



# *Ready for Sea*



TO: ALASKA COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN

Subject: READY FOR SEA

Commercial fishing is the most dangerous occupation in Alaska. Over the last decade, over 200 commercial fishermen have died fishing in Alaska's waters. In an effort to increase the safety of commercial fishing in Alaska, the 17th Coast Guard District has developed a "READY FOR SEA" program that focuses on the primary safety factors that for many fishermen have been instrumental in their "Safe Return"!

The three elements of this new safety program are:

(1) "Top 10" Safety Check Off List: The Coast Guard is promoting voluntary compliance with the "Top Ten Ready for Sea" safety checklist. This checklist is comprised of factors that have historically prevented accidents and ensured survival when accidents have occurred. Several of these safety factors are non-regulatory, but are good practice and the Standard of Care used by the most safety conscious operators. Review of accidents over the last 10 years has shown these safety factors make the difference between vessels that are "Ready for Sea" and those that are not!

(2) "Lessons Learned": Sharing the "Lessons Learned" from the Coast Guard's investigation of fishing accidents with other fishermen with the objective of improving safety awareness and the adoption of safe practices followed by other fishermen. Communicating "Lessons Learned" to the fishing community should also help others avoid making the same mistakes as others have.

(3) Increased Coast Guard Contact with the Fishing Industry: The Coast Guard in Alaska will increase communications and contact with Alaska fishermen through expanded safety partnerships, communication of "Safety Alerts" via newsletters, magazine articles and the World Wide Web, conducting voluntary dockside exams and underway boardings. The objective of this expanded contact is to increase attention to safety issues and compliance with safety regulations.

You are encouraged to use the enclosed checklist as a quick safety review prior to getting underway and review the Fishing Vessel Safety Alerts to ensure your vessel is "Ready for Sea".

If you have comments or questions about any of this information please contact Mrs. Sue Jorgensen at (907) 463-2286 or LT Ernie Morton at (907) 463-2196 of the 17th Coast Guard District's Fishing Vessel Safety Staff.



## **READY FOR SEA**

Seventeenth Coast Guard District  
P O Box 25517  
Juneau, Alaska 99802  
In Alaska (800) 478-7369  
or (907) 463-2286  
[www.uscg.mil/d17/FVSWEB/d17fvs.htm](http://www.uscg.mil/d17/FVSWEB/d17fvs.htm)

- Weather**: Evaluated weather forecast. Vessel and crew can handle safely! Can monitor weather reports at sea.
- Crew**: Trained and drilled in operation of vessel and safety equipment. Work schedule minimizes fatigue.
- Stability**: Scuppers and freeing ports clear. Gear, catch and hatches secured. Limit accumulation of ice.
- EPIRB and Communications**: Equipment tested. EPIRB armed and mounted properly. Carry back-up comms.
- Immersion Suits**: Crew has donned suits to ensure proper fit & good condition. Suits accessible and lights attached.
- Survival Craft**: Capacity for entire crew. Serviced, properly installed and crew trained to launch.
- PFDs Worn on Deck**: Crew knows to wear PFDs or inflatable suspenders with lights on deck during high risk operations.
- Damage Control**: Bilge pumps work. Damage control equipment on board and crew trained in use.
- Fire Fighting**: Adequate number of serviced fire extinguishers on board and crew trained in fire fighting.
- Safety Exam**: I conducted “Ready for Sea” deck walk/safety inspection and determined vessel safe to sail.

Amplifying details on the reverse

# *Ready for Sea Safety Factors*



## **WEATHER**

- Weather checked and evaluated. Vessel and crew can handle conditions.
- Operable weather forecast comms equipment on board. Forecasts monitored.

## **CREW**

- Drills conducted with every person on board (monthly).
- Work scheduled to minimize fatigue.
- Experienced crewmember checked & corrected deck/pot/fishing hazards.
- Crew knows where the safety gear is and how to use it.

## **STABILITY/OVERLOADING**

- Hatches operable and secured to ensure the vessel is watertight.
- Freeing ports unblocked to allow free flow of water off deck.
- Deck loads & bait shacks properly secured so that they won't break loose.
- Bin boards in place to keep the load from shifting.
- Vessel tanked to reduce free surface effect (fuel, water and catch not freely moving in tank).
- Stability book up-to-date and vessel operated in accordance with guidelines.

## **EPIRBs & COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT**

- 406 MHz EPIRB tested within past 30 days, properly mounted and in the ARMED position.
- Communications equipment operable and adequate for voyage.
- Every person on board knows how to make a distress call and the frequencies to be used.
- Emergency power for communications equipment and/or back up handheld VHF radio on board.

## **IMMERSION SUITS**

- One for every person on board. Stowed in readily accessible location.
- Each person donned to ensure proper fit and able to quickly don in an emergency.
- Suits serviceable--zippers waxed and operable, inflation bladder & lights attached.

## **SURVIVAL CRAFT**

- Large enough to carry every person on board.
- If craft is a liferaft, serviced within the past 12 months.
- Every person on board knows how to launch the survival craft.
- Properly installed so it will deploy in an emergency.

## **PFD/WORK VEST**

- Crewmembers wear flotation [suspenders, float coats, etc.] when on deck in hazardous condition.
- Personal marker lights [strobe, fixed bright, etc] attached to the flotation devices.

## **DAMAGE CONTROL**

- Damage control kits with plugs, wedges, etc. on board and crew trained in use.
- High water alarms operable. Bilge pumps adequate and operable.
- Shaft and rudder post(s) checked to ensure no or only minimal leakage.

## **FIRE FIGHTING**

- Adequate number of serviceable fire extinguishers on board.
- Crewmembers trained to extinguish a shipboard fire.

## **SAFETY EXAM**

- Vessel examined by a Coast Guard dockside examiner, classification society, or third party organization to ensure vessel is **READY FOR SEA!!!**
- Pre-sail **READY FOR SEA** exam conducted.
- Safety deficiencies corrected and vessel safe to sail.