



Alaska Communications Best Practices:

- As soon as possible after an incident occurs, the ship will notify both the home office (normally via satellite phone), and USCG (normally via VHF radio). These initial notifications will be almost simultaneously. Since both parties require essentially the same information, the following practices are recommended to reduce the communications demands on the vessel and permit the master to focus on the emergency:
 - Establish Open lines:
 - It is common practice for the ship and the company EOC to establish an open line using a satellite telephone. A dedicated communicator mans the phone at each end.
 - If possible, establishment of a 3 way open line between ship, industry EOC and D17 RCC at the earliest opportunity is recommended. (If no SAR, or SAR phase complete, Unified Command can replace RCC). A dedicated communicator will man each telephone line.
 - If a 3 way open line is not possible, then a second open line between the company EOC and the USCG is recommended so that information requirements can be quickly exchanged. A dedicated communicator will man each telephone line.
 - The length of time the lines remain open will be depend on the situation. Scheduled conference calls can be established once situation has stabilized and the constant demand for information is reduced.
 - Maximum use of On Scene Coordinator
 - USCGD17 RCC shall appoint an On Scene Commander (OSC) as quickly as possible. The OSC shall serve as the sole “on scene” communicator with the master. The “best” means of reliable communications will be utilized. All on scene rescue assets will check in and check out with the OSC. The OSC will set the on scene communications plan with rescue resources, and keep a log of all activity, vessels, destinations and numbers on board.
 - Away Team (Reference CGD17INST 16451.1)
 - The COTP and vessel master shall determine if an AWAY TEAM is required to support on scene communications and response. The Away Team will communicate via the On Scene Commander (OSC). If no OSC, the Away Team may be appointed as the OSC and communicate with the RCC. The AWAY TEAM will operate in accordance with D17 instruction.
 - Pollution Response Communications:
 - Pollution response communications will be assigned so not to interfere with SAR operations. Normally, VHF 81A will serve as the main on scene pollution response channel. On scene pollution operations leader will assign secondary VHF channels as required.
 - Information sharing:
 - Information must be shared timely to avoid duplication of effort and wasting resources. Maximum use of web based information sharing programs for real time updates, use of liaison officers, scheduled updates and conference calls are all potential options.
 - Having all response partners operate from the same command post will also facilitate the sharing of information and maximum use of resources.
 - It is recommended the USCGD17 request local USCG Sectors provide a liaison officer at industry EOCs located outside of Alaska.