

**U.S. Department of
Homeland Security**

**United States
Coast Guard**



Captain of the Port
United States Coast Guard
Marine Safety Office

510 L Street, Suite 100
Anchorage, AK 99501-1946
Staff Symbol: POPS
Phone: (907) 271-6708
FAX: (907) 271-6751
Email: Jay.J.Jerome@uscg.mil

16710
January 30, 2006

From: Captain of the Port, Western Alaska
To: Distribution

Ref: (a) November 28, 2005 Ice Rules for Upper Cook Inlet
(b) January 26, 2005 Ice Rules; Extended to all of Cook Inlet

Extreme Ice conditions have occurred in Cook Inlet on multiple occasions during winters past, with the worst occurring during the winter of 1999. These severe ice conditions came about during prolonged periods of sustained sub-zero temperatures, high spring tides, and westerly winds. There were several hazardous events that occurred, most notably, the parting of numerous mooring lines from the M/V OCEAN LAUREL due to pressures exerted by large pans of ice during a period of high-tide and swift current. This resulted in several thousands of dollars worth of damage to the vessel and the Agrium dock facility. There were also other instances of vessels experiencing difficulty approaching and/or staying at the berth, damage to propellers, icing of sea-chests, and severely-diminished crew ability to safely work on deck.

Most of the ice-related problems at the berths in Nikiski occurred when winds from the west pushed large pans of ice against the face of the dock. These pans were then propelled by faster tidal currents from spring tides. In some instances, forces against vessels were sufficient to part lines or prevent berthing altogether. Extreme Ice conditions are enacted when the following conditions occur:

1. Sustained sub-zero temperatures over a period of more than 7 days. If these temperatures are accompanied by relatively calm weather, ice formation may be accelerated.
2. A period of spring tides, or tidal currents in excess of 4 knots.
3. Winds from the westerly quadrant (Nikiski Terminals).
4. The presence of large developed pans of thick, hard ice.

Due to observed severe icing conditions in Cook Inlet this winter, the Coast Guard has imposed special operating conditions and restrictions in addition to those specified in references (a) and (b) for all vessels transiting Cook Inlet. These "Extreme Ice Rules" will remain in effect until the Captain of the Port, Western Alaska, in conjunction with the Southwest Pilots Association (SWAPA), determines the increased threat to shipping no longer exists.

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When Extreme Ice conditions exist, the Captain of the Port will carefully evaluate ship movements within Cook Inlet. Vessels shall not force ice at any time. If, in the opinion of the vessel master and/or pilot, the vessel is forcing ice, the transit shall be aborted. A good indication of forcing ice shall be when the vessel slows 50% or less of the speed being made before entering the ice.

If Extreme Ice conditions preclude safe operation of vessels or the berths in Nikiski, Drift River, Port Mackenzie, or the Port of Anchorage the Captain of the Port may implement the following restrictions on a cases by case basis:

1. Termination of cargo operations
2. A requirement for a pilot(s) to remain aboard while the vessel remains at dock.
3. Closure of the terminal or port.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Lieutenant Jay Jerome at (907) 271-6708 or Lieutenant Ken Phillips at (907) 283-3292.

Sincerely,



M. R. Devries
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard
Captain of the Port, Western Alaska