

Office of Public Affairs
U.S. Coast Guard First District



U.S. Department of
Homeland Security
**United States
Coast Guard**



News Release

Date: Dec. 16, 2009
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Coast Guard en route to disabled Gloucester boat 200 miles offshore

BOSTON — A Coast Guard cutter is en route to help five Gloucester, Mass., fishermen on a disabled lobster boat more than 200 miles southeast of Nantucket, Mass., Wednesday night.

The owner of the 77-foot boat, Michael and Kristen, suspecting contaminated fuel, called for help when the boat's engines would not start at about 3:30 p.m.

Initial communications with the Michael and Kristen were spotty, so a C-130 Hercules plane from Air Station Elizabeth City, N.C., already nearby for another mission, guided the vessel to an area where Sector Southeastern New England command center staff in Woods Hole, Mass., could maintain radio communication.

The crew of a nearby fishing vessel, Rachel Leah, responded to the Michael and Kristen's call for help and is currently towing the lobster boat.

The 270-foot Boston-based Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba is expected to be in the area around 9:30 p.m., to assess the situation, factoring in the most current weather conditions and forecast.

Presently, the crew of the Michael and Kristen is facing rain, 40 mph winds with gusts up to 50 mph and nine to 12-foot seas. The seas are expected to increase to 11 to 16 feet through the night. The forecast also calls for isolated snow showers overnight.

Although the Michael and Kristen is equipped with a generator to supply heat for the crew, freezing spray is a concern. Command center staff at Coast Guard Sector Southeastern New England will continue to maintain a 30-minute communications schedule with the crew until the Escanaba arrives.

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