

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

*Sam Cotten, Commissioner
Scott Kelley, Director*



Contact:
Jeremy Botz, Gillnet Area Management Biologist
Charles Russell, Seine Area Management Biologist
Stacy Vega, Assistant Area Management/Research Biologist
Phone: (907) 424-3212 Fax: (907) 424-3235

Prince William Sound Area Office
401 Railroad Avenue, PO Box 669
Cordova, AK 99574-0669
Date Issued: Friday, July 6, 2018
Time: 9:30 am

Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #19

SEINE FISHERIES: This news release is being distributed at the request of the U.S. Coast Guard.

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard

Captain of the Port
United States Coast Guard
Prince William Sound Alaska



PO Box 486
105 Clifton Drive
Valdez, AK 99686
Phone: 907-835-7210
Fax: 907-428-7207

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CAPTAIN OF THE PORT, PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND NAVIGATION SAFETY ADVISORY

1. **PURPOSE:** This navigation advisory is provided to remind all mariners the importance of following the requirements for operating a vessel upon the navigable waters of Prince William Sound. Additionally, it outlines specific navigational safety concerns and risk mitigation measures available for vessels operating in the Valdez Narrows.
2. **DISCUSSION:** In December 2017, Marine Safety Unit Valdez determined there has been a steady increase in the number of near-miss collisions between tank vessels and fishing vessels in Port Valdez and Prince William Sound. This increased risk of vessel collisions is avoidable by adhering to the requirements in this advisory and, if not corrected, could lead to injury of personnel, damage to equipment, and harm to the environment. This situation could be aggravated by the increased vessel traffic due to the current transition taking place in companies providing escort towing for TAPS tankers. This change requires training of vessels and crew with exercises in and around the Port of Valdez and Prince William Sound.

a. Responsibilities Between Vessels:

- i. Every vessel shall at all times maintain a proper look-out by sight and hearing by all available means appropriate in the prevailing circumstances and conditions so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and thus reduce the risk of collision, per Rule 5 of the International Navigation Rules.
- ii. Any vessel less than 65 feet, or a vessel engaged in fishing shall not impede the passage of a vessel which can safely navigate only within a narrow channel or fairway (e.g. Valdez Narrows), per Rule 9 of the International Navigation Rules.
- iii. A vessel crossing a traffic separation scheme shall cross on a heading as nearly as practicable at right angles to the general direction of traffic flow, per Rule 10 of the International Navigation Rules.
- iv. A vessel engaged in fishing within the traffic separation scheme, shall not impede the passage of any vessel following a traffic lane, per Rule 10 of the International Navigation Rules.
- v. All vessels shall adhere to Rule 18 of the International Navigation Rules, which outlines the navigational responsibilities between vessels underway. In particular, a power-driven vessel shall keep out of the way of a vessel engaged in fishing (except where Rules 9, 10 and 13 is applicable).

b. Communications:

- i. 33 CFR 26.03 requires VTS Users to carry a radiotelephone on board at all times.
- ii. 33 CFR 161.12 requires VTS Users to maintain a listening watch on VHF Channel 13 and must respond promptly when hailed.
- iii. 33 CFR 161.12 states VTS Users shall report to the VTC whenever they are unable to comply with any VTS regulation. (e.g. radio malfunction).

c. Security Zones in Prince William Sound:

- i. 33 CFR 165.1710 states a security zone exists around all waters 200 yards either side of a Tanker's optimal track line in the Valdez Narrows.
- ii. 33 CFR 165.1710 establishes a security zone within Buoy Alpha and Buoy Bravo approximately 0.8 NM from the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Valdez Terminal.
- iii. No vessel or person may enter or remain in a security zone without the permission of the Captain of the Port.

d. **Violation of rules and regulations:**

- i. A violation for failing to carry a radiotelephone can start out at \$100 and go up to \$650.
- ii. A violation for failing to maintain a listening watch on Ch. 13 and 16, failing to respond when hailed or failing to report to the VTC the inability to comply with 33CFR 161.12 requirements can result in a \$1,000 and up to \$40,000 fine.
- iii. Failing to follow Rule 9 or 10 of the International Navigation rules can result in a fine starting at \$5,000 and can go up to 1 year of imprisonment for gross negligent operations.
- iv. A security zone incursion can result in a violation fine starting at \$2,000 and going up to \$40,000.

M. R. FRANKLIN
Commander, U.S. Coast Guard



