

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY**Coast Guard****33 CFR Part 165****[COTP Prince William Sound 03–002]****RIN 1625–AA00****Security Zone: Port Valdez and Valdez Narrows, Valdez, AK****AGENCY:** Coast Guard, DHS.**ACTION:** Temporary final rule.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard is establishing a temporary security zone encompassing the Trans-Alaska Pipeline (TAPS) Valdez Terminal Complex, Valdez, Alaska and TAPS Tank Vessels and a security zone in the Valdez Narrows, Port Valdez, Alaska. These security zones are necessary to protect the Alyeska Marine Terminal and Vessels from damage or injury from sabotage, destruction or other subversive acts. Entry of vessels into these security zones is prohibited unless specifically authorized by the Captain of the Port, Prince William Sound, Alaska.

DATES: This rule is effective from September 12, 2003, until March 12, 2004. Comments and related material must reach the Coast Guard on or before December 31, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Comments and material received from the public, as well as documents indicated in this preamble as being available in the docket, are part of docket COTP Prince William Sound 03–002 and are available for inspection or copying at U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Office, PO Box 486, Valdez, Alaska 99686, between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: LT Catherine Huot, U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Office Valdez, Alaska, (907) 835–7222.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Regulatory History**

A notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) was not published for this regulation. In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 553 (b)(B), the Coast Guard finds good cause exists for not publishing an NPRM. The Coast Guard is taking this action for the continued protection of national security interests in light of terrorist acts perpetrated on September 11, 2001 and the continuing threat that remains from those who committed those acts. Also, in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), the Coast Guard finds good cause to exist for making this regulation effective less than 30 days

after publication in the **Federal Register**. Publication of a notice of proposed rulemaking and delay of effective date would be contrary to the public interest because immediate action is necessary to provide for the safety of the TAPS terminal and TAPS tank vessels. On November 7, 2001, we published three temporary final rules in the **Federal Register** (66 FR 56208, 56210, 56212) that created security zones effective through June 1, 2002. The section numbers and titles for these zones are—

Section 165.T17–003—Security zone; Trans-Alaska Pipeline Valdez Terminal Complex, Valdez, Alaska,

Section 165.T17–004—Security zone; Port Valdez, and

Section 165.T17–005—Security zones; Captain of the Port Zone, Prince William Sound, Alaska.

Then on June 4, 2002, we published a temporary final rule (67 FR 38389) that established security zones to replace these security zones that expired June 1, 2002. That rule issued in June, which expired July 30, 2002, created temporary § 165.T17–009, entitled “Port Valdez and Valdez Narrows, Valdez, Alaska”.

Then on July 30, 2002 we published a temporary final rule (67 FR 19359) that established security zones to extend the temporary security zones that would have expired July 30, 2002. This extension was to allow for a notice of proposed rulemaking process to be completed for permanent security zones to replace the temporary zones. Then on October 23, 2002, we published the notice of proposed rulemaking that sought public comment on establishing the temporary security zones as permanent security zones (67 FR 65074). The comment period for that NPRM ended December 23, 2002. Although no comments were received that would result in changes to the proposed rule an administrative omission was found that resulted in the need to issue a supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking (SNPRM) to address the “Collection of Information” section of the proposed rule (68 FR 14935, March 27, 2003). Then, on December 30, 2002, we issued a temporary final rule (68 FR 26490, May 16, 2003) that established security zones to extend the temporary security zones through June 30, 2003. This extension was to allow for a rulemaking for the permanent security zones to be completed. This temporary final rule resumes the temporary security zones to allow for the SNPRM process to be completed.

Discussion of This Temporary Rule

This temporary final rule establishes three security zones. The Trans-Alaska Pipeline (TAPS) Valdez Marine Terminal Security zone encompasses the waters of Port Valdez between Allison Creek to the east and Sawmill Spit to the west and offshore to marker buoys A and B (approximately 1.5 nautical miles offshore from the TAPS Terminal). The Tanker Moving Security Zone encompasses the waters within 200 yards of a TAPS Tanker within the Captain of the Port, Prince William Sound Zone. The Valdez Narrows Security Zone encompasses the waters 200 yards either side of the Tanker Optimum Trackline through Valdez Narrows between Entrance Island and Tongue Point. This zone is active only when a TAPS Tanker is in the zone.

This temporary final rule reflects the proposed changes to 33 CFR 165.1701 published in an NPRM in the **Federal Register** (67 FR 65074, October 23, 2002). The Coast Guard has worked closely with local and regional users of Port Valdez and Valdez Narrows waterways to develop these security zones and the NPRM in order to mitigate the impact on commercial and recreational users. This temporary final rule establishes a uniform transition from the temporary operating zones while the NPRM and SNPRM process is completed.

Request for Comments

Although the Coast Guard has good cause in implementing this regulation without a notice of proposed rulemaking, we want to afford the maritime community the opportunity to participate in this rulemaking by submitting comments and related material regarding the size and boundaries of these security zones in order to minimize unnecessary burdens. If you do so, please include your name and address, identify the docket number for this rulemaking, COTP Prince William Sound 03–002, indicate the specific section of this document to which each comment applies, and give the reason for each comment. Please submit all comments and related material in an unbound format, no larger than 8.5 by 11 inches, suitable for copying. If you would like to know they reached us, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed postcard or envelope. We will consider all comments and material received during the comment period. We may change this temporary final rule in view of them.