



Standards of Care

For Alaska Small Passenger Vessels

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- Area Familiarity:** New operators should make a pre-transit of the areas they intend to operate with an experienced mariner to develop familiarity with the waters, navigation aids and hazards, and vessel traffic patterns, rules and protocols.
- Bridge Resource Management:** The vessel's crew should be trained to work as a team, and apply Bridge Resource Management practices.
- Restricting Passengers from Bridge:** When a vessel is operating in low visibility, confined or ice congested waters, and other critical operations passengers should be kept from the pilothouse to prevent them from interfering with the safe navigation of the vessel.
- Communications:** Operators should be familiar with the limitations of their communications equipment and coverage areas and adopt appropriate measures to ensure their safety is monitored.
- Safe Distance from Glaciers:** Vessels should maintain a minimum safe distance of from glaciers and ice bergs to prevent exposure to the hazards of calving glaciers and unstable ice bergs.
- Reduce Speed in Ice:** Operators should navigate their vessels at reduced speed while operating in ice conditions to avoid damage to the hull or propulsion.
- Charts:** Operators should develop customized charts that provide annotations of tracklines, danger bearings and distances from hazards, and other information to help ensure safe navigation.
- Emergency Preparedness:** Operators should develop and keep readily accessible, emergency check off lists that outline actions the crew should take in the event of sinking, grounding, fire, medical evacuation, taking on water, etc.
- Equipment:** Operators should be familiar with the capabilities and limitations of their navigation and safety equipment
- Situational Awareness:** Operators should review "Lessons Learned" from other marine casualties distributed by the Coast Guard and continually train their crews to ensure navigation, seamanship and rescue skills are honed.

Amplifying details on the reverse

Top 10 Standards of Care

The Alaska Small Passenger Vessel Task Force was established in the wake of several passenger vessel accidents in Alaska during the 1999 operating season. The Task Force's close examination of passenger vessel operations identified "Standards of Care" and good marine practices that should be adhered to by prudent mariners to help prevent accidents and improve maritime safety. The three Alaska Coast Guard Captain of the Ports (Anchorage, Valdez and Juneau) have adopted these "Standards of Care" for vessels operating in their areas.

Area Familiarity: Navigating on Alaska's waterways can be very challenging due to limited aids to navigation, numerous hazards, harsh weather and strong currents. Mariners should be fully familiar with the waters upon which they intend to operate by making a pre-season voyage with an operator having prior experience in the area.

Bridge Resource Management: Using the team approach, operators can improve the safe navigation of their vessel in restricted waters or poor visibility by using other crewmembers to serve as lookouts, helmsman, and or by assisting in obtaining fixes through use of GPS, radar and depth sounder.

Restricting Passengers from the Bridge: Passengers can unwittingly interfere with the safe navigation of vessels when present on the bridge. When a vessel is operating in low visibility conditions, confined or ice congested waters, passengers should be kept from the pilothouse.

Communications: There are numerous communication "black holes" in Alaska caused by nearby cliffs and mountains that block VHF, HF and in some cases even satellite communications. Mariners should be aware of these areas and have float plans or voyage following with their home offices to ensure help is alerted if they are not heard from. In some cases, vessels should carry GPIRBs or satellite comms.

Safe Distance from Glaciers: Calving glaciers and shooters can present a hazard to vessels by direct impact with ice or through steep and sudden wave action. Mariners should ensure their vessels remain in deep water and at a safe distance from glaciers.

Reduced Speed in Ice Conditions: Vessels have sustained serious damage to hulls and propulsion systems due to impact with ice. Proceeding at slower speeds in ice conditions can substantially reduce the risk of sustaining damage.

Charts: Accurate and updated charts complete with annotations of tracklines, danger bearings and distances from hazards and other information can help ensure safe navigation.

Emergency Check Off Lists: Through developing check off lists and training for emergencies crews can better ensure the safety of passengers and crew.

Equipment: Mariners should become familiar with the capabilities and limitations of their navigation and safety equipment including but not limited to the vessel's charting programs, GPS, fathometer, radios and autopilot. With respect to communications operators should know where they have good comms and where comms are poor or non-existent. Additionally, crews shall be familiar with the vessel's lifesaving equipment and operation.

Situational Awareness: Operators should become very familiar with the waters, weather, ice and current conditions of the vessels they operate and review "Lessons Learned" from other maritime accidents.