

US Coast Guard Sector Anchorage
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Marine Safety Task Force



February 2020



Marine Safety Task Force is the new hub and spoke deployment model for Coast Guard Sector Anchorage personnel inaugurated during summer 2019 regulatory operations. This model allowed the Coast Guard to inspect a record numbers of facilities in 2019, while enhancing other missions. This deployment model is unique to Sector Anchorage and is a necessary step in our effort to ensure the safe and efficient conduct of regulatory operations throughout the Arctic and Western Alaska. **See inside for details!**



Marine Safety Task Force

In 2019, US Coast Guard Sector Anchorage significantly changed how it conducts summer season regulatory operations. This change addressed an increasing pattern of oil spills, coastal erosion, degrading infrastructure and impacts from tundra upheaval associated with federally-regulated bulk oil facilities in the Arctic and Western Alaska.

Standard Coast Guard operational models do not work in the Arctic and Western Alaska to conduct annual federal oversight of regulated facilities and their operations. There are approximately 380 above-ground, bulk oil storage tank facilities regulated by the Coast Guard in the Western Alaska Captain of the Port zone. These facilities receive fuel by barge and provide critical energy to support daily life in rural Alaska.

Historically, Sector Anchorage has only inspected 15% of the 380 facilities annually. However, as fuel tanks have aged and reports of oil spills have increased, the need to evaluate conditions of tank farms in the Arctic and Western Alaska has become a more pressing priority and inspired Sector Anchorage to take action.

Sector Anchorage created the Marine Safety Task Force to address these issues by recruiting USCG personnel around the nation and sending small teams to hub locations for up to 2 weeks to inspect and assess regulated bulk oil tanks and facilities. Within the first year, MSTF inspected 236 regulated bulk oil facilities (or 60% of the total) over a 5-month period. This represented a 395% increase over previous annual inspection averages and helped established a new regional standard for regulatory compliance.

The Coast Guard collaborated with federal, state, local, and tribal partners, including the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Alaska Federation of Natives, and the Alaska Tribal Conference on Environmental Management. The excellent partnerships and coordination with these groups will continue to be a positive driver in the coming years.

Through truly diligent efforts, the Coast Guard and our partners have shown a true dedication to the safety of Alaskan people and to the environment. My staff and I look forward to continuing to work together with our partners as we raise awareness of the conditions of these bulk oil fuel facilities with the goal of ending oil spills in the Arctic and Western Alaska.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "SC MacKenzie, CAPT". The signature is stylized with a large 'S' and 'M'.

Sean C. MacKenzie, CAPT
Commander, Sector Anchorage

Marine Safety Task Force 2019

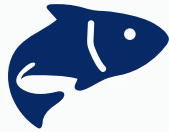
STATISTICS

ECONOMIC VALUE OF THE AMERICAN ARCTIC



1,000,000

*Square miles of
U.S. Territorial Waters
and Exclusive Economic
Zone in the Arctic.*



\$3 Billion

*Economic impact
of Alaska's Arctic
seafood industry.*



90 Billion

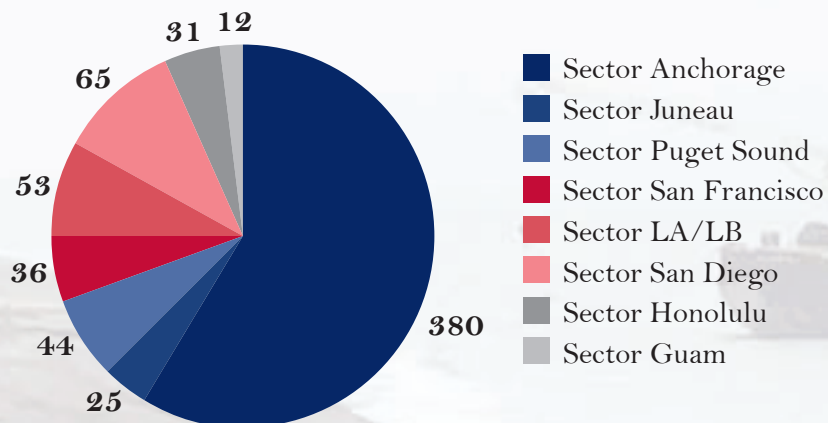
*Barrels of undiscovered
oil reserves in the Arctic and
an estimated 30 percent
of the world's undiscovered
natural gas.*



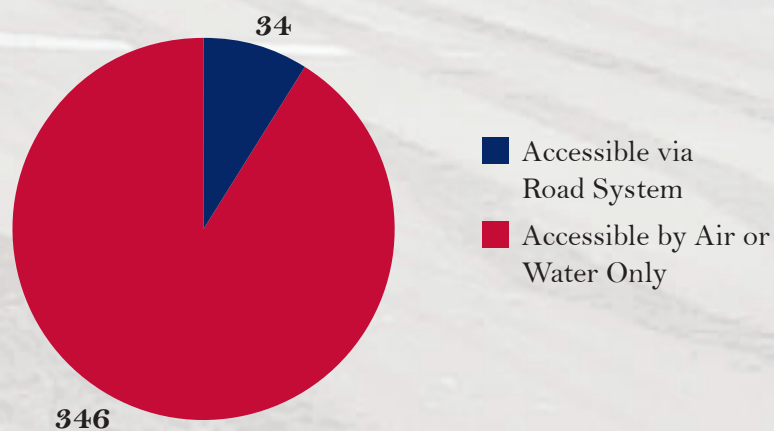
\$1 Trillion

*Value of the Arctic's rare
earth minerals, such as zinc,
nickel, and lead.*

USCG REGULATED FACILITIES PER CG UNIT



USCG SECTOR ANCHORAGE REGULATED FACILITY ACCESSIBILITY



2019 MSTF Initiative

New personnel deployment model adopted and funded:

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\$370,000

Field/Support
personnel costs



\$340,000

Total travel costs
from Anchorage to
Hub Cities



113 Sorties

83 Flight hours

Civil Air
Patrol Support



Engagement and Outreach
with **102** Alaska
Communities for capacity
building and increased
resiliency



236

Bulk Oil Storage
Facility Inspections



475

Commercial
Fishing Vessel Exams

57

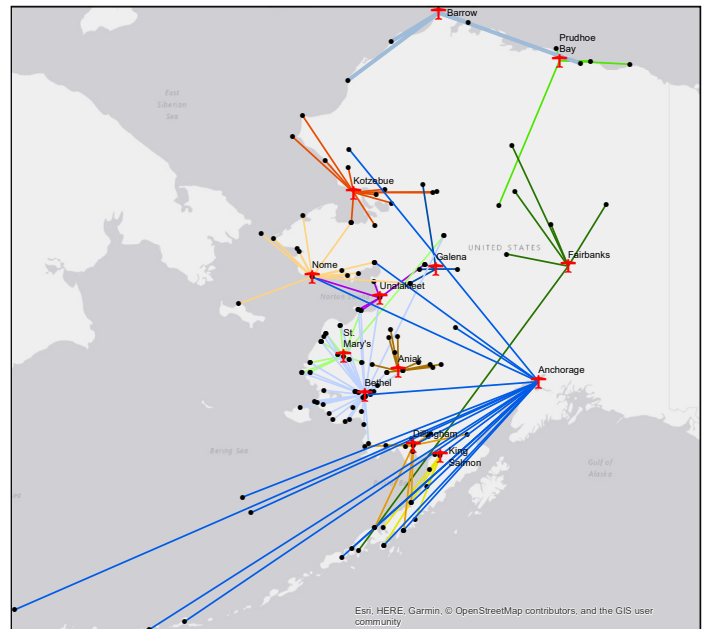
Prior yearly average (2014-2018) for Sector
Anchorage on-site facility inspections



MSTF Operations

Sector Anchorage faces operational challenges unlike any other Coast Guard unit in the nation. Traditional logistics and organizational methods do not work in the Arctic and Western Alaska, based on challenges associated with distance, transportation, logistics, and weather.

The Coast Guard's regulatory missions require significant year-round operational planning due to majority of the communities not being on the road system. For example, lodging and local transportation must be identified and scheduled months in advance for the entire time a USCG team stays within each hub community. This logistical planning includes arranging Coast Guard travel to these off-road hubs, using personnel from Southcentral and Southeast Alaska and the Lower 48, and dedicating personnel to conduct year-round planning for optimal MSTF coordination. In 2020, Sector Anchorage is augmenting MSTF staff in order to increase the MSTF teams' effectiveness and efficiency. This decision was based on lessons-learned and successes from 2019.



To more efficiently access rural Alaska, the MSTF partnered with the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), which provided on-demand air service for deployed MSTF personnel. This mutually beneficial relationship between Sector Anchorage and CAP was based on each agency's fiscal year 2019 funding and personnel availability. With their addition into MSTF operational planning, CAP eased many logistical issues and provided some travel expense savings by facilitating seamless transfers of personnel between rural Alaskan communities. After arriving in a community, many Coast Guard personnel then used other transportation modes, such as off-road vehicles, to access bulk oil facilities.

MSTF team members are selected with the goal of completing an array of regulatory missions, while relying on limited personnel. For example, in King Salmon, Alaska, Coast Guard personnel completed over 175 commercial fishing vessel exams, in addition to 25 facility inspections. This construct allows Sector Anchorage to conduct other mandated regulatory operations and simultaneously inspect all 380 regulated bulk oil storage facilities biennially, within the seasonal surge months of May to September.

MSTF inspection teams identified varying degrees of regulatory compliance, and, where necessary, mitigated significant threats to the environment or responded to actual oil spills. All other facility non-compliance was managed via the Coast Guard's deficiency documentation process. Ultimately, MSTF identified 556 facility deficiencies. Coast Guard personnel will spend the winter and spring season following up with these bulk oil facility managers to ensure deficiencies are corrected before the summer 2020 fuel deliveries begin. The information gathered from these inspections is now also being used to create a baseline assessment of 380 facilities to ensure pollution prevention regulation compliance is optimally achieved in the Arctic and Western Alaska regions.

Deployment of MSTF personnel fosters strong relationships with remote Alaskan communities, improves awareness of maritime domain activities through consistent presence, and enhances maritime safety and environmental stewardship throughout the Arctic and Western Alaska.



Way Ahead



The Coast Guard will continue to work with tribal, local, state, and federal partners to promote a safe, secure, and efficient marine transportation system. The Coast Guard remains committed to the protection of the marine environment and will continue to work closely with Alaskan communities to ensure they safely receive the fuel they need to survive and evolve their resilience. We will continue to protect Alaskans and the environment by:

Enhancing Capability to Operate Effectively in the Arctic

The Coast Guard has ample authorities and resilient partnerships, yet there are critical gaps in the capability and capacity of the tank farms that must be addressed in order to ensure

environmental protection of rural Alaska. Sector Anchorage is committed in 2020 to inspecting the remaining 40% of the bulk oil facilities in the Western Alaska area of operation and will follow up with bulk oil facilities that have remaining inspection requirements from 2019.

Expanding MSTF to include other Coast Guard Mission Areas

Sector Anchorage will expand the Marine Safety Task Force model for use in other Coast Guard mission areas, including pollution response and enforcement, vessel inspections, ice rescue training, the Kids Don't Float program, waterways management, search and rescue coordination, as well as conducting outreach to our neighbors in remote communities.

Strengthening Partnerships

Sector Anchorage will continue to capitalize on successful partnerships within the Arctic and Western Alaska Area Committee to further refine oil pollution prevention and response activities. To that end, Sector Anchorage will rely on the committee to form workgroups, comprised of government officials and environmental protection experts, to assist in mission execution coordination and decision-making efforts.



For More Information

Sector Anchorage personnel are always looking for additional opportunities for outreach or to answer your individual questions. Contact us at MSTFanchorage@uscg.mil. For specific questions regarding Coast Guard bulk oil facility regulations, email us at westernalaskafacilities@uscg.mil.

The biannual Arctic and Western Alaska Area committee meetings are open to the public. More information can be found at <https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/contingency-plans/response-plans/arctic-western-area/>





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