

Coast Guard introduces new rescue boat at Little Creek

The Response Boat-Medium (RB-M) is an all-aluminum, 45-foot boat with twin diesel engines and water jet propulsion. These boats will replace the 41-foot Utility Boats, which have been the workhorse of the coastal stations for more than 25 years. (Courtesy of U.S. Coast Guard / April 7, 2008)

[BY MIKE HOLTZCLAW](#) |

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VIRGINIA BEACH - The U.S. Coast Guard's new search-and-rescue boat will make its debut at Coast Guard Station Little Creek this morning.



The 45-foot Response Boat-Medium (RB-M) will be able to operate in shallow water better than larger crafts. The vessel, designed and built by Marinette Marine Corporation of Wisconsin and Kvichak Marine Industries of Seattle, was tested in Tacoma and later at [Fort Monroe](#) in Hampton. This morning, it made its first appearance at Little Creek. The RB-M boats will eventually be distributed around the United States, said Petty Officer Christopher Evanson, a spokesman for the Coast Guard station at Portsmouth.

Evanson described by RB-M as "a multi-mission capable boat expected to operate in coastal zones which include inshore and inland waterways and open ocean out to 50 nautical miles." He said the boat would be able to respond to missions on short notice, and that it will replace a 41-foot utility boat that has been used at Coast Guard stations for the past 25 years.

He said the new RB-M has the ability to right itself when struck by a wave and can travel up to 40 knots (46 mph), far faster than the utility boats it is replacing. He said it would be primarily used in rivers, in the Intracoastal Waterway and at offshore locations in the ocean waters.