



ALASKA
Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Ocean Ranger Program

Background

In 2006, Alaska voters passed a ballot initiative creating an Ocean Ranger program in the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) which became law on December 17, 2006. Alaska is the first and only state in the country to require U.S. Coast Guard licensed marine engineers on board vessels to act as independent observers monitoring State environmental and marine discharge requirements and to ensure that passengers and crew are protected from improper sanitation, health, and safety practices. DEC is implementing the law in stages: the early season program, transitional program, and ocean ranger program. What follows is a status report of progress being made to as of September 2007.

Program Development

Efforts to date: DEC is currently establishing the following:

- Ocean Ranger job duties to perform efficient and effective environmental compliance according to the law, including effective education and updated training,
- Logistical support needed for Ocean Rangers on board vessels,
- The estimated total cost to fully implement the program,
- Synchronization with existing state and federal oversight to create an effective Ocean Ranger Program,
- Procedures to verify environmental compliance with the requirements of the Large Commercial Passenger Vessel Wastewater General Permit as required by the law,

- Training requirements to verify environmental compliance on board, including food safety, public health, and safety.

DEC directed a contractor to develop a report on the different options for employing Ocean Rangers on board vessels. The March 7, 2007, report “ADEC Final Report Ocean Ranger Program Cruise Ship Ballot Measure Implementation” is available at: www.dec.state.ak.us/water/cruise_ships/pdfs/ADEC%20Report_OR_implementation_7March1.pdf

Current status: DEC is soliciting proposals for assistance with development and implementation of the Ocean Ranger program for the 2008 cruise season. The Request for Proposals is available at: http://www.dec.state.ak.us/public_notices.htm. The selected contractor will provide the framework for the 2008 season under close supervision of DEC by further developing the inspection and verification guide, and checklist. The contractor will also develop and conduct a training course for the Ocean Rangers, administer the program and manage the logistics of placing Ocean Rangers on most large commercial passenger vessels during each visit to Alaska.

Objective: The inspection and verification checklist will be used to develop Ocean Ranger duties, guidelines, and a training manual.

Ship Board Observations—Cruise Season 2007

Efforts to date: In May 2007, interim observers, under contract with DEC, began serving many of the Ocean Ranger functions by verifying environmental and sanitation compliance onboard cruise ships as required by the new law. Engineers and other observers go aboard at one port and disembark at the next. While aboard, they work through a schedule of observations that includes inspecting wastewater systems, reviewing environmental records and serving as the on-board contact for DEC staff.

Current status: Throughout the 2007 season, DEC retained a contractor that put observers and U.S. Coast Guard licensed marine engineers on board cruise ships in

Alaska. The information gathered during 2007 will allow DEC to assess training and logistics for the 2008 season. In August, DEC provided specific vessel verification training and on board familiarization for the licensed marine engineers. These licensed marine engineers will travel on the cruise vessels for the remainder of the 2007 season. The specific information gathered from the licensed marine engineers and observers may be used for further implementation of the Ocean Ranger program.

Plan: DEC will use the information gathered by observers and marine engineers in 2007 to develop and implement the Ocean Ranger program for the 2008 cruise season.

Ship Board Observations—Cruise Season 2008

Current Status: A proposal to assist DEC with the 2008 implementation of the Ocean Ranger Program will be selected after September 12, 2007.

Plan: DEC is planning to have a fully staffed and operational Ocean Ranger program in place for the 2008 season.

Public Information and Forums

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), held a public meeting about the Ocean Ranger program on June 7, 2007. Its purpose was to inform the public about the development of the Ocean Ranger program as mandated by Ballot Measure 2, passed by Alaskan voters in August 2006.

For more information, go to:

www.dec.state.ak.us/water/cruise_ships/cpv_ocean%20ranger%20program.html

DEC is planning to schedule a follow up public meeting on the Ocean Ranger program in the fall of 2007.