

INTERIM PROTOCOL FOR THE USE OF SOUTHERN B.C. COMMERCIAL ANCHORAGES

Monthly Report #7– Summary of Activities for August 2018

The Interim Anchorages Protocol for southern British Columbia commercial anchorages is a voluntary change of procedure and applies to all cargo vessels who request to anchor at one of the 33 identified locations along the south coast of B.C. It came into effect on February 8, 2018 for an initial trial period of six (6) months, and was extended in August for a further period of 12 months while the national Anchorages Initiative project and a new anchorages framework is completed. The Vancouver Fraser Port Authority manages the assignment of anchorage locations along the south coast in order to balance use more equitably and ensure that no one location is overused. The protocol also introduced voluntary guidelines for noise and light emissions from ships between 1900 and 0700 hours

1. HIGHLIGHTS for August

As for previous months, Transport Canada’s National Aerial Surveillance Program (NASP) had a busy month and completed 11 coastal flights and 8 northern ones, for a total of 1013 overflight ship inspections. No pollution was observed from the commercial ships at anchor.

A number of residents from coastal communities wrote to Transport Canada asking why some locations were used more often than others, and why vessels were returning to the same spot when other sites were empty. Each anchorage is rated for maximum size of ship that it can accommodate, meaning that larger ships can only anchor at the larger locations such as Cowichan Bay and Trincomali. And, the assignment system used by VFPA also considers the overall past use of the anchor grouping, not just the individual site.

In response to multiple request for further detail on the system used by the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority to assign vessels to south coast anchorages, Transport and VFPA worked together to develop a short outline of the process. Look for a new posting on the VFPA public website in the weeks ahead.

Last but not least, readers should be aware that although VFPA has a published 7-day limit on ships at anchor, vessels are *not* automatically redirected to south coast anchorages unless there is an immediate operational requirement. Ships are sometimes at anchor for one or two weeks beyond the 7-day limit.

2. USAGE DATA and SUMMARIES

Transport Canada staff have been reviewing data to determine what factors impact on the demand for coastal anchorages. With the increased size of bulk carriers, we noted that some grain ships need to make several to a terminal before they are fully loaded, and must wait at anchor between arrivals of product. And, since terminals work almost continuously, it is not possible to berth alongside the terminal while waiting for the next shipment.

During the third week of August we experienced a spike in demand all anchorages -- both in the ports and along the south coast. Unfortunately, there was no single direct cause, so the increase in demand could not have been forecast however, the congestion resulted in a flurry of inquiries to both Transport Canada and VFPA.

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As usual for our monthly reports, we include an attachment showing anchor-days for each coastal anchorage grouping during the month of August and total days at anchor since the beginning of the Protocol. The updated data source data set, which includes names of vessels with their arrival and sail times, and new detail on annual usage since 2013, is available for download for registered organizational representatives. If you are not a subscriber but would like to receive the information, please contact us at TC.PacificAnchorages-Ancragesdupacifique.TC@tc.gc.ca

3. CHANGES TO THE PROTOCOL

Our Working Group considered a number of ideas and suggestions about the Protocol and made the following changes:

- Communities have written to Transport Canada and the Pacific Pilotage Authority (PPA) to say that anchorages are too close to shore. The group noted that all anchorages are safe for the identified maximum size of ship, and that sometimes moving further away could increase the safety risk. However, in response to the comments, PPA will advise pilots to direct ships to the furthest point away from the community within the prescribed anchoring area.
- Based on a review by pilots, anchorages that are currently described as 225 m LOA (length overall) can safely accommodate ships up to 230 m. The change in rating will allow up to 15% more ships to be assigned to the current 225 m sites, thereby reducing the use of the longer Cowichan and Trincomali locations.
- VFPA will request agents of vessels that are being redirected from the Port to the south coast to make best efforts with timing and ordering of pilots so as to avoid arrivals in the Gulf Islands during nighttime silent hours.

A number of citizens also wrote to Transport Canada asking us to impose limits on the length of stay at individual south coast anchorages. When we analyzed the idea, we realized that making such a change would not decrease the number of days at anchor, but would increase the number of transits and the risk of damage to the environment. And, since pilots are needed for the area, it would also add costs for the shipper. So, we made no changes at this time, but have presented the suggestion to our national anchorages team lead for consideration in the development of a new framework.

4. NEXT STEPS

Anchorages will be a topic of discussion at the upcoming Oceans Protection Plan Dialogue Forum on October 22 in Vancouver, which will include a breakout session on anchorages. We look forward to seeing many of you there.

If you have additional comments or suggestions about anchorages, write to the Pacific Region team at TC.PacificAnchorages-Ancragesdupacifique.TC@tc.gc.ca, or join the conversation at the Oceans Protection Plan Let's Talk Website at <https://letstalktransportation.ca/OPP>
