

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY



### U.S. Coast Guard to Conduct Safety Checks for Dungeness Crab Season 2018

**Northern, California – 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, & 8<sup>th</sup> of November** U.S. Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary personnel will be conducting dockside exams and safety spot-checks at commercial fishing ports from Monterey to Crescent City, prior to the opening of the Dungeness crab season.

One of the most dangerous jobs in America continues to be commercial crab fishing. Every year, California fishermen's lives are in danger during crab season with West Coast crabbing vessels having a historically high fatality rate.

**“Operation Safe Crab”** is an outreach initiative to reduce the loss of lives and fishing vessels in the West Coast crab fleet. California's crab season typically begins on November 15th for the Central coast (Avila-Morro Bay to the mouth of the Russian River) and December 1st for the Northern coast (Russian River to the Oregon border).

Since **“Operation Safe Crab's”** inception, Coast Guard personnel have walked the docks and spot-checked crab vessels for the required primary lifesaving equipment, pot-loading practices affecting stability, and vessel watertight integrity. These safety checks have greatly reduced the number of potential casualties. Past experience has shown many EPIRB's (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons) and life rafts to be installed incorrectly. This type of situation is easily corrected on the spot, and has helped prevent needless tragedies at sea for California's crab fleet. Crab vessels with serious safety discrepancies, such as overloading, lack of watertight integrity, missing primary life saving equipment, can be restricted from operating until the discrepancies are corrected.

California crab fishermen are also strongly encouraged to contact their local Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety dockside examiner with any questions. Implemented in 1991, the Coast Guard's Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Program is designed to help commercial fishermen identify and eliminate potential safety hazards. Successful completion of a dockside exam may also make any future Coast Guard boardings at sea greatly abbreviated.

#### **For more information Contact:**

Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety, USCG Sector San Francisco Prevention Department

- Manny Ramirez : (415) 399-7310 for Monterey, Moss Landing, Santa Cruz, Half Moon Bay, San Francisco, and Bodega Bay.
- John Giles: (707) 481-0048 for Fort Bragg, Eureka, and Crescent City.