



United States Coast Guard
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

News Release

U.S. Coast Guard 13th District PA Detachment Astoria

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Coast Guard urges safety, preparedness for upcoming Dungeness crab season

Commercial Fishing Vessels

HAZARDOUS BAR CROSSING PROCEDURE

33 CFR 165.1196 and 165.1325:

WHEN THE BAR IS RESTRICTED BETWEEN SUNSET AND SUNRISE, CONTACT THE COAST GUARD ON VHF-FM CH 16 / 22.

- RECEIVE UPDATED BAR INFORMATION
- **PRIOR TO CROSSING PROVIDE:**
 - VESSEL NAME
 - POSITION
 - NUMBER OF PEOPLE ONBOARD
 - DESTINATION (INBOUND, OUTBOUND, OFFSHORE, ETC.)
 - LIMITATIONS (STEERING, PROPULSION, ETC.)
- DISCUSS ESCORT OPTIONS (IF NECESSARY)
- **AFTER CROSSING, REPORT SAFE TRANSIT**

LIFEJACKETS / IMMERSION SUITS MUST BE WORN ON BOARD OR READILY AVAILABLE WHILE INSIDE

www.FishSafeWest.info



Editors' Note: Click on images to download high resolution version

SEATTLE — The Coast Guard urges commercial fishermen to ensure vessel safety to prevent maritime emergencies before the opening of the commercial Dungeness crab season scheduled to begin Sunday with the Pre-Soak.

Marine investigators from Coast Guard Marine Safety Unit Portland have responded to over 200 marine casualties so far this year with a large portion of those incidents involving commercial fishing vessels.

The Coast Guard reminds all mariners that when unsafe conditions exist at the bar, the Coast Guard will prohibit the passage of recreational and uninspected passenger vessels based on their size. When the conditions exceed operating parameters of Coast Guard search and rescue

resources, the bar will be closed, and no vessels can cross unless specifically authorized by the Captain of the Port.

The Coast Guard will notify the public of bar restrictions and bar closures via a Broadcast Notice to Mariners on VHF-FM channel 16 and 22A. Monitoring cameras and associated websites prior to setting out to sea may provide mariners with additional information in certain locations.

The Coast Guard reminds all commercial fishermen that prior to crossing a restricted bar between sunset and sunrise, they must notify the Coast Guard on VHF-FM channel 16 or 22A to provide their vessel name, position, number of people aboard, destination, and any vessel limitations. After crossing, they are required to report back a safe transit or otherwise.

Life jackets or immersion suits must be worn by all persons on deck or located in any open areas of the vessel while crossing a restricted bar. Life jackets or immersion suits are required to be readily accessible for all persons located in any enclosed spaces of vessels when crossing a bar with restrictions in place. Life jackets are also required whenever a vessel is under tow or while being escorted across the bar by the Coast Guard. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in a maximum civil penalty of \$25,000.

Mariners directing the movement of large ships offshore and along the Columbia River have indicated to the Coast Guard that the high-intensity ‘work-lights’ used by commercial fishing vessels prevent vessel operators from seeing the fishing vessel’s navigation lights at night and in low visibility conditions. Occasionally, attempts to hail a fishing vessel to make passing arrangements fail due to crew members not monitoring the designated frequency.

A clear and present threat to navigation safety exists when one vessel cannot see the navigation lights of another vessel. If navigation lights are obscured, the aspect of the latter vessel cannot be determined making it extremely difficult for both vessels to successfully execute the nautical rules of the road. Navigational Rule 20 states that no other lights that may impair the visibility of the lights specified in the Rules shall be displayed from sunset to sunrise and during periods of low visibility.

When transiting the bar or channel, do not run with ‘work-lights’ engaged. Vessels found to be in violation of Rule 20 may be subject to a maximum fine of \$15,173.

A threat to navigation safety exists when one vessel cannot communicate with another vessel when operating in close proximity and the intentions of either vessel cannot be determined. 33 CFR § 26 identifies VHF Channel 13 as the designated frequency that is required to be monitored along the Columbia River by all power-driven vessels over 20 meters. Vessels found to be in violation of this regulation may be subject to a maximum fine of \$2,164.

Navigational Rule 5 states that every vessel shall at all times maintain a proper look-out by sight and hearing as well as by “all available means”. “All available means” includes the effective use of available instruments and equipment, in addition to the use of both sight and hearing. Vessels found to be in violation of this regulation may be subject to a maximum fine of \$15,173.

“The pandemic has negatively impacted many fishermen financially and the announcement of the start of the 2021-2022 commercial Dungeness season opening December 1st without delay for the first time in seven years, will mean a brighter Christmas for many,” said Lt. Carl Eschler, chief of the investigations division at MSU Portland. “Fresh crab may be on the table for Christmas for the first time in years, and the Coast Guard wants everyone to be able to enjoy it. No matter how many times you’ve crossed over a bar, fishermen are encouraged to contact their local Coast Guard station to familiarize themselves with bar conditions and reporting methods. Contacting the Coast Guard prior to crossing a restricted bar between sunset and sunrise is more than just a good idea for commercial fishermen, it’s a requirement.”

You can access current bar conditions and restrictions on your smart phone or hand held device by going to: <https://www.weather.gov/pqr/AllBars>

Information for each bar along the Oregon Coast can be accessed at: <https://www.oregon.gov/osmb/boater-info/Pages/Water-Level-and-Chart-Information.aspx>

Coast Guard District 13 Local Notice to Mariners can be accessed at: <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Featured-Content/Mariners/Local-Notice-to-Mariners-LNMs/District-13/>

Mariners are encouraged to sign up to receive Local Notice to Mariners e-mail updates.

Marine Safety information Bulletin, Crossing Hazardous Bars in the Pacific Northwest: http://www.fishsafewest.info/PDFs/MSIB_Hazardous_Bars_Final.pdf

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