

Alaska Marine Safety Education Association

*A community-based cold water &
boating safety training network*

Volume 19, Number 2
Summer 2003

AMSEA Staff Enjoys New Offices

On July 24 AMSEA moved into new offices at 2924 Halibut Point Road in Sitka. In this new facility AMSEA has a permanent home. Staff is especially pleased with the improved storage this building provides for the large amount of training gear shipped in and out of the office to marine safety instructors around the state.

The new building also provides room for a larger staff, should one become necessary, and an expanding number of objectives. AMSEA's mailing address, phone, and fax all remain the same.

Website Upgraded

AMSEA's web site has recently undergone a significant upgrade. Visitors to www.amsea.org will now find improved graphics that load quickly.

Most importantly, the site contains lots of new information. For example, ever wonder what an AMSEA staff member looks like? Visit the the web site and find out!

Return to www.amsea.org often for news about safety training opportunities, developments in marine safety, information for teachers and safety trainers, and much more!



MARINE SAFETY UPDATE

Refresher Course Offered for Marine Safety Instructor Training Graduates

A Marine Safety Instructor Training refresher class will be offered in Sitka on September 18-20, 2003 just before the IFISH II conference. This class is for instructors wanting updates on effective instructional methods, the latest on survival equipment and procedures, and new ways to problem solve training issues. Cost is \$175. To register or for more information, contact Jerry Dzugan at director@amsea.org or 907-747-3287.

Reach AMSEA Staff at New Email Addresses

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Marine Safety Training & Events On Tap

Join AMSEA staff & instructors at any of the locations & events listed below. Contact AMSEA at 907-747-3287 or visit www.amsea.org for information about courses or events listed, to register to attend, or to set up training elsewhere.

Ongoing: **FREE**, on-demand F/V Drill Instructor refresher drills are available in many Alaska communities.

Sept. 18 - 20, **Sitka**: Marine Safety Instructor Training (MSIT) Refresher for those who have taken an MSIT course and want updates on survival topics and an opportunity to share effective teaching tips.

Sept. 22 - 24, **Sitka**: Second International Fishing Industry Safety & Health (IFISH II) conference cohosted by AMSEA and NIOSH.

Sept. 26, **Sitka**: Alaska Water Wise Instructor course for persons with prior teaching experience interested in teaching safety to recreational and subsistence boaters.

Sept. 27 - Oct. 3, **Sitka**: Marine Safety Instructor Training designed for those interested in teaching marine safety and survival to commercial fishermen, professional mariners, teachers, children, government agency personnel or others.

Oct. 13 - 15, **Kodiak**: Alaska Water Wise Instructor course for anyone interested in teaching safety to recreational and subsistence boaters.

Oct. 16 - 17, **Kodiak** (tentative): *Surviving Outdoor Adventures* Curriculum Workshop for teachers and others who work with children. Contact Michael Jones, AMSEA Schools Program Coordinator at schools@amsea.org or 907-271-1403 for more information about or to express interest in this course.

Nov. 20 - 22, **Seattle, WA**: Exhibit in the Alaska Pavilion at Fish Expo WorkBoat Northwest showcasing AMSEA's newest videos.

Mar. 28, 2004, **Seward**: Alaska Water Wise Instructor course for those interested in teaching safety to recreational and subsistence boaters.

Mar. 29 - Apr. 3, 2004, **Seward**: Marine Safety Instructor Training designed for those interested in teaching marine safety and survival to commercial fishermen, professional mariners, teachers, children, government agency personnel or others.

Apr. 18 - 20, 2004, **Panama City Beach, FL**: Exhibit, presentation, and *Surviving Outdoor Adventures* Curriculum Workshop at the International Boating & Water Safety Summit.

Marine Safety Update

is published quarterly by the Alaska Marine Safety Education Association to provide information that furthers the safety of everyone who spends time on the water. Subscriptions are free with paid memberships in AMSEA, or can be purchased for \$10.00 per year (\$20.00 outside the U.S.). Sustaining, supporting, and donor memberships receive recognition in this publication.

Funding for this publication is provided by the members of AMSEA. Memberships and all contributions to AMSEA are tax-deductible. Membership runs from January 1 through December 31. Dues received after October 1 are credited to the following year.

Contributions to this publication and letters to the editor are most welcome. Please submit them to:

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Marine Safety Update

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AMSEA to Co-Host International Conference

AMSEA, in cooperation with CDC/NIOSH Alaska Field Station, will host the Second International Fishing Industry Safety and Health (IFISH II) conference in Sitka, Alaska, September 22 to 24, 2003. IFISH II will focus on the prevention of work-related injuries and deaths of commercial fishermen. Presentations will emphasize programs, coalitions, and interventions with proven success.

Forty-eight fishing industry safety experts from around the world will present their research, observations and injury prevention strategies. Participants from 20 countries have registered to attend the conference. IFISH II should be of interest to anyone involved in safety promotion, occupational health, injury prevention, public safety, as well as to the fishing industry, other mariners and safety officers. IFISH II provides an excellent learning opportunity for AMSEA instructors focusing on fishing vessel safety.

The program will include keynote speakers, the presentation of scientific papers and posters, workshops, and exhibits. Some of the scheduled presentations include:

- *Low Back and Shoulder Stress in Crab Fishing* by Don Blowski of the University of Utah
- *The Safety Culture in the UK Fishing Industry* by Clifford W. Brand of the United Kingdom's Marine Accident Investigation Branch
- *Improving Safety Through Training in the New Zealand Fishing Industry* by Peter M. Dawson of the New Zealand Seafood Training College
- *Fishing Processor Safety* by Alan Davis of American Seafoods, Inc.
- *Drowning Prevention* by Harvey Linton of the Workers' Compensation Board of B.C.

- *Psychology of Survival* by staff from the North Pacific Groundfish Observer Program

Other confirmed speakers, covering a wide variety of safety-related topics, hail from the Harvard School of Public Health, the Chilean Safety Association, the Faroese Fishermen's Union, the University Hospital of Northern Norway, the U.S. Coast Guard, Sri Lankan Department of Fisheries, and many other organizations.

In addition to the conference presentations,

participants can look forward to:

- A commercial fishing-themed art exhibit featuring the works of photographer Scott Chambers, painters Stephen Lawrie and Colin Herforth, and printmaker Rebecca Poulson.
- An "icebreaker" reception on Sunday evening, September 21 catered by Ludvig's Bistro, Sitka's newest dining sensation.
- On each of the three days of the conference, Lighthouse Catering will provide registrants with a continental breakfast buffet as well as a luncheon buffet on site.
- An evening cruise on



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vessel safety.***

beautiful Sitka Sound aboard Allen Marine's comfortable catamarans and with light hors d'oeuvres on board.

- A closing reception with a hearty hors d'oeuvres buffet catered by Taste of Sitka Catering.

Cost to attend the three-day conference, including all sessions, meals and social events is \$275.00. Single-day registration is also available.

For more information about IFISH II or to register to attend, contact conference coordinator Kristie Sherrodd at AMSEA, 907-747-3287 or visit the conference web site at www.amsea.org/ifish/.

Two AMSEA Publications Win Awards

Surviving Outdoor Adventures, AMSEA's K-12th grade, four-volume curriculum, received the "Blue Ribbon Award" in the curriculum and education materials category at the biennial Sea Grant Week national meeting! This extensive curriculum with hands-on activities covers the topics of cold-water survival, shore survival and sea survival. This publication is very popular with teachers and home schooling parents. It includes Alaska teaching standards. *Surviving Outdoor Adventures* is available from AMSEA or Alaska Sea Grant.



The 4th edition of *Beating the Odds on Northern Waters: A Guide to Fishing Safety*, edited by Susan Clark Jensen and Jerry Dzugan, won a 2003 APEX Award of Excellence in the "one-of-a-kind government publications" category. This edition

of the book has updated information and a new cover. More than 12,000 copies of previous editions have been sold. A companion video, *Beating The Odds: Emergency Onboard Drills*, is also available from Alaska Sea Grant or

Oral Inflation Hoses Raise Health Concerns

Many immersion suits that AMSEA loans to school programs across the state, come back with the inflatable bladders removed. When teachers are asked why, they express concern for health risks to students inflating bladders using the oral inflation hoses.

This is a legitimate concern. Some viruses and bacteria live for long periods of time even in a non-aqueous environment. The downside is that students are not being trained how to inflate the bladder. They may not learn that bladders are essential for buoyancy in rough seas, and that they are a standard, USCG-required part of immersion suits. Bladders are not optional accessories!

Every teacher needs to balance the safety and health of students with the importance of providing hands-on training using equipment as it is really used. It is documented that learners remember 90% of what they do and only 20% of what they hear. Studies have shown that in an emergency people do what they have been trained to do. So, it is important to use and demonstrate safety gear as it must be used in real emergency situations.

Teachers might consider using alcohol wipes on inflation hoses between uses to minimize risk. Those who chose not to have students blow up bladders themselves should carefully demonstrate the procedure so students understand the bladder's use and importance.

New AMSEA Safety Video Scheduled for Release

COMING SOON! AMSEA's new video on USCG helicopter evacuations and dewatering pump use will be available late this fall.

Shown during filming are, from left, AMSEA staffers Kristie Sherrodd and Mary Chambers, Noel Hutton from USCG AirStation Sitka, videographer Alexander Allison, AMSEA's Steven Campbell, and videographer and film producer Ellen Frankenstien.



SET NET SKIFF CAPSIZE AND FATALITY PROVIDE GRIM LESSONS

Information provided by the Seventeenth U.S. Coast Guard District Safety Alert Program that presents Lessons Learned from marine casualties in support of the Coast Guard's "Ready for Sea" safety program.

Incident:

On July 11, 2002, crewmen aboard a 22' aluminum set net skiff were retrieving a net near the Kasilof River when the net became tangled in the outboard motor. The net was accidentally dropped into the water causing the vessel to swing 180° with the stern facing into the current. The skiff quickly swamped and all four people aboard entered the water. All were wearing Coast Guard-approved Type III personal flotation devices (PFDs). Because the accident occurred at the close of the fishing day, there were no vessels near enough to witness the accident or render assistance.

The skiff operator swam more than a mile and a half to the beach and summoned help. One crewman clung to a marker buoy and the two others clung to the partially submerged skiff until it sank. The three were in the water for over three hours until rescue personnel arrived on scene. One crewman, a 14-year-old male, was unconscious when found and pronounced dead at the hospital.

Lessons Learned:

In Alaska, immersion suits are required for every person on board a commercial fishing vessel. The Cook Inlet set net fishermen have been granted an exemption that allows substituting a PFD for an immersion suit, provided the PFD is worn at all times.

This incident illustrates the significance of the exemption. Had the crew of this skiff not been wearing PFDs, there would have been no survivors.

Many fishing vessel skiffs, such as the one involved in this incident, are not built with inherent flotation. Owners are encouraged to consider added flotation so that if a vessel capsizes it will remain afloat.

Owners should consider adding grab lines on the exterior of skiffs. These provide something for a person in the water to hold on to until help arrives.

Operators should carry a survival kit in a waterproof pack containing items such as visual distress signals, flashlight, EPIRB, and portable VHF radio. It should be stored where a person in the water can easily retrieve it, and every person on board should know what is in the kit and where it is located.

The vessel in this incident did not have a current CG dockside exam. These exams, performed at the dock, help identify safety deficiencies that can lead to loss of vessel and/or crew.

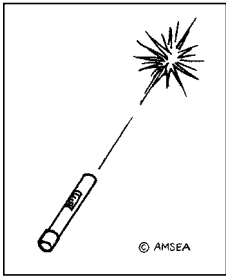
Note: The referenced immersion suit exemption applies to many set net fishing areas in Alaska and contains additional requirements such as PFD worn at all times, a VHF radio on board, radio checks, a dockside exam every two years and is limited to specific areas of operation. Please check with a USCG Marine Safety Office to obtain a copy of the applicable exemption in a specific area.

Surfing for Commercial Fishing Safety Information

Kirk Greiner, Captain, USCG (Ret) has created a web site with a large collection of fishing vessel links. View it at www.maritimeconsultant.com/homepage.htm. Click on "Fishing Vessel Links" for sites related to commercial fishing.

Also, the Alaska Field Office of National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH) has a fishing-related web page. This relatively new page explains projects NIOSH is working on regarding Alaska commercial fishing safety. See it at www.cdc.gov/niosh/injury/traumafish.html.

Training With Unfamiliar Signal Flares Presents Hazard



Recently an AMSEA instructor experienced a close call during a training exercise using Comet-brand pyrotechnic flares. The instructor grabbed a Comet parachute flare, thinking it was a hand-held flare. Comet parachute flares are very like

hand-held flares in size and operation, and have a firing mechanism similar to some hand-held flares.

Typically, an ignition cord pulls from the muzzle end of a hand-held flare to ignite a flame. However, while looking almost identical, Comet parachute flares have the ignition cord at the opposite end of the flare tube from a hand-held flare. Fortunately, the instructor followed safe technique and had both ends of the flare pointed away from himself and his students. The instructor was surprised and shaken

when a missile fired, and from the opposite end that he was expecting to ignite! Luckily, the flare cleared all surrounding buildings and landed harmlessly in the water. A parachute projectile shoots 1,000 feet and can be deadly. Lessons learned:

1. Be absolutely familiar with the firing procedure and mechanism of each brand of flare used. There are no standardized operating mechanisms. Each manufacturer uses a different mechanism and procedure. Never assume you know how one works.

2. Always point flares away from others, even if it is "just" a hand-held flare.

3. Follow training safety procedures for flares in the *AMSEA Marine Safety Instructor Manual*.

4. Never *assume* everything will work fine. When using flares in training, assess situations from a safety perspective. If you are uncomfortable with anything, stop and change it or cancel the exercise. Remember it's *safety* training!

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Washington State Convention & Trade Center
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Plan to Visit AMSEA in Seattle at Fish Expo!

Problems With Repacked Liferrafts Noted

The USCG Marine Safety Detachment in Dutch Harbor notes a problem with some repacked liferafts. At least one liferaft repacker used improper, overly strong tape to seal liferaft containers. This tape was placed over the plug that seals the painter port in the canister. Also, the knot typically tied in the painter just *inside* the plug was tied *outside* the plug.

The improper tape was the critical issue. An industrial grade, reinforced, heat-shrink tape was used. It was so strong that by pulling up on the painter one could lift the liferaft in its canister. The plug did not pull out when tugged as is necessary to allow the painter to freely pay out. Had this liferaft been deployed, it would have floated free of the boat. However, because the painter would not pay out, the raft would not have inflated.

The misplaced knot in the painter was also significant. A knot in the painter just behind the plug will pull the plug out as the painter begins to pay out, preventing the painter from jamming or tangling

inside the canister. The plug in this case is hard rubber that will not break apart even if pulled hard. If the hard rubber plug remains in the canister, the painter can tangle and jam inside the canister, not pay out, and prevent the liferaft from inflating.

Liferaft owners should pay attention to the type of tape, if any, used on repacked canisters. If it impedes the plug or painter from operating as required, it should be removed from the vicinity of the plug & painter. In the cases observed in Dutch Harbor, the vessel crews had assumed that the repacking was done correctly and did not notice the problem tape.

That repacker has been notified of the problem, but there still may be liferaft canisters out there that are improperly taped.

Thanks to LT Joe Higgins, Supervisor, MSD Unalaska, for the information in this story. LT Higgins can be reached by phone at 907-581-3466, by fax at 907-581-3468 or by email at jhiggins@cgalaska.uscg.mil.



Overly strong tape and an incorrectly placed knot in the painter line may prevent repacked liferaft like the one shown above from inflating in an emergency.

Garbage Log Requirements Eased for Some Mariners

Effective November 2001, garbage logs are only required on vessels over 400 gross tons, ships certified to carry 15 passengers or more and engaged in international voyages, and manned fixed or floating platforms subject to U.S. jurisdiction.

Hoax Distress Calls Can Be Expensive

New Years Day 2002 was witness to one of Alaska's most expensive hoax SOS calls. Several Coast Guard aircraft, a Coast Guard cutter, and more than 40 personnel from the Alaska State Troopers and two police agencies spent over 13 hours searching for the source of a call in Kachemak Bay. No one in distress was located and the source of the call was never determined.

In 1990, a father and son died after their fishing vessel *Sol E Mar* sank off Woods Hole, Massachusetts. The pair placed a legitimate distress call at the same time the Coast Guard received a hoax call to which they responded first. Because the Coast Guard responds whenever there is a possibility of distress, cutters or aircraft tied up searching for nothing may prevent a boater in actual distress from getting timely assistance. Thus, lives are lost due to hoax calls.

If a hoax caller is not caught, U.S. taxpayers pay the cost of the search. Coast Guard C-130 aircraft cost about \$4,244 an hour to operate, Coast Guard helicopters run about \$4,400 an hour, Coast Guard cutters cost about \$1,550 an hour, and Coast Guard small boats cost between \$300 to \$400 an hour to run. Under federal law, knowingly and willfully making a false distress call is a felony. Hoax distress calls can net callers five to ten years in prison, a \$5,000 civil fine, a \$250,000 criminal fine and reimbursement to the Coast Guard for the costs incurred responding to the false call.

Common hoax calls include boaters trying to check a radio, improper operation of an automatic SOS feature on a radio, unsupervised children playing with a radio, and adults intentionally transmitting false information for the purpose of entertainment or to launch a search. Parents are legally responsible for false calls made by their children.

The Coast Guard is taking steps to improve capabilities to track radio distress signals with the Rescue 21 program. This program will allow the Coast Guard to pinpoint the origin of all distress calls to within plus or minus two degrees. With this new technology, the Coast Guard will be able to track down both legitimate and hoax distress callers

quickly, minimizing the use of Coast Guard assets for unnecessary search and rescue efforts.

To reduce hoax calls, remove radios or lock them up when not in use, teach children that unauthorized use puts people in danger, and confidentially report suspect hoaxers to U.S. Coast Guard Tipline at 800-2NO-HOAX. Tipsters may remain anonymous if they choose. For more information contact Petty Officer Sara Raymer, 17th USCG District Public Affairs at 907-487-5700 or CGAlaskaPublicAffairs@cgalaska.uscg.mil.

Boaters' Radio Communication Law Takes Effect in Hawaii



Boaters that venture more than a mile off Hawaiian shores are now required to carry emergency radio equipment under a bill recently signed into law by Gov. Linda Lingle. The law requires *any* watercraft that ventures more than a mile offshore to carry an EPIRB or VHF-FM radio. Violators are subject to a fine of \$100.

The law applies to any vessel required to be registered with the State or the Coast Guard, including manual- or sail-propelled boats. Canoes, personal watercraft, surfboards and paddleboards are exempt. Kayaks and training sailboats must comply and are only exempt if accompanied by another vessel that complies with the law. Thus, all vessels in Hawaii presented for a safety examination will now need to exhibit an EPIRB or VHF radio. If this equipment is not present, a VSC decal cannot be issued. For purposes of examination, it is assumed that all vessels covered by the law will be operating more than a mile offshore.



THANKS!

The following people and organizations help keep AMSEA's marine safety training programs afloat!

2003 Sustaining Membership

Trident Seafoods Corp., Seattle, WA
North American Traditional Indian Values
Enrichment Program, Sitka, AK

2003 Supporting Memberships

S.E. Alaska Regional Health Consortium, Sitka, AK
Aaron "Pat" Dye, Cooper Landing, AK
Noel & Onna Johnson, S/V Sequoia, Sitka, AK
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Petersburg Vessel Owners Assoc., Petersburg, AK
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Alan & Elizabeth Horoschak, Sitka, AK
Felicia McCauley, F/V Amber J, Juneau, AK
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Mark Severson, F/V Odin, Petersburg, AK

Recent Equipment & Service Donations

F/V Kupreanof, Sitka, AK – Charter for video shoot
F/V Miss Melody, Seward, AK – Charter for onboard
drills during Marine Safety Instructor Training
Seadog Fisheries – Liferaft
Maya Chambers, Lucas Chambers, Devon Huddleson,
Dani Sneider and Tim Doggett – Video packaging
assistance

**Also thanks to the scores of individual members,
and the many others who teach and contribute to marine safety education!**

JOIN AMSEA!

- Individual Membership: \$20.00
- Donor Membership: \$50.00
- Supporting Membership: \$100.00
- Sustaining Membership: \$500.00

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Auto-Inflating PFDs Require Care

Auto-inflators on Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) are great. However, over time, especially in damp (read: marine) environments, the auto-inflators that work with a dissolving “pill” need maintenance.

When exposed to moisture, the chemical catalyst in the dissolving pill slowly exhausts, resulting in a PFD that does not inflate when finally immersed, because there is not enough catalyst left to fully dissolve the pill.

A periodic inspection of the pills is needed. They look like peppermint (or is it spearmint?) Lifesaver™ candy mints. When not degraded by moisture, they look like brand-new Lifesavers™ with an almost shiny surface. If moisture has affected them, pills will be pitted like Lifesavers™ partially dissolved in someone’s mouth. Then, the catalyst is probably gone and their PFDs will not auto-inflate.

So, auto-inflatable PFDs are great, but they need to be checked on a regular basis, especially if they have been used outside or become wet. These automatically inflating PFDs provide maximum flotation with maximum wearability, but it must be understood that they are also high maintenance!

Some Things Never Seem to Change

In Alaska, drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional death. It is interesting to get a historical perspective on this problem. The following statistics come from the General Bill of Mortality for London England, 1808.

Drowning	123
Falls	77
Burns	51
Suicide	36
Excessive drinking	7
Bit by mad dog	3
Bit by mad cat	1