

UNDERKEEL CLEARANCE

Action Items:

- When underway, minimum clearance shall be 10% of vessel's draft or 3 feet, whichever is greater.
- When at anchor, the minimum clearance is 3 feet.
- The vessel is to remain always afloat on final approach to a berth, while at the berth and on its departure from a berth.

The above underkeel clearance standards shall be adhered to by all commercial vessels in Puget Sound. These standards of care are written with the understanding that certain vessels such as tugs with uninspected barges and commercial fishing vessels are required by the very nature of their business to operate with less than these minimum underkeel clearances when in specific locations and conditions. However, operating with the hull touching or resting on the bottom is no longer considered a prudent or appropriate practice.

While the above guideline is general in nature, it is noted that the determination of an appropriate minimum under-keel clearance for a specific vessel transiting a specific waterway must take into account many factors in addition to vessel draft and least depth, including but not limited to: vessel size, configuration, speed, trim, and list; the shape, size and hydrography of the waterway; and variations from predicted tidal levels.