



Alaska's Small Passenger Ships

DEC's Commercial Passenger Vessel Environmental Compliance Program

How does the State of Alaska ensure the environmental compliance of ships in Alaska?

Since 2001, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC's) Commercial Passenger Vessel Environmental Compliance Program (CPVEC) has worked with the Coast Guard and Ocean Rangers to sample, test, and report both wastewater and air emissions from ferries and small commercial passenger vessels. Small cruise ships are defined as those with between 50 and 249 lower berths for passengers.

How do large cruise ships treat their wastewater?

Large cruise ships must use Marine Sanitation Devices (MSD) that are laboratory certified to meet federal requirements. Alaska has specific state requirements that go beyond the federal requirements. As a result, large cruise ships operating in Alaska use advanced treatment systems for both sewage (blackwater) and all other wastewater (greywater). The 2014 Large Commercial Passenger Vessel Wastewater Discharge Permit was issued based on the standards of these advanced systems.



How do smaller passenger vessels treat their wastewater?

Smaller passenger ships and state ferries are not generally engineered for those advanced systems, whose weight and size compromise a smaller ship's efficiency and stability. Instead, they have improved treatment performance by modifying their existing MSDs and engaging in best practices.



What are the discharging requirements for small cruise ships and ferries in Alaska?

Small ships must have either a state permit or a state-approved Best Management Practices (BMP) plan to discharge treated wastewater in Alaska

waters. Untreated sewage may not be discharged at any time. A vessel’s BMP plan must address regulatory requirements intended to minimize environmental and human health impacts of treated sewage and greywater. Approved BMP plans contain geographical restrictions on discharging to protect salmon and herring spawning grounds. They also include provisions to monitor the performance of onboard wastewater treatment systems.

Which small ships are discharging here?

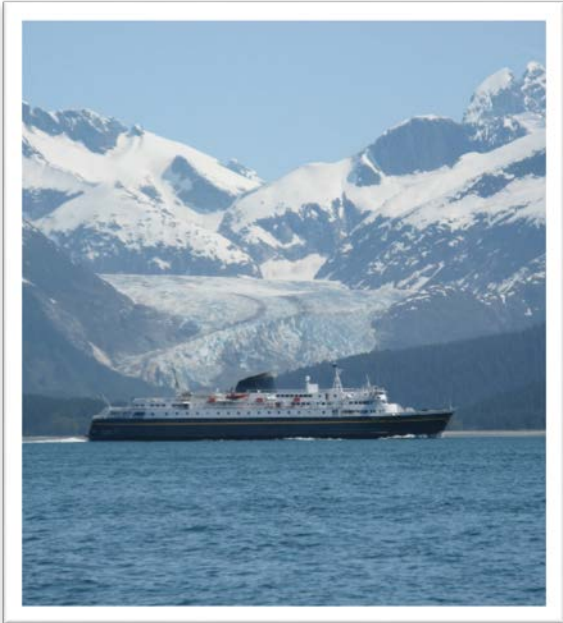
In 2016, five ferries and ten small cruise ships were authorized to discharge treated wastewater in Alaskan waters. One small cruise ship, *The Hanseatic*, did not discharge, but elected to use her holding tanks.

How are small cruise ships and ferries monitored?

CPVEC reviews the testing results of all wastewater samples collected aboard small cruise ships and ferries. The program also evaluates annual plans for wastewater and solid waste treatment, inspects ships for compliance, monitors air emissions, and reviews new or renewed BMPs. The net result of implementing those BMPs has been cleaner-running ships. Data is made available to the public on CPVEC’s website. Overall, sample data indicates that small commercial

Vessel Operator	Vessel Name
Alaska Marine Highway	<i>Columbia</i>
Alaska Marine Highway	<i>Kennicott</i>
Alaska Marine Highway	<i>Malaspina</i>
Alaska Marine Highway	<i>Matanuska</i>
Alaska Marine Highway	<i>Taku</i>
Alaska Dream Cruises	<i>Admiralty Dream</i>
Alaska Dream Cruises	<i>Chichagof Dream</i>
American Cruise Lines	<i>American Spirit</i>
Hapag-Lloyd	<i>Hanseatic</i>
National Geographic	<i>Sea Bird</i>
National Geographic	<i>Sea Lion</i>
Silver Expeditions	<i>Silver Discoverer</i>
Un-Cruise Adventures	<i>Wilderness Adventurer</i>
Un-Cruise Adventures	<i>Wilderness Discoverer</i>
Un-Cruise Adventures	<i>Wilderness Explorer</i>
Un-Cruise Adventures	<i>Safari Endeavor</i>

passenger vessels and state ferries have made progress in terms of overall effluent quality since the beginning of the CPVEC BMP program. Operators have also made progress in quicker notification and follow up corrective actions after high fecal coliform results are reported.



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