

SECTION B

GENERAL INFORMATION

ALEUTIAN ISLANDS WATERWAYS SAFETY PLAN

B.1. STANDING POLICIES AND DIRECTIVES

Standards and protocols included in the Waterways Safety Plan (WSP) address operational and environmental issues unique to the Aleutian Islands. This Plan is not intended to supplant or otherwise conflict with federal, state, or local regulations, policies or directives developed under legal authorities. Nor is the plan intended to replace the good judgment of a ship's master in the safe operation of his/her vessel. The WSP is intended to complement existing regulations by advising the mariner of unique conditions and requirements that may be encountered in the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands, and the standards and protocols developed by local experts for ensuring greater safety in light of those conditions and requirements.

B.2. GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

The geographic scope of the Aleutian Islands WSC includes the area encompassed by the boundaries of the Aleutians East Borough and the Aleutians West Coastal Resource Service Area, including the Pribilof Islands and adjacent shorelines and waters to the outer boundary of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone as depicted in Figure B-1.

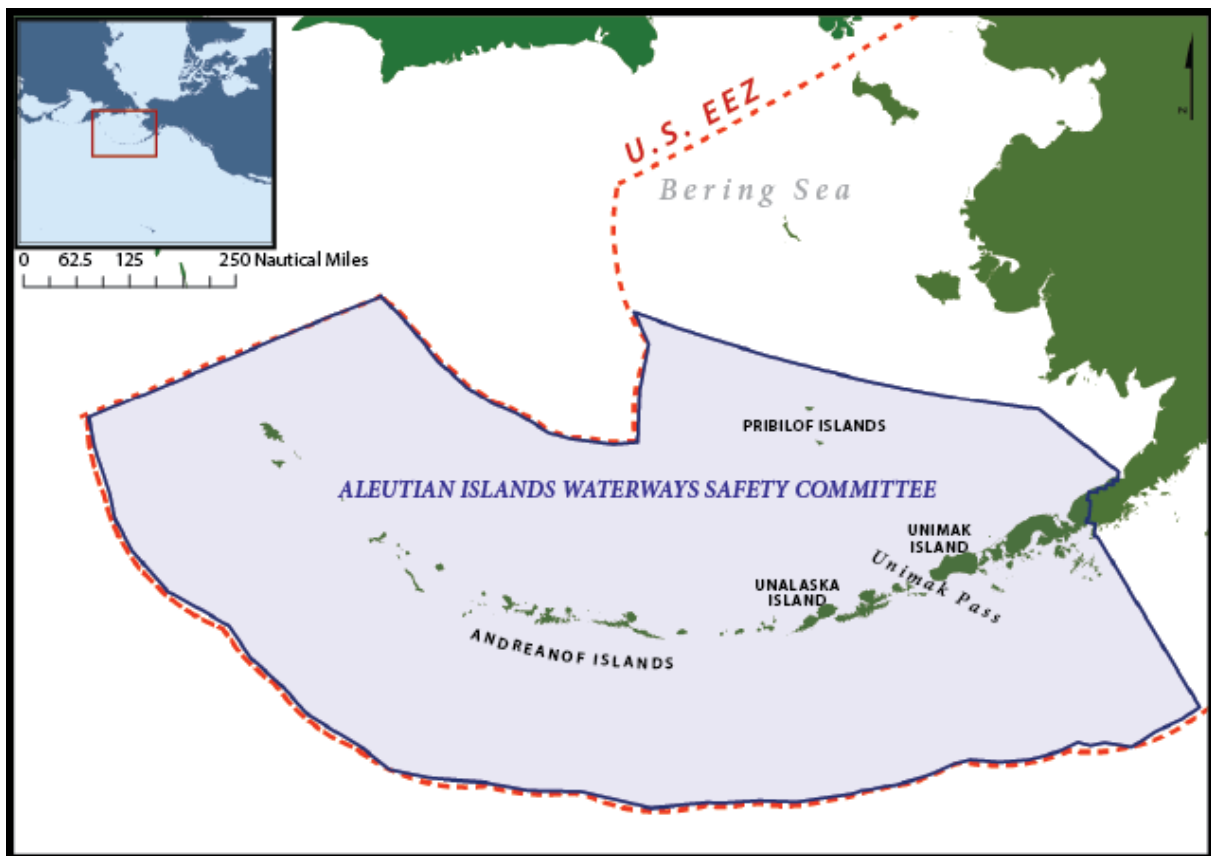


Figure B-1. Geographic Scope of the Aleutian Islands Waterways Safety Committee.

B.3. U.S. COAST GUARD SECTOR ANCHORAGE

For all U.S. Coast Guard mission areas including waterways management, marine safety, search and rescue, law enforcement, maritime security, and environmental stewardship, Sector Anchorage is the primary authority. The Sector Anchorage Commander has five unique federal authorities throughout Western Alaska:

- Captain of the Port (COTP)
- Search and Rescue Mission Coordinator (SMC)
- Federal on Scene Coordinator (FOSC)
- Federal Maritime Security Coordinator (FMSC)
- Officer in Charge Marine Inspection (OCMI)

Tasked with the oversight of marine safety, security, and environmental stewardship throughout Western Alaska, Sector Anchorage conducts a broad array of activities that includes vessel inspection, investigations of marine casualties, search and rescue, aids to navigation, and federal pollution response efforts. The legal boundaries for the COTP Western Alaska are set forth in 33 Code of Federal Regulations 3.65-10. The COTP has varying levels of jurisdiction extending to the outer limit (200 nautical miles) of the Economic Exclusion Zone (EEZ) for foreign and domestic vessels.

B.4. ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

For all commercial vessel and waterways management, marine safety, and environmental protection and spill preparedness and response issues in Alaska waters, including all of the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) is the primary state authority responsible for dealing with vessel and facility incidents as they might impact state resources. The state's jurisdiction extends to activities occurring in the coastal waters within the U.S. territorial seas, and state interests may extend beyond those limits to the extent the event would likely impact state waters and resources. Similar to the U.S. Coast Guard, the Spill Prevention and Response (SPAR) program of ADEC conducts vessel examinations utilizing accepted industry standards for tank and non-tank vessels and oil barges, as well as conducting fuel and cargo oil transfer monitoring inspections.

B.5. COAST PILOT

Coast Survey published its earliest version of the United States Coast Pilot in 1858, as Appendix No. 44 in Coast Survey's Annual Report. Now as part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Coast Survey publishes nine regional volumes providing navigational information that cannot effectively be represented on nautical charts. Volume 9 provides information on the maritime regions of Western Alaska, including the region represented by AIWSC.

The Coast Pilot provides information on ports and harbors, hazards, safety and environmental issues beyond that which can be incorporated on NOAA charts. The publication provides a

means for the AIWSC to provide information to mariners not familiar with Western Alaska ports as well as “Standards of Care” and other information generated by the Committee. The AIWSC will periodically review the Coast Pilot information on Western Alaska ports covered by the AIWSC to ensure it is current and accurate. After conducting vetting of information provided NOAA will publish recommended changes and data in the appropriate section of the manual.

The on-line version of the Coast Pilot can be accessed via the internet at <https://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/publications/coast-pilot/index.html>

B.6. DUTCH HARBOR FAIRWAY MANAGEMENT

Occasionally deep draft vessels at anchor in the Fairway present a navigational hazard in port to tugs in tow. Figure B-2 depicts the boundary points for the identified area.

Fairway Protocols:

Anchoring within this area is not recommended without first contacting the Harbormaster’s Office.

Dutch Harbor Harbormaster Contact Information:

Telephone: (907) 581-1254

On Duty Officer Cell: (907) 359-1254

VHF CH 16/14.

[City of Unalaska website - Ports and harbors contact information](#)

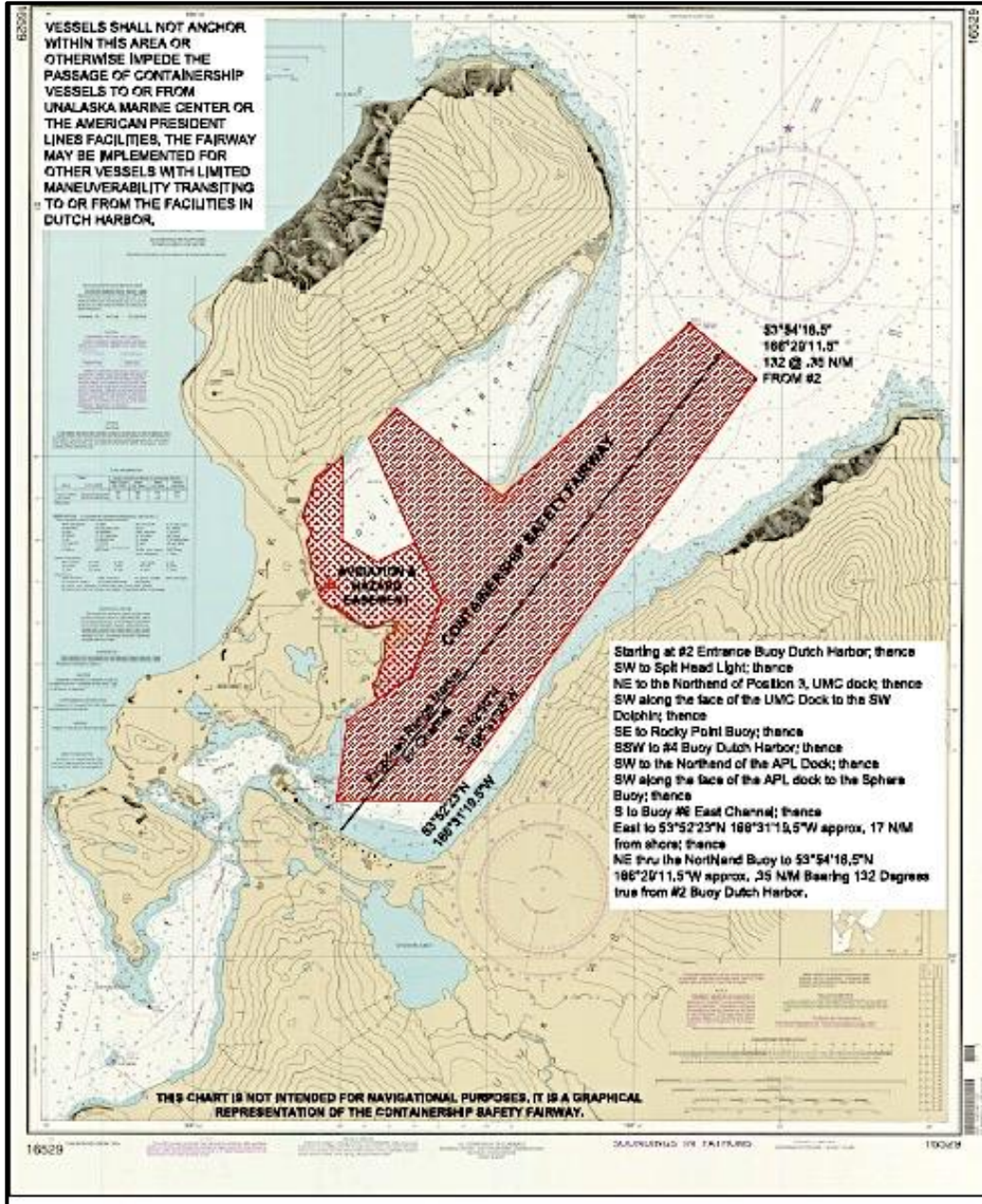


Figure B-2. Dutch Harbor Fairway boundaries.

B.7. POTENTIAL PLACES OF REFUGE FOR STORM AVOIDANCE

The M/V SELENDANG AYU incident in December 2004 focused attention on international vessel traffic transiting the Aleutian Islands Geographic area and the need to identify Potential Places of Refuge (PPOR) for vessels experiencing distress or seeking shelter from severe weather. Understanding this guidance is an important prevention measure for vessels that have lost power or steering, are structurally damaged or leaking, and may need to be brought into a harbor or anchored to effect repairs. It is also intended to apply to vessels that are seeking to

avoid severe weather to prevent the loss of life or loss of the vessel, or to prevent or mitigate a release of oil or hazardous substances¹.

Together the U.S. Coast Guard and Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation authored a joint Arctic and Western Alaska Area Contingency Plan (ACP) that contains a detailed listing of PPOR in the Aleutian Islands. This response plan meets the requirements of the National Contingency Plan (NCP) and the Alaska Regional Contingency Plan (RCP) applicable to the state and federal government.

The most recent version of the ACP was approved in September 2018 and is available on the ADEC website at: <https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/contingency-plans/response-plans/>

The ability of vessels to utilize PPOR is an important component to minimize the risk to life and negative effects to environmental and economic resources.

B.7.1. Potential Places of Refuge (PPOR)

This guidance consists of two parts:

- 1) A flow chart that describes the process to make expedited decisions that ensure appropriate federal, state and local agency partners, federally-recognized tribes, stakeholders, and other experts (e.g., marine pilots) are consulted whenever possible and;
- 2) Maps that pre-identify locations for docking, anchoring, mooring and grounding that may be used as PPOR.

The flow chart and decision-making process are part of the Arctic and Western Alaska ACP and define Potential Places of Refuge as a location to which a vessel needing assistance can be temporarily moved, and where actions can then be taken to stabilize the vessel. The decision process provides guidance for an incident that requires immediate action as well as for a situation that allows time for consultation with Unified Command and partner agencies. This flow chart can be found on the ADEC webpage: <https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/response-resources/ppor/aleutians/>.

Maps of pre-identified sites for consideration as Potential Places of Refuge in the Aleutian Islands geographic area are divided into 10 zones. The maps contain pertinent geographic, bathometric, sensitive resources areas and operational considerations for each of the pre-identified areas to aid in the decision-making process.

It is important to note that the PPOR document is only guidance and does not require that the locations identified be used as the sole locations for PPOR.

¹ For Severe Weather Guidelines, see Standards of Care Section C.2.

ALEUTIAN ISLANDS WATERWAYS SAFETY PLAN

A detailed analysis of risk factors, including weather, for the Aleutian Island region can be found at: <http://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/response-resources/ppor/aleutians/>

B.8. AREAS TO BE AVOIDED (ATBA)

The remoteness, extreme weather conditions and substantial maritime activity by international trade and in the Aleutian Islands and neighboring waters has contributed to major marine casualties that have resulted in loss of life, property and environmental harm (Refer to Appendix D.1. for more information on the history of marine casualties in the region).

This section provides guidance to vessel masters transiting the Aleutian Islands geographic area and Western Alaska COTP Zone regarding sensitive natural or economic resource areas that are subject to prevention measures designed to reduce the risk of adverse impacts from ships. These areas, designated as Areas to be Avoided (ATBA), were established by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) effective January 2015 and apply to all vessels greater than 400 gross tons making innocent passage through Aleutian Island archipelago. For more information on the history of ATBA designation, see Appendix D.1.2. The ATBA extend 50 nautical miles from the shoreline of the U.S. Aleutian Islands and serve as a routing measure to restrict navigation by larger vessels. The ATBAs are not mandatory although vessels enrolled in an USCG approved Alternative Planning Criteria (APC) are required to transit outside of the ATBAs. The ATBAs do not apply to fishing industry vessels, tugs or vessels making domestic port calls.

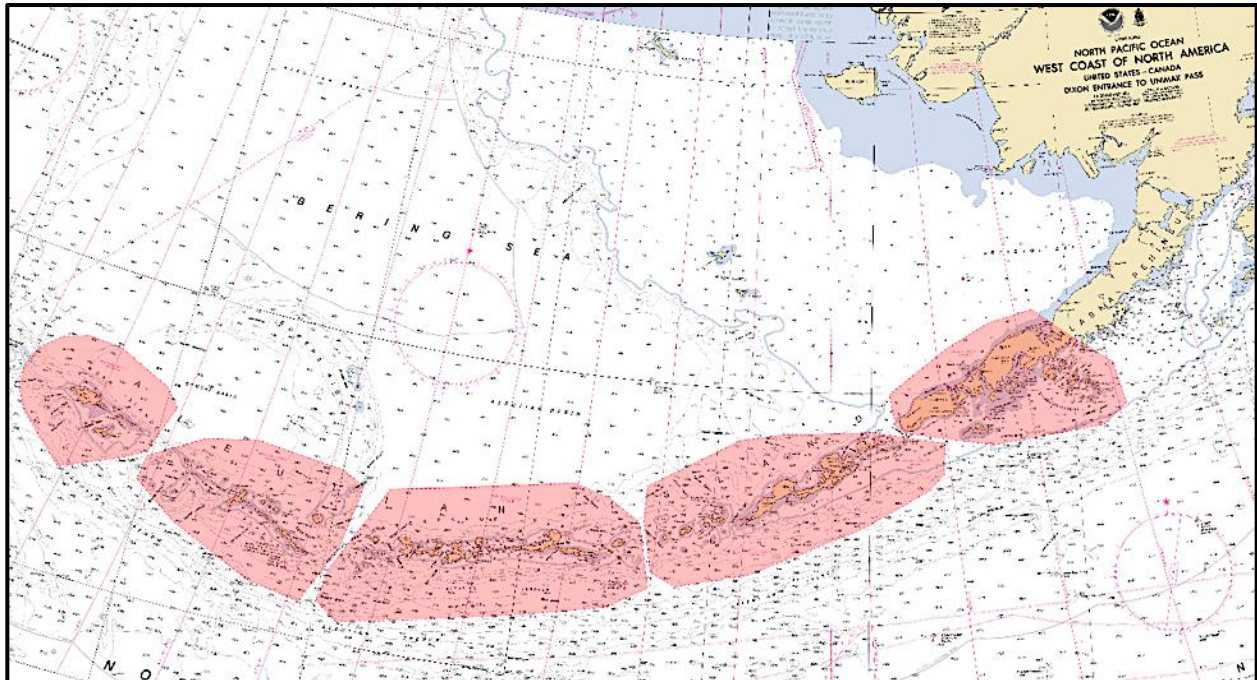


Figure B-4. Aleutian Islands Areas To Be Avoided (ATBAs).

Vessels greater than 400 gross tons making innocent passage through Aleutian Islands should utilize the designated passes and approaches shown in Figure B-5 to maintain position outside

ALEUTIAN ISLANDS WATERWAYS SAFETY PLAN

of the ATBAs. Vessels should only approach within 50 NM of land when transiting through one of the designated passes or approaches or calling on a port in the area.

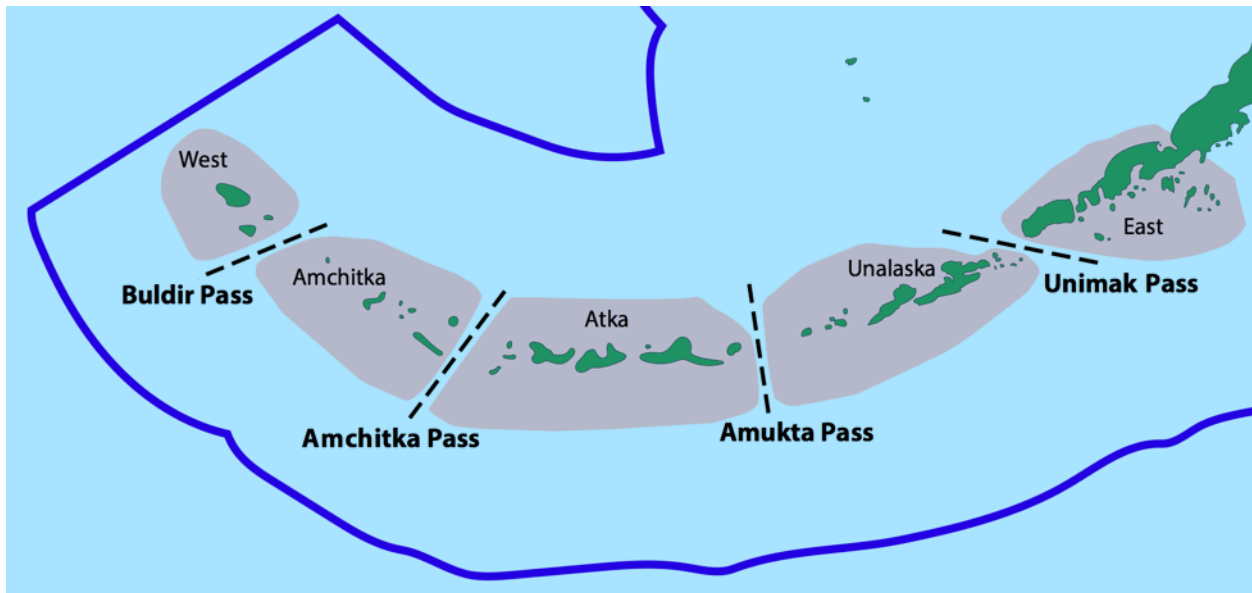


Figure B-5. Designated passes in the Aleutian Islands region.

B.8.1. Requests to Enter an Area to Be Avoided

Vessels subject to the ATBA measures must request permission from the USCG COTP Western Alaska prior to entry into an ATBA using the procedure described in guidance developed by their APC Provider. Prior to entering an ATBA a vessel master must contact their APC Provider and request approval to enter the ATBA.

The APC provider will provide the vessel master with a Storm Weather Avoidance Form that is to be completed and returned to the APC Provider. The APC Provider will forward the form to the USCG Sector for review and approval. The APC Provider will serve as the Point of Contact between the vessel and the USCG.

If the vessel is requesting to enter an ATBA seeking a Place of Refuge additional information is required to be provided to the USCG. Refer to Section B.7.1. Potential Places of Refuge for further information on this procedure.

B.9. NOTICE TO MARINERS

The 17th Coast Guard District publishes a weekly Local Notice to Mariners (LNM) which includes updates to the Light List and applicable NOAA charts. Mariners should use this LNM to maintain awareness over ongoing maritime activity in the Aleutian Islands. The LNM covers aids to navigation, charts, channel depths, marine construction, military operations, bridge repair/construction, significant marine events and other information of interest to mariners.

The web address to receive and/or view the LNM and the yearly Special Local Notice to Mariners (SLNM) is:

<http://www.navcen.uscg.gov/?pageName=InmDistrict®ion=17>

Mariners can submit information to be published into the LNM by contacting the 17th Coast Guard District at: D17-PF-D17-LNM@uscg.mil

Mariners are urged to take advantage of automatic chart distribution as a quick and easy way to ensure the most up to date charts are on board.

Note: NOAA Electronic Navigational Chart (ENC) numbers are listed for vessels navigating using Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS) that comply with International Maritime Organization (IMO) requirements for Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) classed vessels.

B.10. OIL SPILL RESPONSE AND PREPAREDNESS

Certain vessel owners are required, under federal and state law, to hold approved vessel response plans for discharges of oil and hazardous substances. Federal and Alaska laws also require vessel owners to demonstrate financial responsibility to respond to a discharge from their vessels. Vessel owners can arrange to obtain vessel response plans and certificates of financial responsibility through their qualified individuals. The failure of a vessel to comply with state and/or federal requirements may result in the imposition of civil penalties or criminal fines.

The federal and state governments will designate on-scene coordinators to oversee the vessel owner's response to an oil spill. The designated federal and state on scene coordinators will ensure that an owner's response complies with national and area contingency plans covering the area of the discharge.

B.10.1. Vessel Response Plan Requirements and Applicability

Certain vessels, while operating in federal or state waters off the coastline of Alaska, are required to hold vessel response plans to respond to a discharge of oil or hazardous substances from the vessel.

Federal VRP

Tank vessels and non-tank vessels of over 400 gross tons, bound for or departing from a U.S. port, while navigating within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (out to 200 miles from the U.S. coastline), are required by federal law to hold a USCG-approved vessel response plan (VRP).

The USCG has determined that the available response resources in all areas within the Aleutian Islands are inadequate to allow a vessel owner to meet federal response planning standards for