

Lack of Immersion Suits for Young Prompt Exemption

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

Commercial

salmon fishing in Alaska is often a family affair, with kids joining parents onboard. There is a problem that pops up though, with very young children and the requirement for immersion or survival suits for everyone onboard a commercial fishing boat.

Ken

Lawrenson, the commercial fishing safety coordinator in Juneau says the Coast Guard is aware of the conflict between regulation and reality.

-- (Immersion 1 don't make it.) 28 sec "Therein lies the problem with ... and manufacturers

There is one company, Scandia, that makes immersion suits for small children, but they are not U.S. Coast Guard approved. As a result, the Coast Guard offers an exemption to fishing families - but it must be requested in advance.

-- (Immersion 2 requirement.) 34 sec "It does put the boat owner ... going to enforce that

Lawrenson

says the Coast Guard, through the exemption, is trying to bridge the practical considerations between regulations and lack of product:

-- (Immersion 3 38 sec "It is a problem. It isn't ... not get in trouble with
the Coast Guard.")

Since the state of Alaska only allows kids on commercial fishing boats under the age of 14 to be the children of the skipper, the exemption is only good for the kids of the master of the boat. An exemption letter can be obtained by contacting Lawrenson at the District 17 headquarters in Juneau.

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