Busy Weekend for Coast Guard

Tuesday, 26 May 2009

Jay Barrett/KMXT

A helicopter crew from Air Station Kodiak hoisted an ailing man from a cruise ship south of Cold Bay on Monday. It was one of two medevacs from cruise ships in Alaska water over the Memorial Day weekend.

Around 3 p.m. Monday the Coast Guard was notified by the crew of the Silver Shadow that a 58-year-old man had internal bleeding and was in need of medical treatment. An MH-60 Jayhawk was launched and located the ship about three hours later. A rescue swimmer was lowered to the cruise ship and evaluated the patient before hoisting him into the hovering chopper. The man was then delivered to a waiting life flight jet at the Sand Point airport a little after 8 p.m. The rescue swimmer, Petty Officer Erik Pointer, said good communication between the air crew and the ship's doctor made for a smooth medevac.

The other medevac was on Saturday near Whittier, when a 60-year-old woman suffered a possible heart attack aboard the cruise ship "Spirit of Columbia." A 25-foot response boat from the Coast Guard station in Valdez responded at about 8 p.m. and had the woman aboard in less than an hour. When they returned to port, the patient was transferred to waiting emergency medical technicians.

Besides the two medevacs from cruise ships, the Coast Guard responded to 13 requests for help from recreational boaters over the long holiday weekend. They ultimately helped 30 people out of various jams, ranging from boats that became grounded, to a pair that were sinking.