The harsh environment, limited infrastructure and logistics pose unique challenges when conducting operations in the Arctic.

To overcome these challenges, Coast Guard personnel are working closely with our federal, state, local and tribal partners and industry representatives to identify issues and to determine the best possible solutions to ensure we are protecting our nation's Arctic interests.

Coast Guard's 11 Statutory Missions:

1. Ports, Waterways, and Coastal Security
2. Drug Interdiction
3. Aids to Navigation
4. Search and Rescue
5. Living Marine Resources Law Enforcement
6. Marine Safety
7. Defense Readiness
8. Migrant Interdiction
9. Marine Environmental Protection
10. Ice Operations
11. Other Law Enforcement

Mission Complexities:

Conducting operations in Alaska is like planning and overseeing operations from Georgia and staging equipment in Texas to conduct operations in North Dakota. Moving people and equipment from Kodiak to Barrow is approximately equal to moving from north Texas to the North Dakota, Minnesota, Canada border.

Coast Guard External Affairs Information:

Juneau: 907-463-2065
Anchorage: 907-271-2660
Kodiak: 907-487-5700

Arctic Shield 2012

As the nation's lead federal agency for ensuring maritime safety, security and stewardship in the Arctic, the Coast Guard will perform its statutory missions to ensure the Arctic remains a safe, secure and environmentally sustainable region. Coast Guard Arctic Shield 2012 will focus on operations, outreach and an assessment of our capabilities.

Operations

Coast Guard Arctic Shield operations will be conducted from June through October with multiple cutters, aircraft and personnel deployed throughout the Arctic region.

- Cutters will include a National Security Cutter, Medium Endurance Cutters and Seagoing Buoy Tenders.
- Coast Guard helicopters and airplanes will be strategically positioned to conduct search and rescue, law enforcement, and Arctic Domain Awareness flights.
- Communications specialists will deploy to ensure fluid communications and connectivity in support of all Coast Guard operations.

Outreach

The Coast Guard will continue its long history of learning from and sharing with our Alaskan Native partners.

Coast Guard outreach teams worked closely with tribal leaders to ensure our scheduled activities would not conflict with tribal rights, interests or subsistence hunting and fishing.

In February, Coast Guard and other federal, state and local personnel began conducting over 50 humanitarian outreach events in 27 different communities. It is the nation's largest humanitarian outreach effort that is not in response to a disaster (natural or man-made) in recent history. Included in this outreach mission are medical, dental and veterinary assistance in the three hub communities of Nome, Kotzebue and Barrow.

Outreach efforts also include water safety, ice safety, boating safety and commercial fishing vessel safety training at local schools and search and rescue organizations in remote fishing villages.

We value our relationship with our federal, state, local and tribal partners. We have many unique challenges to overcome in the Arctic and we need the knowledge and experience of our partners to help us achieve our goals.

Rear Adm. Thomas Ostebo,
District 17 commander.

Capability Assessment

Arctic Shield 2012 will give us an opportunity to exercise our capabilities to ensure we have the right resources to conduct our maritime operations.

Our goal is to develop an active, layered, adaptive, fiscally responsible and scalable approach to meet our maritime safety, security and stewardship requirements in the Arctic.

SORS Joint Exercise: For the first time in the Arctic we will conduct a joint training exercise with US NORTHCOM, and Navy Supervisor of Salvage and Diving and other agency partners to deploy Spilled Oil Recovery System equipment from a Coast Guard buoy tender.

The exercise will help us gain vital experience and understanding of oil spill response capabilities in the remote Arctic region and will strengthen our federal, state, local and tribal partnerships.

Port Access Route Study (PARS): The Coast Guard is conducting a Port Access Route Study to look at the need for ship routing measures in the Bering Strait. The study will include public comment periods and a U.S. interagency group that will establish recommendations that will be discussed with the Russian Federation before being proposed to the International Maritime Organization.