

Five Crewmen Rescued from Burning Western Venture

Monday, 21 October 2013

Jay Barrett/KMXT

Five crewmen from a burning fishing vessel in the western Aleutian Chain were safely rescued by a nearby Good Samaritan. The crew of the 59-foot Kodiak-based longliner Western Venture were picked up from their liferaft by the Aleutian Beauty, after their vessel caught fire Sunday morning.

The Coast Guard in Juneau reported receiving emergency locator beacon signals around 9 a.m., first from a crewman's survival suit, and then from the Western Venture itself.

Two Jayhawk rescue helicopters - one from Cold Bay and another from Kodiak, were launched, as well as a pair of C130 Hercules aircraft. The cutter Waesche, on patrol in the Bering Sea, was also diverted toward the location of the Western Venture, about 70 miles west of Adak.

The 98-foot Seattle-based longliner Aleutian Beauty had responded to the Coast Guard's radio call for assistance, and reached the Western Venture first, taking all five crewmen aboard safely. The men will be transferred to Adak.

Meanwhile, the Western Venture is reportedly still afloat and adrift, emitting smoke from the fire onboard. It has a 4,300-gallon fuel capacity. The Coast Guard is broadcasting a warning to vessels transiting the area alerting them of the hazard to navigation. An investigation will determine if the Western Venture can be salvaged and what the cause of the fire may have been.