



"Citizens promoting environmentally safe operation of the Alyeska terminal and associated tankers."

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Coastal firefighters to get free training for battling shipboard blazes

The Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council is sponsoring the 5th Land-Based Marine Firefighting Symposium in Valdez, Alaska May 5-7, 2008.

Through this program, 50-75 firefighters, oil spill response personnel, and other emergency services providers from Prince William Sound and other Alaska coastal communities will receive hands-on classroom and field training for responding to fires on oil tankers and other ships.

There is no cost to the firefighters' home departments, as expenses are paid by the council and the Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, with supplemental support in the form of sponsorships. These are provided by Alaska Tanker Company, Polar Tankers, Crowley Marine Services, the City of Valdez, Southwest Alaska Pilots Association, and Reynolds Alaska, for such things as the use of vessels, meals, books, use of the Valdez Convention and Civic Center, docking fees, and tanker pilotage.

While there are no more sponsored slots, space is available for firefighters who wish to attend the symposium and provide their own travel, lodging and meals. Tuition is free for all participants. Interested firefighters should contact the council's Valdez office for information.

Representatives from the American Salvage Association, the Coast Guard, the Southwest Alaska Pilots Association, and the state fire marshal's office plan to participate in this year's event, as do firefighters from Anchorage, Cordova, Haines, Homer, Hoonah, Nikiski, Ketchikan, Petersburg, Port Graham, Seldovia, Seward, Sitka, Unalaska, Valdez, Whittier and Alyeska Pipeline Service Company.

Five instructors will provide coursework and seminars on both operations and command procedures used in real events. Topics to be covered include basic shipboard firefighting and vessel familiarization; tank farm, cruise ship, small boat, and marina awareness; fire safety/fire prevention planning and ship's crew coordination; and the politics of a marine incident including regulatory authority and plan implementation.

New to this year's symposium is a panel discussion on the initial incident command system that would be established during a marine fire event.

The council is an independent non-profit organization whose mission is to promote environmentally safe operation of Alyeska Pipeline's Valdez Marine Terminal, associated oil tankers, and contracted escort tugs. The council monitors Alyeska's Valdez terminal and tanker operations, conducts independent research, and advises industry and government on ways to prevent oil spills and respond effectively if spills do occur. More information on the symposium is available on the council website at www.pwsrcac.org/projects/MaritimeOps/marinefire.html or by calling the council's Valdez office at 907-834 5000.

Note to editors: Photographs of past fire training symposiums can be reviewed at:

www.pwsrcac.org/projects/MaritimeOps/marinefire2005.html and

www.pwsrcac.org/projects/MaritimeOps/marinefire2003.html.

If you would like high-resolutions versions of any of these images for publication, contact Stan Jones at jones@pwsrcac.org or 907-273-6230.

If you received this news release by fax, you can obtain it electronically by emailing a request to jones@pwsrcac.org. ♦