

SECTION A

INTRODUCTION

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY BLANK

PURPOSE OF THE PUGET SOUND HARBOR SAFETY PLAN

Although there have been several different stakeholder forums to precede it, the Puget Sound Harbor Safety Committee (PSHSC) was created in 1997 by stakeholders with an interest in promoting safety and the protection of Puget Sound. It was formally incorporated as a non-profit organization on December 13, 2000.

The mission of the PSHSC is to provide a proactive forum for identifying, assessing, planning, communicating, and implementing operational and environmental measures beyond statutory and regulatory requirements that promote safe, secure, and efficient use of Puget Sound and adjacent waters. The committee is made up of delegates appointed by broadly based organizations representing a span of interests focused on Puget Sound. Additionally, various governmental agencies formally support the work of PSHSC in advisory roles.

With its regular meetings and broad stakeholder group participation, the PSHSC offers an agile and vibrant forum to lead the stakeholder community in identifying and resolving conflicts or concerns, existing and potential, in the commercial and recreational use of Puget Sound. The PSHSC should be viewed as the agent of choice by government, industry and environmentalists to present and respond to user conflicts, desired new environmental practices, new safety initiatives, and natural resource conflicts or changes. The PSHSC can also support and expand upon the work of other Puget Sound focused organizations, such as the Puget Sound Partnership, the Puget Sound Area Maritime Security Committee (AMSC), the Pacific Northwest Area Committee (AC)/Regional Response Team (RRT), the Puget Sound Marine Firefighting Commission (PSMFC) and others.

PSHSC takes responsibility for capturing existing standards and protocols as well as developing new standards and protocols that address those environmental and operational elements of maritime operations that are somewhat unique and especially significant to Puget Sound. The standards and protocols have been compiled in the Puget Sound Harbor Safety Plan which is intended to complement and supplement existing federal, state and local laws and regulations with advice to mariners regarding unique conditions and requirements that may be encountered in Puget Sound and adjacent waters. These standards and protocols are not intended to supplant or otherwise conflict with the laws or regulations; nor are they intended to replace the good judgment of a ship's master in the safe operation of his/her vessel.

Action Items: Especially important action items for vessel masters will be highlighted throughout the plan in special "action items" boxes like this one.

PROCEDURES

The elements of the Puget Sound Harbor Safety Plan were developed by “focus teams” which are subcommittees of the Operations standing committee of the PSHSC. To assure the broadest perspectives on measures considered, focus teams are expected to include interested parties from within the PSHSC and to reach beyond the PSHSC for membership, participation and advice.

As possible additions and/or corrections to the Harbor Safety Plan are identified, the Chair of the Operations standing committee will appoint one or more PSHSC members to lead a focus group to consider the issues and bring recommendations to the full PSHSC.

GUIDELINES

Standards and protocols included in the Puget Sound Harbor Safety Plan address operational and environmental issues unique to Puget Sound. The Puget Sound Harbor Safety Plan is not intended to supplant or otherwise conflict with federal, state or local regulations developed under legal authorities. Nor is the Puget Sound Harbor Safety Plan intended to replace the good judgment of a ship’s master in the safe operation of his/her vessel. The Puget Sound Harbor Safety Plan is intended to complement existing regulations by advising the mariner of unique conditions and requirements that may be encountered in Puget Sound and adjacent waters and the standards and protocols developed by local experts for ensuring greater safety in light of those conditions and requirements.

HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

LIST OF MEMBERS

The Puget Sound Harbor Safety Committee is a stakeholder organization. A broad based association representing the interests of each stakeholder group is invited to nominate a representative and an alternate. The Puget Sound Harbor Safety Committee includes the following:

Voting Members

- Commercial Fishing (non-tribal)
- Environmental Groups
- Labor
- Local Government
- Maritime Services Organizations
- Native American (treaty)
- Passenger Vessel Operators
- Petroleum Shippers
- Pilots
- Public at large
- Public Ports
- Recreational Boaters
- State Ferry System
- Steamship Lines
- Tug & Barge

In addition to the stakeholder groups listed above, there are a number of governmental agencies that may serve on the Puget Sound Harbor Safety Committee in a non-voting, advisory capacity and to the extent they consent to participate on the Committee. These include:

Advisors (non-voting)

- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Admin
- U.S. Navy
- U.S. Maritime Administration
- Pacific States/BC Task Force
- WA Dept of Ecology

The Chair of the Puget Sound Harbor Safety Committee appoints the chairs of the various PSHSC subcommittees (including the Operations standing committee).

Committee membership shall not, by itself, be construed to in any way limit the legal rights, obligations, or authorities of an individual representative or the groups or agencies which they represent.

GEOGRAPHIC PLAN APPLICABILITY AND INFORMATION

GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES

This plan is intended to cover federal navigable waters throughout the Puget Sound region and the approaches from Sea, and the focus is primarily on commercial vessels. The U.S. and Canada cooperatively manage vessel traffic in these boundary waters, and there are sections of this plan with relevance to dealing with Canadian authorities, operations in Canadian waters, and operations in U.S. waters controlled by Canadian traffic managers. With the above in mind, the applicability of this plan is the combination of the below geographic areas that encompass both the legal and traffic management regimes.

U.S. COAST GUARD CAPTAIN OF THE PORT (COTP) ZONE

For all Coast Guard mission areas including waterways management, marine safety, search and rescue, law enforcement, border security, port security and environmental issues in Puget Sound and northwest Washington State, the Captain of the Port Puget Sound (located at Sector Puget Sound) is the primary Coast Guard authority. The legal boundaries for the Captain of the Port Puget Sound are set forth in 33 Code of Federal Regulations 3.65-10. This approximately corresponds to the Queets River on the Washington coast and northward, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the San Juan Island archipelago and all the navigable waters of Puget Sound. The Captain of the Port has varying levels of jurisdiction extending to the outer limit (200 nautical miles) of the EEZ for foreign and domestic vessels.

WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

For all commercial vessel and waterways management, marine safety, port safety and environmental protection and spill preparedness and response issues in Washington state waters, including all of Puget Sound and the various connecting straits, the Washington Department of Ecology Spills Prevention, Preparedness, and Response (SPILLS) Program is the primary state authority responsible for dealing with vessel and facility incidents as they might impact state marine resources. The state's jurisdiction extends to activities occurring in the coastal waters within the U.S. territorial seas, and state interests may even extend beyond those limits to the extent the event would likely impact state waters and resources. Similar to the U.S. Coast Guard, the SPILLS program conducts vessel examinations utilizing accepted industry standards for non-tank vessels, as well as conducting fuel and cargo oil transfer monitoring inspections on all vessels. In addition, the agency responds to and investigates all marine incidents and accidents involving covered vessels (i.e., tank vessels, and other commercial vessels of 300 gross tons or more).

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEME

An International Maritime Organization (IMO) approved Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) governs vessel traffic in Puget Sound and its approaches. This area is actively managed by a joint U.S. - Canadian Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service (CVTS). At the western entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, this area includes the extent of Prince Rupert Traffic's radar coverage, approximately 60 miles out to sea, and extends throughout the Puget Sound region north to Vancouver, British Columbia, and south to Tacoma, Washington and Olympia, Washington. Commercial mariners are required to have an operating handbook for the Vessel Traffic Service; it is available at: <http://www.uscg.mil/d13/psvts/>.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY BLANK