



16710

November 3, 2010

CAPTAIN OF THE PORT, WESTERN ALASKA NAVIGATION ADVISORY

Subj: **2010-2011 OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR SEVERE WEATHER IN THE
ALEUTIAN ISLANDS AND PRIBILOF ISLANDS**

OVERVIEW:

1. The Captain of the Port (COTP), Western Alaska, through consultation with marine pilot associations, vessel operators, and port authorities, developed these operating procedures (hereafter, *Procedures*) for vessels in port or at anchor in the Aleutian or Pribilof Islands, with an emphasis on Dutch Harbor, Alaska. These Procedures were developed to address the frequent and severe storms that impact both the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands. They are based on safety recommendations from a Coast Guard investigation of the M/V KUROSHIMA, a marine casualty that involved the dragging of anchor, vessel grounding, two deaths, and a major oil spill.
2. For these Procedures, **severe weather** is defined as: sustained winds that exceed 45 knots, wind gusts that exceed 60 knots, a “winter storm warning” by the National Weather Service (NWS), or any combination of the three for any part of the Aleutian or Pribilof Islands.¹
3. These Procedures **automatically go into effect whenever** severe weather occurs or is forecast to occur within 48 hours.
4. The master is ultimately responsible for the safe operation of their vessel at all times. Adherence to appropriate risk mitigation measures in accordance with these jointly developed Procedures demonstrates forehandedness on the part of the master, and is in keeping with prudent seamanship. It is always the master’s responsibility to take all necessary steps to effectively mitigate risks in circumstances where these operating Procedures may fall short.
5. The COTP may order a vessel to operate or anchor in the manner directed when there is reasonable cause to believe the vessel is not in compliance with any regulation, law, or treaty, or it has been determined that such order is necessary in the interest of safety by reason of weather, visibility, sea conditions, temporary port congestion, other temporary hazardous circumstances, or the condition of the vessel (33 CFR § 160.111).

¹ NWS Alaska Marine Zones 155, 165, 170, 171, 172, 175, 176, and 179 as depicted in the enclosed graphic.

VESSELS IN SEVERE WEATHER AREAS:

1. Factors considered in determining whether a vessel poses excessive risk include, but are not limited to: vessel location, on scene weather, machinery/equipment status, dragging anchor, vessel load status (to determine draft/free surface area), cargo stowage (ready for sea), number of vessels alongside or scheduled alongside, estimated duration of cargo operation, availability of resources (tugs, pilots, available dock space, etc.).
2. Vessels at anchor shall terminate cargo loading/offloading operations and separate when sustained winds exceed 45 knots, or an opposite rolling moment in excess of 10 degrees occurs between the vessels.
3. The master shall use all available means to detect dragging of the vessel's anchor. A proper anchor watch shall be maintained at all times in accordance with 33 CFR § 164.19.
4. Whenever a vessel drags anchor during cargo operations, loading/offloading shall be terminated until more favorable conditions prevail.
5. Agents should monitor VHF channel 16 to facilitate rapid communication in the event their vessel is adversely impacted by severe weather.
6. The master shall ensure engineering plants remain in ready condition and machinery is not taken out of service for maintenance during severe weather. In addition, the anchor winch must also remain in a ready status.

VESSELS PLANNING TO ANCHOR IN UNALASKA:

1. The master must ensure vessel operations are consistent with City of Unalaska ordinances. Both anchors on the vessel shall have 10 useable shots of chain for the vessel to anchor.
2. A secondary anchor shall be available for immediate deployment, as there is a history of vessels fouling their anchors on abandoned cables and debris on the harbor bottom in Unalaska.

NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR VESSELS DRAGGING ANCHOR:

1. A vessel dragging anchor during severe weather in the Aleutian or Pribilof Islands constitutes a hazardous condition. In these instances, the agent, master, operator, or person in charge shall notify the Coast Guard as soon practicable in accordance with 33 CFR § 160.215:

| <u>Coast Guard Unit</u> | <u>Office Number</u> | <u>After Hours Number</u> |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Sector Anchorage | (907) 271-6769 | (907) 271-6769 |
| Marine Safety Detachment Unalaska | (907) 581-3466 | (907) 359-6737 |

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These Procedures supersede all previous Special Operating Guidelines for the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands. I invite your feedback and proposed revisions. As best practices evolve and lessons are learned, I anticipate and welcome changes to these Procedures.

Sincerely,



J. A. FOSDICK
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Captain of the Port, Western Alaska

Encl: National Weather Service Alaska Region Marine Zones

Copy: Commander, Seventeenth Coast Guard District (dp)
Supervisor, Marine Safety Detachment Unalaska

Alaska Region Marine Zones

- AFG Fairbanks
- AFC Anchorage
- AJK Juneau

