



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PSP levels elevated in Southeast Alaska Dungeness Crabs

(ANCHORAGE, AK) — Viscera from Dungeness crab harvested from Southeast Alaska waters are showing elevated levels of the toxins that cause paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP). Three samples taken by the Department of Fish & Game in area 115-32 on Thursday, July 14, have PSP levels above the legal limit of 70 micrograms per hundred grams ($\mu\text{g}/100\text{g}$).

Based on these results, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation has directed that any processor receiving Dungeness from this area must eviscerate (remove the guts from) the animals and may not sell them as whole crab until further notice. This restriction applies to the areas of North Lynn Canal, including Chilkat Inlet, Chilkoot Inlet and Lutak Inlet.

Recreational or subsistence harvested crabs from these areas also should be eviscerated before consumption. Crabmeat is not known to contain the PSP toxin, but crab guts can contain unsafe levels and should be discarded. Shellfish such as clams, mussels, oysters, geoducks and scallops can contain paralytic shellfish poison. PSP cannot be cooked or cleaned out of shellfish. Commercially harvested shellfish and crabs are tested and considered safe.

Early signs of PSP often include tingling of the lips and tongue. Symptoms may progress to tingling of fingers and toes, then loss of control of arms and legs, followed by difficulty breathing. Death can result in as little as two hours.

Paralytic shellfish poisoning is considered a public health emergency. Suspected cases must be reported immediately to the Section of Epidemiology by health care providers at 907-269-8000 during work hours or 800-478-0084 after hours.

For more information on PSP visit DEC's Food Safety and Sanitation shellfish page at: <http://dec.alaska.gov/eh/fss/seafood/shellfish.htm>

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services also has information on PSP here: http://www.hss.state.ak.us/pdf/201006_shellfish.pdf