

[MOVEMENT IN] RESTRICTED VISIBILITY

A. GENERAL

Conditions of restricted visibility pose an increased risk to the mariner. As set forth in rule 19 of the COLREGS, vessel operating in conditions of restricted visibility, not in sight of one another, shall proceed at a safe speed adapted to the prevailing circumstances, have her engines ready for immediate maneuver and, if a risk of collision exists, take avoiding action in ample time.

B. STANDARDS

1. When getting underway or transiting an area of restricted visibility the master, pilot, or vessel operator shall make a positive evaluation, including but not limited to the following operating factors:
 - a. Qualification of personnel
 - b. Maneuvering characteristics of the vessel.
 - c. The vessels size and draft relative to the waters to be transited.
 - d. The quality of the vessels radar picture and navigational system.
 - e. Whether the Vessel Traffic System (VTS) has radar coverage of the waters to be transited.
 - f. Vessel traffic/congestion in the area
 - g. Proximity of hazards to navigation to the transit route.
 - h. Weather, Tides, Currents.
 - i. Watertight Integrity.
2. **Crews should be informed of the situation for heightened awareness.**

Action Items:

- VTS Puget Sound, “Seattle Traffic” relies on the reports of mariners to identify areas of restricted visibility. Once a report of restricted visibility of 2 NM or less is received, “Seattle Traffic” will notify participants of transits by vessels on a published schedule and route, (Washington State Ferries). Further, when visibility reduces to 1 NM, “Seattle Traffic” will advise participants of anchored vessels and advise ferries of the transits by other ferries. Note: During periods of restricted visibility ferry system traffic may be behind schedule and not where vessels may normally expect.
- Smaller vessels (vessels under 20 meters in length) take on an increased risk in restricted visibility due to the difficulty in detecting these vessels with radar. Smaller vessels should use a radar reflector to increase the possibility of being detected by other vessels.