Coast Guard Encourages Boaters to Prepare For Winter Weather

Local News

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Posted on : October 12, 2012 at 5:10 am

ASTORIA, Ore. — The Coast Guard encourages owners and operators of vessels anchored or moored in Oregon or Washington to conduct preventative maintenance in anticipation of severe winter weather conditions."Completing simple preventative maintenance can prevent pollution incidents from occurring and damaging Oregon and Washington’s natural resources," said Lt. Cdr. Kelly Thorkilson, Incident Management Division Chief for Coast Guard Sector Columbia River in Astoria.Pollution violations caused by sunken vessels could result in fines and salvage costs. A maximum civil penalty of $40,000 per day or up to three times the cost incurred by the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund may be assessed.

To prevent the sinking of a vessel, the Coast Guard recommends boaters:Check local weather forecasts frequently. Be aware that storms can come up quickly and without warning.Cover and secure your boat. Heavy rains can flood boats causing them to sink in extreme cases.Check the shaft packing for excess leakage.Perform routine checks for signs of loose or deteriorating planks on wooden hulled vessels.Conduct a routine inspection of your automatic bilge pump.Visually inspect all thru-hull fittings for damage or loose connections.Remove all unnecessary fuel, designate a caretaker, and leave contact information with the harbormaster if you are planning to be away for an extended period of time.Check overhangs and canopies for snow and ice build-up to prevent damage and collapseThese simple steps can prevent damage to the environment and personal property while limiting man hours and taxpayer dollars spent on avoidable incidents.