

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #24

SEINE FISHERIES: This news release is being distributed at the request of the U.S. Coast Guard. All other previously announced seine fisheries remain as announced.

COAST GUARD ENFORCES VALDEZ SECURITY ZONES

VALDEZ, Alaska -- The Coast Guard is continuing to enforce the security zones in Port Valdez and Prince William Sound this year.

In response to the recent increase in illegal entries, local Coast Guard units are taking swift and decisive action by issuing tickets to operators illegally entering the zone. The tickets alleviate any delay or doubt involved with the penalty process and will immediately direct payment of an initial violation and increased fines for repeat violation. Commercial vessels will be fined double those amounts.

Charts displaying the security zones are posted at the Valdez Harbormaster's office, the public boat ramps, and at the Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit. Brochures detailing the zones are also available at several local retailers and the Coast Guard has increased their harbor presence this year in an effort to educate boaters before they head out.

Vessels without a Captain of the Port permit to operate in the security zones are restricted from entering. The first zone is in front of the Valdez Marine Terminal. It extends out from the shoreline about a mile, and spans an area between Allison Creek and Sawmill Spit. The zone is marked on each side by yellow buoys in the water, and yellow day boards on land. Mariners are reminded that buoys marking the security zone move with tides, winds and currents, and are only an approximate indicator of the actual security zone boundaries. Actual boundaries are determined by position coordinates. To be trouble free, boaters should stay well away to avoid accidentally entering the zone and being subject to a fine.

There is also a security zone in place in the Valdez Narrows in an area 200 yards around the optimum track line for tankers moving through the narrows. This zone is enforced when tankers are present or preparing to enter the zone.

Finally, there is a security zone around all tankers operating within Prince William Sound and operating within 200 miles of the Gulf of Alaska. Only vessels authorized and required to assist the tanker should be inside the security zone at any time.

The Coast Guard takes protecting the waters of Prince William Sound very seriously. They encourage any mariner who observes suspicious activity to report it immediately and looks forward to working with all marine traffic to ensure safe and secure transits for everyone.

The next scheduled purse seine salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to occur by 2:00 pm Friday, July 10.