case-fit review
- Records and evidence review, including photographs, video, incident reports, depositions, vessel records, rental documents, training materials, policies and procedures
- Operational analysis of vessel handling, captain/crew conduct, passenger management, renter instruction, training and supervision
- Site and vessel inspections when appropriate
- Review of safety briefings, SOPs, rental orientation and competency procedures
- Expert reports; deposition and trial testimony when retained for those services
- Review of opposing expert opinions involving marine operations and accepted operating practices

LICENSES & PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS

- USCG Master 200 Ton, Near Coastal
- USCG Approved Instructor - OUPV, 100-Ton Master & Assistance Towing
- National Safe Boating Council Instructor
- Florida Safe Boater Instructor
- Master Marine Surveyor
- Marine Accident Investigator
- Corrosion Surveyor
- Cargo Surveyor
- PADI IDC Staff Instructor
- PADI Freediving Instructor
- First Aid / AED / O2 Instructor
- TWIC | Marine Radio Operator Permit | GMDSS Radio Operator | ARPA

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Founder & Lead Maritime Instructor | Florida Boating Lessons | Florida | 2022-Present

- Develop and deliver private on-water instruction in docking, close-quarters maneuvering, navigation, vessel systems, emergency procedures, situational awareness and safe vessel operation.
- Adapt instruction to the operator's experience, vessel configuration and operating environment; evaluate practical competency and safe decision-making.

Training Captain & Curriculum Contributor | Freedom Boat Club | Multi-State | 2021-Present

- Deliver standardized on-water instruction in docking, navigation, vessel systems, emergency response, vessel familiarization and safe operating procedures.
- Develop boat-operations course content and training materials; conduct practical competency evaluations and member checkouts; support instructor standardization.

Maritime Consultant / Master Marine Surveyor | Independent Practice | U.S. & The Bahamas | 1994-Present

- Evaluate captain, crew, instructor and operator competency; training adequacy; safety briefings; operating procedures; vessel handling; supervision and operational risk.
- Provide marine surveying, accident investigation, safety review and operational analysis grounded in practical vessel operations.

Passenger Vessel Captain | Rusty Anchor | Mount Dora, Florida | 2023-2025

- Led passenger safety, crew coordination, navigation, emergency preparedness, safety briefings, confined-area vessel handling, weather decisions and onboard risk management.

Captain / Operations Manager | Sunshine Scenic Tours | Florida | 2020-2022

- Managed passenger-tour operations with responsibility for crew training, operating procedures, vessel safety, emergency preparedness, daily readiness and performance standards.
- Commanded pirate-ship and dolphin-watch / catamaran passenger operations and supervised customer-facing crew.

Delivery Captain & Yacht Pilot | Bahamas Yacht Services | The Bahamas | 2012-2019

- Commanded and piloted yachts approximately 20-50 meters; executed complex marina maneuvering and coordinated with owners, crews, port authorities and marine technicians.

Captain / Operations Manager | Sea Island Adventures | The Bahamas | 2002-2012

- Commanded a 275-passenger commercial tourism ferry across thousands of voyages; supervised crews in passenger safety, vessel handling, navigation, emergency procedures and shore-side coordination.

Ferry Captain / Master | Bahamas Fast Ferries | The Bahamas | 2000-2002

- Served as Master aboard a large ROPAX ferry carrying passengers, vehicles and cargo; responsible for navigation, docking, voyage readiness, loading/unloading, passenger safety and emergency procedures.

Captain / PADI Instructor | Nassau Scuba Center | The Bahamas | 1995-2000

- Combined commercial dive-vessel command with diver instruction, passenger safety, vessel maintenance, daily excursion operations and customer service.

ADVANCED MARITIME EDUCATION & TRAINING

- South Tyneside Maritime, United Kingdom - previous MCA Master Class IV (3000 Ton) qualification; advanced studies in navigation, ship stability and construction, maritime law, SOLAS, MARPOL, STCW, Bridge Resource Management, radar/ARPA and GMDSS.
- Maritime Professional Training - STCW / GMDSS training.
- Sea School - USCG Master 200 Ton training.
- S.T.A.R. Center - ARPA training.

SELECTED OPERATIONAL BACKGROUND

Recreational boating instruction • Boat-club training and competency checkouts • Passenger ferries and ROPAX operations • Tour, sightseeing and dolphin-watch vessels • Dive vessels and diver-focused passenger operations • Yacht command and delivery • Passenger boarding and safety briefings • Crew training and supervision • Docking and close-quarters maneuvering • Navigation and emergency procedures • Marine surveying and accident investigation

LANGUAGES

English - Native | Spanish - Conversational | Hindi - Conversational