

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

Report #9 – November and December 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 completes its studies and makes recommendations for change. The Vancouver Fraser Port Authority (VFPA) 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 includes voluntary guidelines for noise and light emissions from ships between 1900 and 0700 hours.

HIGHLIGHTS for the reporting period

Transport Canada's National Aerial Surveillance Program (NASP) had a busy month in **November** and conducted 22 coastal overflights with visual inspections of 1425 ships. In **December** the group completed 16 coastal flights, and 1026 overflight ship inspections. Some pollution was observed and reported each month from small vessels and sunken craft, but none from any commercial freighters at anchor.

Summary data for anchorage use for November and December 2018 is attached to this bulletin, and now includes new charts showing the distribution of types of commodities carried by ships at anchor along the south coast. The full updated data set is now posted on the Pacific OPP Forum for download to registered subscribers. It is also available on request by e-mail to our Pacific Anchorages desk, TC.PacificAnchorages-Ancragesdupacifique.TC@tc.gc.ca.

Recent inquiries and activities

In late November, we received a number of inquiries about the fuel tanker "*M. V. Strimon*" anchored in Plumper Sound. As most coastal residents know, tankers generally proceed directly to port to load product and then depart right away, so this was an unusual occurrence. The regulations governing the construction and operation of tankers are more stringent than for other bulk carriers, so there was no increased environmental risk – nevertheless, we followed up and learned that the ship was empty and waiting to depart to Ferndale in the US. In the exchange of correspondence that followed with some community representatives, writers suggested that going forward, anchoring should only be allowed in Canada if a ship is destined for a Canadian port, and that further, Canada should charge a fee. This is one of a number of suggestions that has been presented to the national Anchorages Initiative team.

In November and December, our regional Transport office and VFPA also received multiple complaints over several weeks about the ship "*Desert Oasis*", a grain carrier that was at anchor along the south coast at three separate times between visits to the Port for loading. The ship was contacted and made efforts to reduce

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noise; however, it still remained too loud for a number of coastal residents. We also received correspondence expressing frustration that the vessel was at anchor for almost two months before it finally departed. Lengthy stays at anchor are of concern to us as well, but moving a ship every 7 to 10 days increases the operating costs, adds to the environmental impact, and increases the exposure to risk of a marine incident. The national Anchorages project team is reviewing arrival and loading management practices used in other major ports around the world to determine if any could be adapted for Canada, and we are also engaging industry to determine if they can take any actions to optimize the supply chain, and reduce the need for anchoring outside a port.

More recently, in early January we received a number of citizen complaints about a container ship sitting at anchor at Plumper D. Although the ship was on-site for only a few hours due to a last minute delay in clearing the berth in the Port of Vancouver, the occurrence generated a number of suggestions for the Port about the need for better communication between terminals and arriving ships so as to ensure just-in-time arrival.

We also heard from logging operators working near the Ladysmith anchorages that when the sites B and C are both occupied, barge unloading cannot proceed. Going forward, VFPA will be adjusting the anchorage assignment algorithm to ensure that anchorages B and C are not both used at the same time. We will continue to monitor activities after this change, and follow up with logging companies after a six-month period.

New information

In response to questions from a number of individuals and groups about screening and processing of foreign ships, we have posted a new document in the Anchorages Library section of the Pacific OPP Forum, “*How does the Government of Canada screen foreign ships when they enter Canadian waters?*” Please contact our Pacific Anchorages Desk at the address below if you are not a subscriber to our website, but would like a copy.

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 national conversation at the Oceans Protection Plan Let’s Talk Website at <https://letstalktransportation.ca/OPP>.
