

Office of Public Affairs
U.S. Coast Guard Seventeenth District

**U.S. Department of
Homeland Security
United States
Coast Guard**



Date: Dec. 24, 2009
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News Release

Response to Pathfinder grounding, assessments continue



JUNEAU, Alaska – The Coast Guard, Alaska Department of Conservation, Crowley Marine, Ship Escort Response Vessel System and O'Brien's Group as part of the incident management team are responding to the earlier grounding of the 136-foot Crowley tug Pathfinder on Bligh Reef in Prince William Sound Wednesday evening.

Two of the tug's center-line diesel fuel tanks were reported breached with potential spill of 33, 500 gallons. The total capacity of the vessel is approximately 127, 700 gallons of diesel fuel.

A dive team transported by the vessel Alaska Challenger to conduct a hull inspection, reported extensive damage to the hull, including a 4-5 foot section of the keel missing. A barge is being brought to the Pathfinder in preparation for lightering the diesel fuel.

The tug was working for SERVS scouting the shipping route from Valdez to Hinchinbrook Entrance for ice buildup.

Alcohol testing of all six crewmembers was completed with negative results.

Currently one Coast Guard inspector from Marine Safety Unit Valdez is on the Pathfinder. The vessels Valdez Star, Alaska Challenger and the Invader are also on scene with pollution

response equipment.

A Coast Guard C-130 flight is scheduled for 10 a.m. and a MH-60 helicopter flight is scheduled to take the federal on-scene commander to the scene.

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