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Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



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MARINE SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETIN 04-17

Commercial Vessel Safety Requirements for Gold Dredge Operations in Nome, Alaska for the 2018 Season

PURPOSE: This informational bulletin addresses the gold dredge vessel fleet in Nome, Alaska. The Coast Guard promotes the safety of vessel operators and protection of the marine environment by enforcing regulations applicable to these vessels.

PUBLICATIONS AFFECTED: Sector Anchorage MSIB 01-17 regarding dredge operations in Western Alaska is canceled.

DISCUSSION: The specific commercial standards that apply to each vessel depend on the vessel's length, tonnage, age, area of operation, and means of propulsion.

- a. After a careful legal review and risk assessment analysis, Sector Anchorage has determined that there is an increased need to ensure adherence to the applicable federal regulations for the Nome gold dredge vessel fleet. Some gold dredge vessels will be required to hold a load line certificate and/or a Certificate of Inspection (COI) to operate in 2018.
- b. Vessels which are not required to have a load line certificate or COI may still participate in the voluntary examination program and receive a decal annually.
- c. If you own a dredge that is over 79 feet, more than 300 gross tons, or any size dredge without propulsion, you may have additional regulations that apply and should submit an application for inspection (form CG-3752) to Sector Anchorage at the earliest opportunity.
- d. If you are considering building or buying a large dredge, please contact us *before* doing so. Sector Anchorage will assist dredge owners in determining the regulations that apply to their specific vessel.
- e. If your dredge requires the use of a towing vessel to safely maneuver, please take note that towing vessels of 26 feet or more will be required to hold a COI starting in 2018, and are also required to be operated by a credentialed master mariner.

- f. Starting in the 2018 season, Sector Anchorage's enforcement posture will deviate from previous seasons which allowed dredges leeway and time to come into compliance. The Coast Guard may take enforcement action against any vessel found not to be in compliance with federal regulations. While any vessel has the potential to be boarded by Coast Guard law enforcement personnel, vessels that are inspected or have received a voluntary safety decal from the Coast Guard are less likely to be boarded to verify compliance.

- g. All current and prospective gold dredge owners are encouraged to contact Mr. Jeff Ahlgren at (907) 428-4183 or Jeffrey.L.Ahlgren@uscg.mil at their earliest convenience to ensure they are in compliance with regulatory requirements prior to the start of the season. Our website (<http://www.pacificarea.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/District-17/17th-District-Units/Sector>) has additional gold dredge information. Inspection dates for 2018 will be posted to this website once they are determined.

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Western Alaska