Air Station Kodiak Crews Kept Busy Wednesday Night

Thursday, 09 January 2014

Lauren Rosenthal/KUCB

Coast Guard helicopter crews airlifted three mariners with unusual injuries near Cold Bay Wednesday night. Petty Officer Shawn Eggert says a distress call came in from the150-foot fishing vessel Pavlof around 11 p.m., reporting a 50-year-old man had taken ill.

“He was reported to have a staph infection and his vital signs were decreasing.”

Eggert says an MH-65 Dolphin helicopter attached to the cutter Munro picked up the man about 50 miles outside Cold Bay, and took him to the community’s clinic. He was then transferred to a Life-Med flight bound for Anchorage.

Around the same time, another Coast Guard helicopter crew airlifted two burn victims off a bulk cargo carrier. Eggert says two crew members on the Astoria Bay were badly burned on Tuesday, while they were fixing the ship’s boiler.

The Astoria Bay was traveling to China when the men got hurt. The ship consulted with the Coast Guard’s flight surgeon and diverted to Unalaska for medical help, but Eggert says the injured men wouldn't have made it that far.

“There were at least third degree burns. It was bad enough to warrant flying them to the Cold Bay clinic, where the Guardian Life Flight [helicopter] could pick them up to take them to the Seattle Burn Center.”

Eggert says the burns are serious, though it’s not the most common kind of accident that happens at sea.

“Your most common injuries usually involve slips, trips and falls, basically. But burn injuries are one of the other dangers while working aboard a boat -- especially any time you’re working around the boilers or engine room.”

The Astoria Bay is a 609-foot bulk carrier flagged out of Hong Kong.