

Alaska Marine Safety Education Association

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MARINE SAFETY UPDATE

Increased Charter Activity Raises Safety Concerns

There is increasing concern about the safety of passengers aboard Alaska's growing charter fleet. There are over 2,000 small charter vessels in Alaska. Most are captained by "6 pack" operators, licensed by the U.S. Coast Guard for vessels carrying six or less people. These licensed operators and their vessels are required to carry certain minimum safety equipment. This equipment was not designed with Alaska's cold waters in mind, and there is no required out-of-water survival gear.

The potential danger with such minimal requirements was highlighted last year when a charter vessel out of Homer flooded and sank near the Barren Islands off Kodiak Island. The rising water shorted out the vessel's batteries and a MAYDAY was called only because one of the passengers happened to carry a cell phone. The vessel had no EPIRB. The passengers evacuated to an inflatable dingy, while the captain hung precariously to the bow, the only part of the boat that remained above water. Fortunately, the Coast Guard was able to respond and all were rescued.

Some charter boat operators voluntarily provide immersion suits and other forms of out-of-water flotation for their passengers' safety.

Some also have additional emergency communications equipment on board. The U. S. Coast Guard in Alaska is encouraging all operators to carry such equipment through a program called the **Five Star Safety Rating**.

Capt. Ed Page, chief of the U. S. Coast Guard's Marine Safety Office in Alaska, comments. "I'm advocating a non-regulatory solution . . . for improving the safety of these vessels. This program outlines a suite of recommended safety measures, and is designed to provide safety-conscious operators recognition for their efforts to provide a safer vessel for their passengers." Operators will be able to obtain a star for safety measures, such as equipment and training, above the minimum requirements. Based on this voluntary standard, according to Page, vessels will receive anywhere from a one star to a five star rating. Passengers will therefore have a means of determining the level of survival equipment and practices on vessels as they choose a charter.

The specifics of this program are currently under development and will be tested and refined during the summer of 2000. To provide input to the **Five Star Safety Rating** program, contact LCDR John Bingaman at (907) 463-2228 or at jbngaman@cgalaska.uscg.mil

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Marine Safety Instruction Available

DRILL INSTRUCTION COURSES IN ALASKA

Bristol Bay area - BBEDC, (800) 478-4370
 Cordova - Bob Plumb, (907) 424-6117
 Haines - Karl Johnson, (907) 766-2218
 Homer - Ocean Safety Services, (907) 235-7908
 Ketchikan - Southeast Ocean Survival, (907) 225-8985
 Kodiak - Joycrafts, (907) 486-6293
 Naknek - Debby Robertson, University of Alaska, (907) 246-4292
 Prince of Wales Island - Pete Willburn, (907) 828-3924
 Seward - AVTEC, (800) 478-5389
 Sitka - AMSEA, (907) 747-3287
 Wrangell - Todd Harding, (907) 874-2085

OUT-OF-ALASKA DRILL INSTRUCTION

Bellingham & Seattle, WA - Fremont Maritime Services, (206) 522-5377 or Washington Sea Grant, (206) 543-1224
 California - Coastwise Marine Safety, (707) 464-2934
 Eastern U.S. - Marine Expeditors, Ltd., David Briggs, Norfolk, VA (757) 587-5290
 New Jersey - Thompson Maritime, (908) 899-7990
 Oregon - Clatsop Community College, (503) 325-0910 or, in Newport, Ginny Goblirsch (503) 265-3463
 Rhode Island - Vessel Safety Corp., Paul Helland, (401) 782-2021
 Texas - Israel Linarte, (956) 943-7935
 Westport, WA - Washington Sea Grant, (360) 875-9331

International Fishing Industry Safety & Health (FISH) Conference: Woods Hole, MA October 23-25, 2000

Individuals from around the world, well-versed in commercial fishing and safety, raise consciousness, build coalitions, disseminate information, and encourage action to prevent injury in the industry. The conference is intended for all with an interest in commercial fishing and injury prevention. There will be a lively mix of high quality presentations, scientific papers, workshops and posters.

For more information, contact Sharon Smith at ses4@cdc.gov or phone (907) 271-2382 or fax (907) 271-2390.

WILDERNESS RISK MANGEMENT CONFERENCE: Anchorage, AK September 21-23, 2000

This conference will explore field and administrative risk management practices and policies. It is sponsored by the Wilderness Risk Managers Committee of Outward Bound, Boy Scouts Wilderness Medical Society and a host of other outdoor and experiential education associations. This should be an excellent forum for the latest information on risk management for outdoor training activities.

For more information or to register, contact Debbie Derbish at wild.risk@nols.edu or phone (307) 332-1229. You can also visit the conference website at <http://wrmc.nols.edu/>

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Contributions to this publication and letters to the editor are most welcome. Please contact:
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AMSEA Instructors Spread Marine Safety Message

Hollis instructor Phyllis Ulrich teaches a week-long, K-12th grade program for the whole school. She includes shore survival activities and a trip to the Craig pool. Older kids also enter cold water (with their immersion suits on, of course!).

Teacher Maureen Knutsen will soon start her cold water safety and survival program for students in the Naknek schools. A dip in the pool is on tap for all K-12 students.

Shasta Smith conducted a marine safety program at Sitka High School, while Natalie Voron completed a week of cold water safety at the middle school. She trained 140 students with help from Catherine Pierzala, and Jack Blackwell. Also in Sitka, February's Super Saturday program for grades K to 3 focused on hypothermia with activities on building shelters, personal clothing, PFDs, a search dog demonstration from the local SAR team, and a puppet show reinforcing preparation for a safe boat trip. To Morrow, Robert Schmech, Steven Campbell, Marian Allen, Jetta Budd, Mary Todd Anderson and many others made these activities a successful learning experience for the 110 children who attended.

Kathy O'Gara at SEARHC in Sitka continues to instruct many about marine safety. She includes all the standard cold water safety topics plus others like weather forecasting. SEARHC trainer Janice Huls educated 140 K-6th graders in Yakutat about PFDs and hypothermia. She and Rick McElrath, retired USCG rescue swimmer and AMSEA instructor, plan to return to Yakutat soon to conduct further training.

Further to the west and north, Anna Borland-Ivy of Homer is teaching cold water survival skills to children from the Russian Old Believer community. Brenda Dolma, also of Homer, is teaching survival skills to middle school students. The community of Homer continues to have one of the most proactive marine safety programs in the state.

Bill Thompson, Kenai Middle School, conducts a week-long safety course including weather, clothing, shore survival, boat safety orientation and emergency drills. Also on the Kenai peninsula, Jerry Byrne has incorporated marine safety as part of his swim classes and canoe courses as well as Cub Scout and Boy Scout activities. Jerry has trained hundreds in his courses.

Farther north, Ray Boyd of Fairbanks Northstar School District is teaching cold water survival skills and wilderness survival to his special education students. Also in Fairbanks, Tate Rafat took his K-3rd grade PE class through the seven steps to survival this winter.

Far outside of Alaska, AMSEA instructors Jane Eisemann of Kodiak High School and Jennifer Ketchum of the Mercy ship Caribbean have enrolled in the masters degree program in Marine Education and Training at World Maritime University in Malmö, Sweden.

More Marine Safety Instruction Opportunities

3- DAY WORKSHOPS FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS

These workshops provide teachers and teacher aids with effective instructional techniques on cold water safety. Participants receive an extensive curriculum referenced to Alaska teaching standards.

Bethel, AK: May 26-28, 2000

Anchorage, AK: June 6-9, 2000

Seward, AK: June 5-9, 2000 PLUS an extra session is available for Emergency Drills Instructor certification, June 12-14, 2000

AMSEA MARINE SAFETY INSTRUCTOR/TRAINER COURSE

This is a six-day workshop designed to train adults who want to educate others, primarily adults, using AMSEA's boating safety courses. May lead to USCG acceptance to teach AMSEA's Emergency Drill Instructor course.

Sitka, AK: September, 2000 (exact dates to be announced)

CULMINATING WORKSHOPS – ACTIVITY II-1
SEVEN STEP SURVIVAL WALK
TIME: THREE CLASS PERIODS TOPIC: SEVEN STEPS TO SURVIVAL
LEVEL II


Contributed by Al Hill, Hoonah High School, Hoonah, Alaska.

This activity addresses the following subject areas:

Skills for a Healthy Life

- A-1 Personal well-being
- A-3 Injury prevention
- D-2 Safe and healthy environments

Geography

- B-3 Cultural characteristics of place
- C-1 Natural resource use

- E-3 Physical systems
- F-6 Geography across the curriculum

Science

- A-12 Biological diversity
- A-14 Living things and their environments
- A-15 Using local knowledge
- C-3 Cultural influences
- D-1,3 Practical applications of science

OVERVIEW

Day 1 (75 minutes) - Videotape, introduction and discussion of the Seven Steps to Survival, guest speaker

Day 2 (75 minutes) - Field trip to the beach

Day 3 (50 minutes) - Field trip sharing, review

OBJECTIVE

After completion of the lesson, a student should be able to:

- Identify items found on a typical stretch of beach that could be useful in an emergency;
- Explain how using the Seven Steps to Survival can help a person survive during an emergency.

MATERIALS

- *Fisheries Safety and Survival Series: Shore Survival* videotape, University of Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program (MAP), 1983 (21 minutes)
- *Seven Steps to Survival* handout (one per student)
- One or more guest speakers, who have been in survival situations, to tell their stories
- One pencil and paper per group for the beach walk

PROCEDURE
Session One

1. View the videotape with the class and discuss the Seven Steps to Survival.
2. Invite a guest speaker to tell a true survival story. As

you feel it is possible, ask the speaker what helped/hurt during the survival experience. Try to relate the answers to the Seven Steps.

3. Ask the students to come to school the next day prepared for a field trip to practice using the Seven Steps to Survival.

Session Two

1. For the field trip, divide the class into four groups.
2. Tell the groups a story of how they came to be on this beach. This addresses Step One (Recognition).
3. Assign each group one of the following categories: shelter, signals, water, and food.
4. Instruct each group to walk slowly down a mile stretch of beach, documenting anything along the beach that could be useful for the group's assigned category. This involves Step Two and Step Seven (Inventory and Play).

Session Three

1. Each group presents its list of items and shares how each item on the list could be utilized in a survival situation.
2. Students repeat all Seven Steps to Survival.

NOTE: It is interesting to see that some items are used by all of the groups. Emphasize that items with more than one potential use in a survival situation are valuable.

Recreational Boaters Have Higher Probability of Drowning Than Those in Commercial Fisheries

There were 29 lives lost in recreational boating accidents in Alaska last year. This is almost double the number of commercial fishing fatalities, and continues a disturbing trend. The number of recreational boaters dying in Alaska has been higher than that of commercial fishers for the past several years.

In 1999 there were 16 fatalities in the commercial fishing industry. This made 1999 a fairly typical year for fishing fleet fatalities in light of Alaska's five-year average. The number of fatalities in Alaska's fishing fleet during the last five years has consistently fallen 50% below its previous five-year average. Tremendous improvement has been shown in the survivability of fishermen. This is especially interesting in that the annual commercial vessel loss rate averages 28 to 36 boats. This loss rate has remained consistent over the past ten years.

Best-sellers and TV programs dramatize and perpetuate the dangers of commercial fishing. When one thinks of the stereotypical person in danger at sea, it is a commercial fisherman.

While these dangers certainly still exist, the fact is that more recreational boaters die in Alaska than those engaged in commercial fishing. It is doubtful that someone heading out in a skiff for a day trip equates his risk of drowning with that of a Bering Sea crabber. However, the skiff seldom carries most of the

personal survival equipment a commercial vessel is required to carry. Recreational boat operators also have no training requirements and their vessels are usually much smaller.

Just because recreational boating disasters in Alaska seldom receive national media attention, doesn't mean they don't happen.

Remember, you never know how your day is going to end. Be prepared.



“It is better to be careful a hundred times than to get killed once.”

- Mark Twain

Parents with Sound Safety Practices Instill Similar Good Habits in their Children

Children mimic their parents. Surprised? Of course not. It has been demonstrated that children learn lifelong behavior from observing their parents. Everyone, adults and children alike, learns more from what is seen as opposed to what is heard. Thus, "do as I say, not as I do" doesn't carry much weight with a child.

So, do parents with poor safety habits raise children with poor safety habits? One study suggests that this is indeed the case. In one recent study*, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety compared individuals' driving records with those of their parents. They compared the crash and moving violation rates of 155,000 drivers, aged 18 to 21, with those of their parents. The results:

1. Children whose parents had more violations and crashes, had more violations and crashes themselves.
2. The likelihood of children's violations and crashes increased with the greater number of parent's violations and crashes.
3. For every crash their parents had, it raised their children's chances of having a crash by 7%, and parents' violations increased children's chances of a crash by 3%.

This study reveals some of the effects parents have as unconscious role models. Research shows that children frequently grow up to be like their parents in beliefs, politics, attitudes and success. The more specific message from the automobile accident study: if you want your child to have a good driving record, improve your own.

It would be interesting to see a comparable study of boating safety habits of adults and their children. One would expect similar correlations.

Perhaps many adults do not wear life jackets because their parents never wore them. Although adults often insist that their children wear a life jacket, many do not wear them themselves. Thus, the message imparted is "life jackets are not something adults wear." This same unconscious teaching may also reinforce other unsafe boating practices.

The message here should be clear. Parents teach their children all the time, consciously or not. If you want your child to be a better boater, be one yourself and teach your children well.

*Evergreen Safety Council newsletter *Safety and Health Solutions*, November 1999

AMSEA Web Site Problem Corrected

A technical problem with AMSEA's web site was recently detected. Requests for displays, equipment and course monitoring forms sent to AMSEA on-line in the past few months may not have reached the office.

Anyone who did on-line ordering from AMSEA and did not receive confirmation should assume that the orders were not received. Please contact us again.

This problem has now been corrected. We regret any inconvenience this situation may have caused and appreciate reports of problems with the AMSEA web site.

NEW! On-line Forum for Instructors

The AMSEA Instructor Network List, an e-mail listserv for AMSEA-trained instructors, is now up and running. This will provide a forum for sharing ideas and teaching tips, posting teaching material updates, and asking questions of AMSEA staff and instructors.

All instructors having an e-mail address on file with AMSEA will be added to the list automatically. Any others instructors wanting to be added may send their address to amsea@alaska.com. It is easy to unsubscribe, so please try this service for a month or two to see if it is useful and informative.

It's Easier Than Ever to Reach AMSEA On-Line!

AMSEA's web site (www.uaf.edu/seagrant/amsea) hasn't moved, but there's now an easier way to get there. Just type **www.amsea.org** in any browser's URL window and the AMSEA site comes up. Bookmarks for the longer web address still work fine, even with the new short cut in place.

Book Brings Tlinget Point of View to Science Classroom

Tlinget Moon and Tide Teaching Resource, authored by AMSEA Board member Dolly Garza was recently published through Alaska Sea Grant. It is designed as a resource for elementary school science teachers wishing to bring Alaska Native science and ecological understanding into the classroom.

The publication is intended to help enhance the self-esteem of Alaska Native students and introduce all students to traditional knowledge. The book introduces information on tides and moon cycles from a Tlinget cultural perspective without "westernizing" the knowledge.

Teachers will find many helpful features in this publication. State, federal and Native science standards are cited. A guide to using elders in the classroom is included, and culturally appropriate teaching tips are covered in depth.

Dr. Garza's work on ***Tlinget Moon and Tide Teaching Resource*** was recently recognized with an award from the Alaska Federation of Natives. Copies of this publication may be ordered from the University of Alaska Sea Grant, P.O. Box 755040, 203 O'Neil Bldg. Fairbanks, AK 99775-5040 or phone (907) 474-6707.

Free Help Available from USCG Fishing Vessel Office

The Fishing Vessel office of the U.S. Coast Guard has EPIRB testers available. Testers can be used onboard to verify the signal of an EPIRB. In a recent survey in S.E. Alaska, 18 EPIRBs were tested. One failure was reported, and one was found to have the wrong identification code on the NOAA sticker. Contact any fishing vessel examiner for a free EPIRB test.

Fishing vessel examiners are also putting damage control training kits together. These kits will demonstrate to fishermen some items useful in an emergency to control flooding

Keep Those Teeth Sharp!

Recently, two Canadian fishermen climbed aboard their liferaft to escape their sinking vessel. However, their raft was still connected to the vessel by the painter line. Neither man had a knife to sever it. Fearing they would be pulled under by the sinking boat, the men took turns chewing on the line.

One hour and one broken tooth later, they gnawed through the line, freeing their raft only minutes before the fishing vessel plunged to the bottom.

This is the third example that has come to AMSEA's attention in which the liferaft occupants chewed through a painter line thinking it was necessary for survival. None realized that there is a safety knife stored, specifically for this purpose, just inside or outside the doorway of the liferaft.

According to the American Society of Dental Technicians, it is much easier on the teeth to use the knife instead of chewing through lines.

Check Out This Web Site: www.open.gov.uk/maib/maibhome.htm

This is the web site of the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB). MAIB was set up under the U.K. Merchant Shipping Act of 1988. It investigates accidents involving any UK-registered ship worldwide or any ship in U.K. waters.

MAIB is unique in that it is independent of any regulatory agency. It reports casualties, and establishes recommendations and lessons learned. Casualties reported include fishing vessels as well as other commercial vessels. A summary of incidents can be found by clicking on Safety Digest on the site. Other sites of interest:

www.sailnet.com for information on navigation, resources and a chatline.

For a demonstration of how to properly connect your life raft to a Hammer™ hydrostatic release mechanism try **www.cmhammer.com**

Check Radios for Optimal Range & Performance

Single sideband and VHF radios have greatly improved safety at sea. However, radio range may be unnecessarily reduced for the following reasons:

1. Low voltage to the radio due to improper wire gauge, dirty connectors or an overloaded circuit
2. Improper coaxial cable
3. Improperly matched antennas
4. Corroded antenna connectors
5. Improper or no grounding system
6. Wrong antenna
7. Radio not working properly
8. Old, worn out antennas. Antennas have life spans, and an antenna over 10 years old, whipped about in gales will have lost performance
9. Cables to other electronics too close to radio cables

Additionally, many emergency power supplies for radios may be improperly hooked up due to:

1. No isolation switch between the alternator and generator in machinery space and radio/battery
2. System too small for radios

To get the maximum from radios, check systems against this list. Remember, when needed in an emergency, there is no substitute for a radio's two-way communication.

Thanks to Alan Dujenski from Petit-Morrey Insurance, Seattle for these thoughts.

Simple Five-Step Stability Test Explained

Here's how it works. Since each vessel has its own inherent rolling period, independent of sea waves, this roll period can be measured and used as a baseline. Steps:

1. Get a stop watch.
2. Take your boat out where there are some waves and let her roll.
3. Measure the time it takes to make a complete revolution (e.g. port to starboard to port again)
4. If the vessel's rolling period measured in seconds is less than her beam in meters (one meter = 3.3 feet), you are all right. If the number of seconds equals the beam in meters, stability is marginal. If the number of seconds exceeds the beam in meters, stability parameters may be exceeded.
5. Try conducting this test in different loading conditions to determine the amount of load the vessel can safely carry.

It is especially useful to try this test in a new vessel or one that has had major modifications, to get an idea of its stability. This simple test is NOT a replacement for a professionally conducted stability test and booklet.

Thanks to Richard Hiscock for passing this quick stability check on from M. Ben-Yami, a fisheries development advisor from Israel who learned it from a naval architect.

LESSONS LEARNED: A report from the 17th U.S. Coast Guard District

Near Unimak Island, a 154-foot crab vessel suffered a stack fire that quickly engulfed the wheelhouse. The crew got off a MAYDAY and removed some survival gear from the wheelhouse just before flames overwhelmed it. Unfortunately, the wheelhouse fire destroyed the communications equipment and other survival gear.

The vessel's engines were engaged and, since access to the steering was denied, the vessel ran in circles. This complicated another fishing vessel's attempts to take the burning vessel under tow, and pass on additional survival equipment

Eventually, a U. S. Coast Guard helicopter airlifted the five-man crew and their dog. The vessel eventually grounded.

Lessons gleaned from this vessel and crew's experience:

1. Crew training for emergencies is critical to effective response.
2. The crew's ability to fight the fire gave them time to call for help and stay aboard until help arrived.
3. Handheld VHF radios or satellite phones provide a critical backup to primary radios.
4. Stack spaces should be inspected for carbon buildup and damage. Flammables should not be stored near stacks.
5. Survival gear stowed away from the potential path of fire ensures accessibility as fire spreads.
6. Free Coast Guard dockside exams can help spot safety deficiencies.



Thanks . . .

The following individuals and organizations are helping AMSEA to keep marine safety training widely available.

2000 Sustaining Memberships

Cloud Nine Fisheries, Sitka
Educational Training Company, Sitka
Trident Seafoods, Seattle
University of Alaska Marine Advisory Program,
Anchorage

2000 Supporting Memberships

U.S. Forest Service, Chatham Area
F/V Kariel, Sitka
Southern Region EMS Council, Anchorage
F/V Shirley, Petersburg
Seattle Marine Fishing Supplies, Seattle
F/V Coral Sea, Sitka
F/V Lazaria, Sitka
F/V Defiant, Petersburg
F/V Gretchen S, Anchorage

2000 Donor Memberships

Gordon Blue, Sitka
F/V Ingot, Petersburg
Bristol Bay Driftnetters Assn., Seattle
F/V Amber J, Juneau
Gabriel Films, NY

Recent Service & Equipment Donations

Slide scanner: White Elephant Shop, Sitka
PFDs: Stearn's, Inc., MN
Water rescue devices and accessories: Rescue
Solutions International, CA
Duffle bags: F/V Seaboy,
PFDs: Rick McElrath, Sitka
PFDs: S/V Wyldewind, Sitka
Liferaft: F/V Nautilus, Sitka
Liferaft: Phil Riggs, Sitka
Liferaft: F/V Kristine, Sitka
Use of vessel for drills: F/V Kupreanof, Sitka
Use of vessel for drills: M/V Eyak, Sitka
PFDs and marine safety educational materials: Belle
Michelson, University of Alaska Marine Advisory
Program
Photocopy machine: National Institute of Occupa-
tional Safety and Health (NIOSH) field office, An-
chorage
Fire extinguishers: Howie Pitts, Sitka
Outdated liferaft survival kit contents: Coastal Safety
Services, Sitka
Classroom and floor space and warm hospitality
during blustery, cold and wet training course: South-
east Ocean Safety, Ketchikan

Thanks also to the many others who have facilitated
marine and water safety training!



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A Worldwide Perspective

Fishing-Related Fatalities A Global Problem

A study by Eric Holliday reported in *International Fishing News*, January 2000, gives an interesting glimpse of the state of marine safety around the world.

For example, South African fishing vessel fatalities have risen alarmingly during the last five years. In 1999 an estimated 1,000/100,000 or 1% fatality rate was reached. That compares to 164/100,000 in the U.S. and 77/100,000 in the U.K.

Worldwide, most fatal boating accidents occur with small vessels. In New Zealand, the fatality rate is three times higher for boats less than 11m, than with vessels over 25m. In the U.S., 60% of fatalities are in vessels under 15m, and in the U.K. 77% of fatalities are connected with vessels shorter than 12m. In Norway, small open boats have been determined to be 11 times more dangerous than larger, enclosed vessels.

Across the globe, most deaths occur in situations where a fisherman ends up in the water, and either drowns or succumbs to hypothermia.

High School Students Narrowly Avoid Disaster

Recently, an energetic group of high school students decided to try their newly learned immersion suit donning-in-the-water skills. They had practiced in a swimming pool and decided to try their new skills in the real world. They chose as their venue a current-swept Alaskan harbor, during January, at night, with no standby rescuers!

Not one of the group made it into a suit in the water due to the frigid temperatures. Fortunately, they were able to rescue themselves and made it back to the dock.

What started out as a lark could have turned deadly serious for these three youths. All training with equipment in the water should be practiced under the watchful eyes of trained spotters in a controlled environment.

The real lesson behind putting a suit on in the water is to don it early, before you end up in the water. There are at least three high school students who are now believers!



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