

Breaking News: Due to Public Outcry, Coast Guard Rescinds Ban on Reporters and Photographers from Oil Spill

By [Washington's Blog](#)

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Due to popular rage at the ban on reporters and photographers from within 65 feet of the oil spill, Coast Guard admiral Thad Allen has rescinded the ban.

Specifically, Allen [announced](#) tonight that the media will have full access, as long as they do not interfere with safety or security:

National Incident Commander Admiral Thad Allen today announced new procedures to allow media free travel within the 20-meter boom safety zones if they have followed simple procedures for credentialing, and provided they follow certain rules and guidelines.

"I have put out a direction that the press are to have clear, unfettered access to this event, with two exceptions — if there is a safety or security concern," said Allen. "This boom is critical to the defense of the marshes and the beaches."

"We need to discriminate between media, which have a reason to be there and somebody who's hanging around when we know that we've had equipment vital to this region damaged," Allen said.

Previously, media were required to contact local authorities each time they wished to access booming operations. The 20-meter safety zone was created to prevent boats from going over the top of booms; it is not intended to limit media access.

This step will further expand media access to frontlines of the BP oil spill response, and ensure that media representatives have the access they need to report this historic response-while maintaining the effectiveness of more than 560 miles of protective boom currently deployed to protect sensitive shorelines along the Gulf Coast.

A credential will be issued for media representatives to carry and display as needed for the duration of the response. Media representatives can obtain credentials by providing their name, media affiliation, and contact information to the Unified Area Command Joint Information Center at UACNOLAJIC@gmail.com.

The credential outlines safety and security guidelines for media access—including adherence to all federal, state and local navigation rules and regulations, and other common-sense guidelines designed to protect boom while keeping everyone safe.

"We have provided unprecedented media access to the largest oil spill response in US history. We want the media and the public to see the tremendous unity of effort of 40,000 federal, state and local responders. We have provided hundreds of embarks on CG vessels and aircraft and we are offering overnight visits on a 210-foot Cutter forty miles offshore at the well site. We believe that by providing the media credentials for vessels, we will increase the ability of the media and the public to see the response effort," said Captain Jim McPherson, USCG spokesman.

Reporters who are denied access to any part of the response can call the UAC JIC at (713) 323-1670 for immediate assistance.

Congratulations to photographers like [Julie Dermansky](#), who have tirelessly documented what's really going on.

Congratulations to [Anderson Cooper](#), who showed that a mainstream reporter can demand access.

Congratulations to the First Amendment.

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