

## ***Section 10: Cruise Ship Incidents***

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### **Introduction**

This section describes the role and responsibilities of the City of Seward when an emergency incident occurs that either directly involves or impacts cruise ship passengers and/or crew in Seward.

The role of the City of Seward during a cruise ship emergency is to assist and support, within the city's capability, in managing the shoreside response to a cruise ship emergency.

This section describes the roles and responsibilities of city departments when a cruise ship emergency occurs, and also describes how a response would be coordinated with the U.S. Coast Guard, cruise ship companies, government officials, and other entities.

### **Seward Cruise Ship Emergencies**

Cruise ship traffic in and out of Seward is seasonal, with most cruise ship visits from mid-May to mid-September. The number of ships that visit Seward each season varies significantly. Historically, the total number of cruise ships to visit Seward each year has varied from less than 20 to more than 100. Crew sizes and passenger capacities vary among the various types of ships to visit Seward, with the largest vessels having 1200 to 1500 people (passengers and crew) on board.

Seward is a turnaround point for many Alaska tour packages, so sometimes cruise ships may disembark and the passengers may transfer over to bus or train legs. The cruise lines maintain buses to transport passengers. These cruise ship buses, as well as the tour buses often hired to meet the ship, may be an important evacuation/transport resource if a cruise ship incident should occur.

Depending upon the type of incident, a cruise ship emergency could involve one or more of the following elements:

- Fuel oil or hazardous materials release
- Mass casualty
- Public health emergency (infectious disease outbreak)
- Terrorist act
- Mass evacuation
- Sheltering of displaced passengers and crew due to vessel fire, grounding, accident, or other emergency
- Search and rescue to locate lost passengers or crewmembers

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### **Cruise Ship Incident Management**

A cruise ship emergency will likely utilize a Unified Command structure, through which all agencies with jurisdictional responsibility come together under a single command and control structure. The Unified Command directs all aspects of incident response and uses a designated IC to manage response operations. The IC will be chosen by the Unified Commanders and will normally be the RP's designated official. At any one time, there can be only one IC; however, the IC can change as the incident changes.

### **Communications**

During a cruise ship incident with shoreside involvement, passengers and crew, and their friends and relatives will have a strong desire to know what is going on. Family and friends may overload the city's communications systems trying to find out if their loved ones have been affected by a cruise ship emergency. Those on the vessel will attempt to notify their loved ones quickly about their status. Relatives typically do not know the name of the vessel their family member(s) is on – only that they are "cruising somewhere in Alaska." With 45,000 cruise ship passengers in Alaska at any given moment during the cruise season, the demand for information will be tremendous. When a cruise ship incident occurs, Seward can expect calls from around the world.

Experience has shown that good communications during a cruise ship incident is vital. Yet, good communications with cruise ships can be very difficult in many parts of coastal Alaska. Marine communications is very sophisticated on modern cruise ships but must be used primarily for communicating with the ship owners and operators, the U.S. Coast Guard, and other response agencies. On the other hand, many passengers may have cellular telephones and attempt to use those phones to call family and friends to inform them of the situation. Considering all of this, a good communications plan is essential. Cruise lines will establish a "1-800" number to handle passenger status inquiries. The Seward IMT, JIC, and SECC should assist in publicizing this number.

**It is critical that the city coordinate with the cruise ship company and the state or federal incident management team to ensure that a 1-800 number for information about the incident is widely published. The local EOC phone number should NEVER be published.**

### **Emergency Medical Services**

Medical needs can be high in a cruise ship emergency. The ship's medical staff and spaces are limited. Their capacity to handle medical emergencies will likely be exceeded very quickly. Medical assistance by local responders will be provided much easier if the ship is in port than if it is underway in the region and heading for Seward and immediate evacuation is needed for a large number of people. Evacuation of people needing medical attention from the ship by commercial helicopter is not likely, since most commercial helicopters do not have passenger hoisting capability and experience. In the event of a possible WMD incident first

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responders, including EMS, should be aware of possible contamination of personnel equipment, and medical facilities.

**Since emergency medical resources and treatment capabilities are limited in the City of Seward, it is important to work with the cruise line and the incident response to help them identify hospitals and treatment facilities in other KPB cities or other parts of the Tri-Borough region.**

### **Reception Centers**

Any of the shelter facilities identified in Section 8 of this plan may be used for the reception and sheltering of cruise ship evacuees. However, since some facilities are also used as schools, dorms, or other seasonal uses, it is important to consider the potential disruption caused by the use of such facilities.

**An incident that affects both the City of Seward and a cruise ship may pose significant challenges due to the need to shelter both displaced local residents and cruise ship passengers and crew.**

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### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **City of Seward**

The City of Seward will play a significant role in a cruise ship emergency if the vessel is moored or anchored in Seward's ports and harbors, or is near Seward waters and intends to proceed in the event of an emergency to Seward. City officials will be notified and may be asked for assistance by the U.S. Coast Guard. City officials may also be the first notified of a cruise ship emergency through dispatch. In any case, the City Manager should be immediately notified and should determine whether to activate the IMT and implement the EOP.

The main role for the City of Seward during a cruise ship emergency may be to provide, through Unified Command:

- Use of the City Emergency Operations Center (EOC),
- Shoreside marine firefighting support (air, foam, water),
- Emergency medical services (EMS) for injured passengers and crew landed ashore,
- Support management of designated landing areas,
- Assistance in evacuee transport from the landing area to the reception/processing area (security, crowd control, ground transport coordination),
- Activation and staffing of the reception area until it can be fully staffed by cruise industry personnel,
- Assistance in evacuee accountability and reporting,
- Assistance to the cruise industry in providing lodging and shelter in the event that the capacity of the reception facility and local hotel accommodations are exceeded,
- Staff for the Unified Command Joint Information Center (JIC), including providing information for family and friends of the evacuees and injured.

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### **Key Local Functions During a Cruise Ship Incident**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Coordinate With:</b>
Activate Seward EOP/IMT.	All city departments Unified Command
Notify Providence Seward Medical Center of injuries/illness.	Ship's medical personnel Public Health
Prepare port facilities for landing & movement of passengers.	Local transportation resources (buses, vessels, etc.)
Assist with establishment of reception areas for displaced passengers and crew.	Cruise ship company Aid organizations
Provide triage, medical treatment, patient transport for injured persons landed ashore.	Regional and state medical resources
Provide representative to Unified Command.	Harbormaster
Set up local emergency shelters as needed.	Cruise ship company, aid organizations, KPB SD

**Appendix A contains a Cruise Ship Incident Assessment Form that may be useful in collecting information on a cruise ship incident.**

### **Responsible Party (Vessel owner/operator)**

The first line of responsibility rests with the owners and operators of cruise ships, called "the Responsible Party" (RP). They are obligated to take all necessary precautions to prevent and respond to cruise ship casualties. They have significant resources to meet their obligations, including financial and organizational resources, professional and experienced staff on the ships and in their company, and access to emergency and safety equipment. The cruise ship industry has established company emergency plans and emergency operations procedures. In addition, they frequently exercise their plans and procedures both internally and with government responders.

Cruise ship companies are represented in Seward through an agent. The agent working with a company experiencing an emergency will likely be the first person to respond for the company in Seward. The agent will mobilize local cruise industry resources until company representatives arrive.

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### **Federal Agencies**

The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) is the lead federal agency with jurisdiction for responding to maritime emergencies in U.S. waters. The Commander, Seventeenth Coast Guard District (located in Juneau) executes those responsibilities for cruise ship incidents in all Alaska waters. In Seward, Sector Anchorage (formerly MSO Anchorage) has primary responsibility for responding to marine casualties and security threats, while the District Command Center and District operating units in the region will manage the SAR operations aspects of the emergency. The Commanding Officer, Sector Anchorage is assigned responsibilities for port safety and security as the Captain of the Port (COTP) for Western Alaska, and as the Officer-in-Charge of Marine Inspection (OCMI) Western Alaska for commercial vessel safety. For cruise ship casualties, the COTP normally assumes the role as the federal Incident Commander for marine safety aspects of the incident. Since Coast Guard units work well together during a response to a significant cruise ship incident, the transition from a SAR-focused operation to a marine safety operation will not be a formal one. There will most likely be a gradual shift in priorities as the event evolves and the Coast Guard Incident Commander will change from the District Command Center as the case shifts from SAR to the Commanding Officer of Sector Anchorage for marine safety operations.

The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) has lead responsibility for criminal investigation of terrorist acts and threats inside the U.S., as well as for related intelligence collection. The FBI shall also coordinate the activities of other members of the law enforcement community to detect, prevent, preempt, and disrupt terrorist attacks within the U.S.

The Bureau of Customs and Border Protection will likely be a significant participant in passenger and crew reception and tracking.

### **State of Alaska**

The Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM) operates the State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC) and helps coordinate and provide logistic support for the response of state agencies to emergencies and disasters. In addition, DHS&EM, through the State Emergency Coordination Center, will coordinate with Federal Government agencies to request assets that are not available from local and State resources, such as; Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team (DMORT), Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT), and DOD MEDEVAC resources.

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation is the lead State agency with jurisdiction for responding to releases of hazardous material and oil spills. During a cruise ship incident the State On Scene Coordinator (SOSC) will direct and coordinate the State's response to an actual or potential spill.

The Alaska State Troopers will be involved when there is the possibility that the cause of the casualty was due to criminal activity. They will assist the FBI. They may also provide persons for the Coast Guard Away Team.

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The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services may assist Unified Command in coordinating requests for medical assets within the City of Seward.

### **Evacuation and Care of Passengers and Crew**

***Note: In February 2004, a Working Group composed of governmental response agencies and the cruise ship industry developed general procedures for the management of evacuees. This information is adapted here for the City of Seward***

#### **Overview**

The decision to remove passengers and non-essential crew rests with the master of the vessel, who will consult with the vessel's company officials and the Coast Guard. If the vessel is underway and a decision is made to evacuate people, the Coast Guard will lead the operation to remove people and likely ask for assistance from the City and the State to work with the RP (under the overall umbrella of Unified Command) to:

- Designate landing areas for helicopters and rescue vessels
- Provide shoreside transportation for evacuees
- Track the whereabouts of evacuees
- Provide shelter / lodging for evacuees
- Provide appropriate medical treatment for evacuees

#### **Standard Procedures for Evacuee Accountability**

If large numbers of passengers and crew are evacuated from a vessel, the following procedure for accountability is recommended.

##### ***1. Master of vessel orders evacuation.***

- Master notifies USCG SAR Mission Controller (SMC) and responsible industry party of evacuation plan. Notification of impending evacuation is passed as required.

##### ***2. USCG SAR Mission Coordinator (SMC) designates an On Scene Commander (OSC), if not already assigned.***

- The OSC is responsible to coordinate all on scene rescue assets, to track lifeboats and life rafts, and to manage empty life boats/rafts.
- Rescue boats report total number of evacuees on board to OSC.
- OSC directs the rescue boats to landing site, and reports departure of each to USCG (RCC) with total count of evacuees. RCC relays information to the industry EOC.

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- Rescue boats report their arrival time at landing site to the OSC, and confirm the total number of persons offloaded. OSC provides additional tasking as required to the rescue boat.

### ***3. Unified Command takes the following action:***

- Implements an evacuee accountability process. [See Items 7 and 8.]
- Determines / designates best landing site(s) for rescue boats and relays information to RCC, OSC and responsible industry party EOC. [See Item 4.]
  - Designation of landing sites will depend on weather, travel distance, water depth, transportation support, ability to safely discharge passengers from rescue boats, and other local concerns or limiting factors for ground transportation.
  - If terrorist related incident, landing site(s) shall be inspected for explosive devices prior to the arrival of evacuees, and appropriate actions implemented taken to deter secondary attacks.
- Identifies best options for reception center(s) and coordinates with responsible industry party for activation.
  - If terrorist related incident, reception center(s) shall be inspected for explosive devices prior to the arrival of evacuees, and appropriate actions implemented to deter secondary attacks.

### ***4. Unified Command activates and secures landing site(s):***

- Unified Command designates a Landing Area Manager for each site. The Landing Area Manager is responsible for overall site management, security, safety, and ensuring protocols are followed.
- Responsible industry party, supported by local community resources and USCG, will normally operate the landing sites
- Local, state, or federal law enforcement will secure site and be responsible for site security, crowd and traffic control.
  - If terrorist related incident, landing site(s) shall be inspected for explosive devices prior to the arrival of evacuees, and appropriate actions implemented to deter secondary attacks.
  - Local emergency response services will establish required decontamination and triage areas at landing site and transport injured persons to Providence Medical Center or suitable clinic or hospital.
  - Port department or facility owner will clear docks and landing areas to facilitate operations.

### ***5. Unified Command designates helicopter-landing pads as required.***

- Assign helicopter pad manger for each site.
- Inform FAA of sites.

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***6. Responsible industry party and local agents arrange transport from landing site(s) to reception center(s) for evacuees not in need of immediate medical attention. [See Item 9 for basic reception center requirements.]***

- If terrorist related incident, transport vehicles shall be inspected for explosive devices prior to the arrival of evacuees,, and appropriate actions implemented to deter secondary attacks during transport.

***7. Unified Command establishes an Evacuee Accountability Branch at the appropriate command post or reception center to manage passenger and crew tracking. Responsible Industry party and their agents will normally take the lead, but may be assisted with available resources from the USCG, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Red Cross or other local agency.***

- For a foreign flagged vessel or ship arriving from a foreign country, the US Bureau of Customs and Border Protection may require all passengers and crew to be tracked from landing site to reception center. At the reception center, the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection may implement emergency arrival and screening processes.
- If the situation requires evacuees to be cleared by law enforcement prior to final release, the Unified Command shall implement as quickly as possible procedures to contain all evacuees at the landing site, and to process, screen, and as necessary, interview personnel at the reception center.

***8. Recommended evacuee accountability process and responsibilities:***

- **Step 1:** MEDEVAC patients from the vessel are tracked by USCG RCC.
  - Gather patient information & relay to hospitals, reception centers
- **Step 2:** Evacuees board rescue vessels.
  - Track total number of evacuees being transported. OSC will direct the rescue vessel to the designated landing site.
  - An accurate list of passenger names is not vital at this stage because when the rescue vessel reaches the landing site, the group will likely be split up or combined with others for transport to reception center(s).
  - Secure landing site to keep people from wandering off.
- **Step 3:** Evacuees arrive at landing site and are transported to reception center(s).
  - If terrorist related incident, landing sites and reception center(s) shall be inspected for explosive devices prior to the arrival of evacuees, and appropriate actions taken to deter secondary attacks.

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- Evacuees requiring decontamination or medical attention will be decontaminated /triaged by local response personnel. Evacuees in need of immediate medical treatment will be transported by local EMS to medical facilities. If possible, patient identification will be gathered prior to transport and provided to accountability branch. If information is not available prior to the patient being admitted to the hospital, USCG will coordinate with hospital officials for release of patient information necessary for passenger accountability.
- Evacuees not requiring decontamination / medical treatment will be loaded onto buses or other vehicles for transport to reception center(s). Ideally, a responsible industry party official, or other designated person, will accompany each transport vehicle. While enroute to the reception center, this official will develop an accurate list of full names (required), cabin numbers (required), and other requested information. If not possible to place a dedicated official on each transport vehicle, the driver, or a reception center official, will collect required information as passengers depart the transport vehicle. At a minimum, this tracking information must be taken as evacuees depart the bus or vehicle.
- For ease of data collection and comparison, a standard format for recording information is recommended, but not critical as long as information is eligible and accurate.
- Throughout the process, the importance of accountability in the rescue process will be stressed to passengers.
- **Step 4:** Evacuees arrive at the Reception Center(s).
  - Passengers and crew are escorted into the reception center. The list of evacuees from Step 3 is delivered to the reception area check in manager. Evacuee names are checked against the "souls on board" manifest provided by the agents.
  - Passengers are instructed to stay with their group until processed at the reception area. Accountability is again stressed to evacuees so they do not leave reception area until processed by the accountability team, and as required, by the Customs and Border Protection Service and law enforcement officials.
  - As appropriate, Customs/Border Protection may implement emergency arrival and screening processes.
  - If evacuees departed the vessel without proper identification, vessel operators, Customs/Border Protection, and TSA will coordinate on requirements and process to permit clearance and travel. Vessel operators often maintain copies of passports or other identification documents for passengers and crew.
  - If available, information sheets are handed out to evacuees.
- **Step 5:** Accountability Reporting.
  - An agent appointed by the responsible industry party will consolidate accountability reports from all reception centers. The USCG and

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Customs may provide resources to assist in this process to speed the flow of information.

- Consolidated passenger and crew accountability information will be transmitted at regular intervals by the most rapid means available to the USCGD17 (RCC) and responsible industry party EOC. If desired, the RCC and responsible industry party EOC may again compare the information received to their copy of the souls on board list.
- Terminations of rescue efforts will occur only after all passengers and crew are accounted for and determined to be safe.
- Responsible industry party shall maintain accountability of passengers and crew ashore until travel arrangements are completed.
- **Step 6:** Accounting for personnel remaining on board vessel.
  - As required, once all passengers and non –essential crew are evacuated, the master of the vessel will provide the OSC a list of all personnel remaining on board to continue response efforts. This information will be relayed to USCG(RCC), reception center, and responsible industry party EOC.

### ***9. Reception Center Requirements***

- Responsible industry party will coordinate with agents and local community resources to identify, secure, and staff a reception center.
- If terrorist related incident, reception center(s) shall be inspected for explosive devices prior to the arrival of evacuees, and actions taken to deter secondary attacks.
- As a minimum, reception centers should provide:
  - Registration and check in-out desk
  - Information desk
  - Food / Water (Red Cross / Salvation Army can assist)
  - Rest rooms
  - Security
- The following services are desirable for the reception center if space and resources permit and can be provided in time for benefit. These services typically require pre-planning by local communities and response organizations.
  - Communications access: telephone, Internet
  - Medical Services
  - Mental health/stress services
  - Comfort kits: clothing, hygiene items, etc.
  - Rest areas: Cots/blankets
  - Recreation, if possible

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- Message Center
- Interview rooms
- Translator services

***10. As necessary, USCG, Alaska State Troopers, medical services, and company officials confirm next of kin notification procedures. Morgue services will be provided in accordance with city/state plans.***