

Coast Guard shifts response focus to maritime environment after Maui Fires



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HONOLULU – Coast Guard first responders are shifting the focus of response resources to minimizing maritime environmental impacts from the Maui fires while remaining ready to respond to any new reports of individuals in the water, Monday.

The Coast Guard has deployed pollution response teams and equipment to affected locations, to include a 100-foot boom

placed at the mouth of the Lahaina Harbor, to contain potential hazardous contaminants and materials.

“While the Coast Guard is always postured for search and rescue operations, we are also focused on minimizing maritime environmental impacts as a result of the Maui fires,” said Cmdr. Kyra Dykeman, the deputy incident commander for the Coast Guard Maui fire response. “We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the community we serve.”

The Coast Guard has a safety zone established from Wahikuli Wayside Park to Launiupoko Beach Park, extending one nautical mile seaward from the shoreline.

The safety zone, enforced by the Coast Guard Maritime Safety and Security Team Honolulu, remains in effect as potential hazards in the waterway are still being evaluated. Safety zones are critical in protecting people, vessels, and the marine environment. In this response, the safety zone aids our partner agencies and first responders by allowing them to facilitate operational mandates and conduct thorough assessments without physical disruption by outside sources.

Coast Guard divers from Regional Dive Locker Pacific, in coordination with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, are using Side-Scan Sonar and a Submersible Remote Operated Vehicle to map the Lahaina Channel and coastline off Lahaina in order to detect hazards that would make the channel unsafe for passage.

The Coast Guard National Strike Force (NSF) arrived on Maui Friday, to aid in the environmental response operation. The NSF provides highly trained, experienced personnel and specialized equipment to the Coast Guard and other federal agencies to facilitate responses to oil and hazardous substance pollution incidents in order to protect public health and the environment.

For those mariners with questions regarding transit of the safety zone, owners of vessels impacted by the Lahaina fires, and reports of pollution in and around Lahaina Harbor, please call 808-723-0008. For all other questions or concerns please contact the Maui Emergency Operations Center at (808) 205-9328.