



Marine Safety Information Bulletin

United States Coast Guard
Captain of the Port, Western Alaska

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Sector Anchorage
49000 Army Guard Rd
JBER, AK 99505-0800

Phone: (907) 428-4215
Fax: (907) 428-4218
Email: SectorAnchorageIMD@uscg.mil

Coast Guard Enforcement of Alternative Planning Criteria Restricted Areas in the Western Alaska Captain of the Port Zone

The purpose of this bulletin is to highlight the importance of Areas to Be Avoided (ATBAs) and other restricted areas established in Coast Guard approved Alternative Planning Criteria (APC) plans for vessels operating in the Western Alaska Captain of the Port (WAK COTP) Zone. Dissemination is encouraged to all maritime industry stakeholders including, but not limited to, vessel owners and operators, qualified individuals, APC Administrators, weather routing service providers, and marine underwriters.

On 01 January 2016, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopted five ATBAs for the Aleutian Island chain. The IMO adopted the ATBAs “[i]n order to reduce the risk of a marine casualty and resulting pollution and damage to the environment ‘In the Region of the Aleutian Island Archipelago,’ all ships 400 gross tonnage and upwards solely in transit should avoid the areas to be avoided...”

These areas are designed to keep vessels 50 nautical miles offshore, creating a safety buffer to provide time for a vessel to repair any mechanical issues or to allow response resources to arrive on-scene in case an issue cannot be resolved before a vessel potentially runs aground. A grounded vessel and ensuing oil spill in this remote and ecologically sensitive area would be catastrophic, as highlighted by past events such as the grounding of the M/V SELENDANG AYU in 2004.

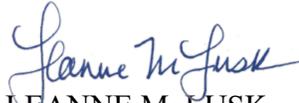
APC Administrators have recognized the inherent risk of allowing vessels to operate in these ATBAs and have restricted vessels operating under their plan from transiting within the ATBAs. Furthermore, APC Administrators identified other high-risk areas that are too remote and ecologically sensitive to allow vessels operating under their plans to enter. These areas are specified within their routing measures or operational guidelines. The purpose for their inclusion within APC plans mirrors the purpose of the IMO ATBAs. In this document, ATBAs and the analogous areas outlined within APC plans, will be referred to as “high-risk areas.”

In order to preserve the safety buffer around high-risk areas, the Captain of the Port for Western Alaska has determined that transiting vessels must abide by the routing measures and operational guidelines established in approved APC plans. Deviations from these Coast Guard approved routing measures are reasonable when it is necessary for the Master to mitigate a significant threat to the vessel, cargo, or crew. Vessel masters are responsible for adequate voyage planning and should not plan deviations in advance to take shelter in high-risk areas. The increased risk to the environment is unacceptable. If a master is uncertain about the safety of their vessel while planning an upcoming transit through a weather system, they are encouraged to delay the voyage or alter their intended course in order to maintain compliance with their Vessel Response Plan. Any vessel that unreasonably deviates from its approved routing measures may be subject to enforcement action by the WAK COTP. Additionally, in accordance with 33 USC 2704(c), unreasonable

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deviations from approved routing as identified within an APC Plan may waive the responsible party's limit on liability should a discharge occur.

This MSIB supersedes the applicable sections of APC Administrators' approved plans until the plans are updated to include the above criteria. Thank you for your assistance and cooperation in protecting the pristine nature of Alaskan waters. All questions can be directed to Coast Guard Sector Anchorage Incident Management Division at SectorAnchorageIMD@uscg.mil.



LEANNE M. LUSK
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Captain of the Port, Western Alaska