

## Bering Sea Covered by Forward-Stationed Kodiak Choppers

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An Air Station Kodiak MH-60 Jayhawk sits on the ramp in St. Paul in this 2010 Coast Guard file photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Jeffrey Solomon.

Jay Barrett/KMXT

Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak has temporarily deployed three helicopters to the Bering Sea for the winter crab season. Two MH-60 Jayhawks and their crews arrived in St. Paul on Sunday, and an MH-65 Dolphin aboard the Kodiak-based cutter Munro will also be patrolling the area.

With the increased number of vessels operating in the region during crab seasons, the Coast Guard regularly deploys crews to St. Paul to provide a more rapid response should an emergency arise. The forward operating location in St. Paul became fully staffed and operational Tuesday. Winter is the busiest time of year for fishing activity in the Bering Sea during some of the worst weather conditions.

Seventeenth District Chief of Response Captain Gregory Sanial says the forward-staging of helicopters significantly decreases the response time to emergencies and has been successful in saving lives.

If not forward-deployed, the helicopters would have to fly from Air Station Kodiak, hundreds of miles and six hours away.