

# SAN FRANCISCO, SAN PABLO AND SUISUN BAYS HARBOR SAFETY PLAN

approved  
\_\_\_\_\_, 2005

Pursuant to the  
California Oil Spill and Prevention Act of 1990

Submitted by the  
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## INTRODUCTION

*In 1990, the California Legislature enacted the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act (OSPRA). The goals of OSPRA are to improve the prevention, removal, abatement, response, containment and clean up and mitigation of oil spills in the marine waters of California. The Act (SB 2040) created harbor safety committees for the major harbors of the state of California to plan “for the safe navigation and operation of tankers, barges, and other vessels within each harbor ... [by preparing] ... a harbor safety plan, encompassing all vessel traffic within the harbor.” The Harbor Safety Committee of the San Francisco Bay Region was officially sworn in September 18, 1991 and held its first meeting on that date. The original Harbor Safety Plan for San Francisco, San Pablo and Suisun Bays was adopted August 13, 1992. SB 2040 mandates that the Harbor Safety Committee must annually review its previously adopted Harbor Safety Plan and recommendations and submit the annual review to the OSPR Administrator for comment.*

*The full committee of the Harbor Safety Committee holds regular monthly public meetings. The committee chairperson may appoint work groups to review the mandated components of the Harbor Safety Plan and timely issues. All committee and work group meetings are noticed to the public. Public comments are received throughout discussions of the various issues, which results in full public participation in developing the recommendations of the Harbor Safety Plan of the San Francisco Bay Region.*

*The San Francisco Bay Harbor Safety Plan encompasses a series of connecting bays, including the San Francisco, San Pablo and Suisun Bays, and the Sacramento River to the Port of Sacramento and the San Joaquin River to the Port of Stockton. The distance from the San Francisco lighted horn buoy outside the Bay to the Ports of Stockton and Sacramento is approximately one hundred miles. The 548-square-mile Bay has an irregular 1,000 mile shoreline composed of a variety of urban and suburban areas, marshes and salt ponds. Several significant islands are within the Bay, including Angel Island, Alcatraz Island, Yerba Buena Island and Treasure Island. Map 1 depicts the geographic boundaries of the area covered by the Harbor Safety Plan.*

*The San Francisco Bay system is the largest estuary on the Pacific Coasts of North and South America. Waters from the two major river systems and the Bay flow through the Golden Gate, which is less than a mile wide at its narrowest point. Because of the volume of water moving through the narrow opening on a daily basis, tides and strong currents occur in the Bay. While the Bay is extremely deep (356 feet) under the Golden Gate Bridge because of the swiftly moving volume of water, the Bay is very shallow in many areas and subject to sedimentation from the rivers emptying into the Bay. Sediment also is deposited outside the entrance to San Francisco Bay where a semicircular bar extends into the Pacific Ocean. The Bay itself is less than 18 feet deep over two-thirds of its area, and the Bay bottom is predominantly mud. A dredged Main Ship Channel allows deep-draft vessels to navigate the Bay.*

*The Bay presents a number of hazards to navigation, such as strong tides and currents and variable bottom depths, which confine large vessels to defined shipping lanes within the Bay. Navigating the Bay becomes more complex during periods of restricted visibility. The San Francisco Bar Pilots regularly compile recommended guidelines for safe navigation entitled “Port Safety Guidelines for Movement of Vessels on San Francisco Bay and Tributaries.” The guidelines are sent to members of the shipping industry, and are based on a general consensus among pilots as to recommended navigation practices.*

*The Bay supports a variety of uses, including shipping, fishing, ferry transit and various recreational activities. There are seven ports, a number of marine terminals, and military facilities at the Military Ocean Terminal Concord (MOTCO) and Moffet Field. Because the water depths near refineries in Contra Costa and Solano Counties cannot safely accommodate larger oil tankers, large tankers lighter oil to smaller tankers or barges to move cargo in-Bay to marine terminals. Map 3 identifies the location of marine terminals in the plan area. In addition, an expanding ferry system annually makes over 85,000 (2004) trips, mainly to and from San Francisco in the central part of the Bay. Because much of the Bay shoreline is urbanized, recreational boating and the growing sports of board sailing and paddle sports are popular, with an estimated 20,000 boat berths around the Bay, exclusive of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, as well as numerous boat launch sites.*

*The shipping industry is a particularly vital part of the Bay Area economy. Shipping spokespersons estimate that approximately 100,000 jobs are dependent upon the shipping industry and that the industry contributes nearly \$5 billion to the regional economy.*

*Thus, vessel traffic in the Bay consists of a complex variety of inbound and outbound vessels, wholly in-Bay vessel movements, tugs, government vessels, ferries, recreational boats, commercial and sports fishing boats, board sailors, paddle sports enthusiasts and personal watercraft (jet skis) within the series of bays, channels and rivers that comprise the San Francisco Bay planning area.*

ORGANIZATION of the HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE of the SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

The San Francisco Harbor Safety Committee consists of representatives from the following: ports (four), dry cargo vessel operators (two), tank ship operators (two) or one ship operator and one oil marine terminal operator, and one of each form tug operation, tank barge operator, passenger ferry or excursion vessel operator, the regional pilot organization, vessel labor union, commercial fishing, recreational boater, environmental organization, U.S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Navy. A complete list of committee members is found in Appendix A.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2004/2005

The San Francisco Bay Region Harbor Safety Committee is concerned with navigation, security and environmental issues that impact the San Francisco Bay Area. The Committee meets monthly, rotating among the Ports of Richmond, Oakland and San Francisco. The Committee consistently has active member and public participation. It is a successful example of federal and state government agencies, the maritime community and the public working together, to provide guidance and oversight of navigational safety in the Bay Region.

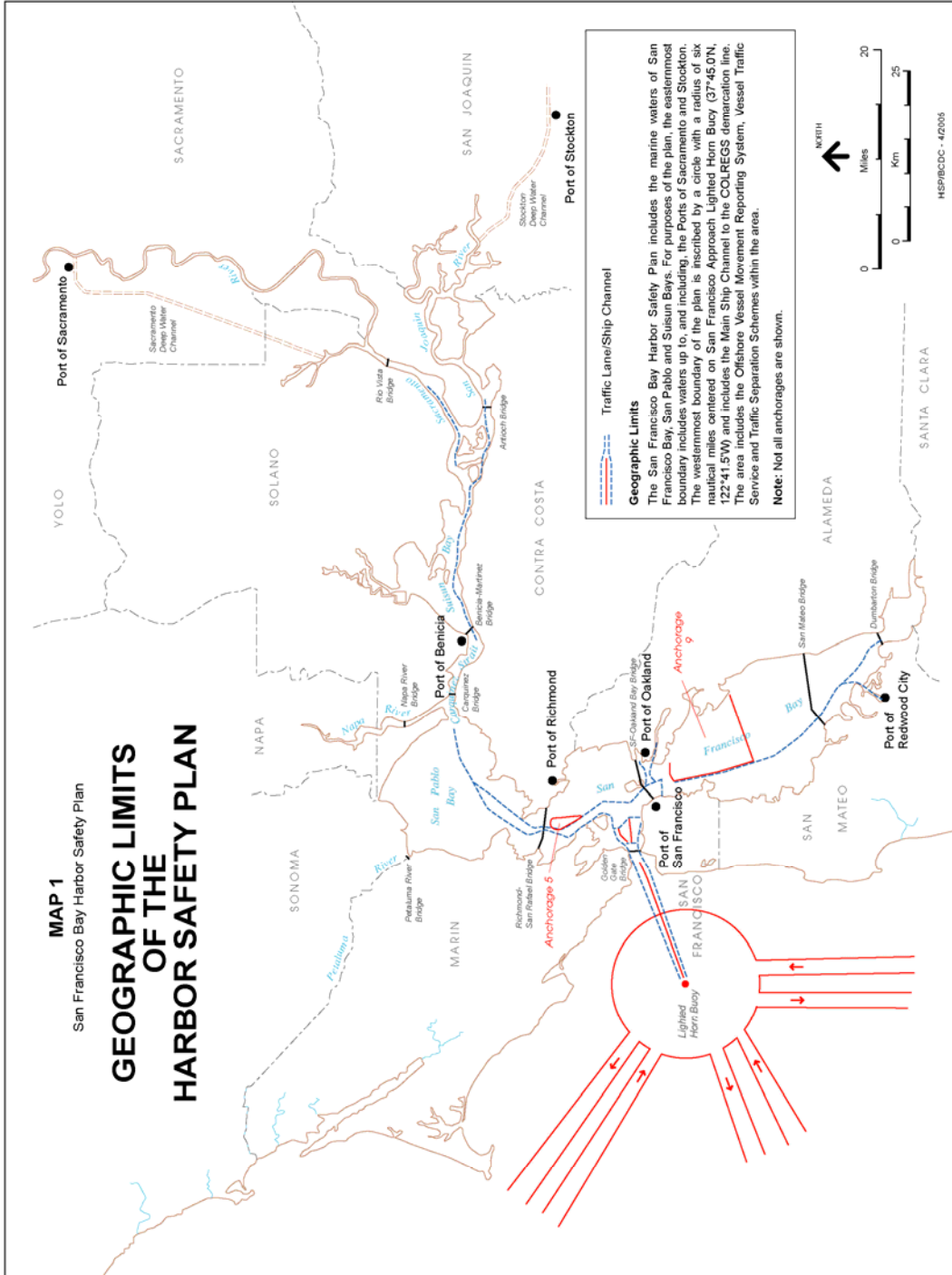
During 2005-2005:

- The Harbor Safety Plan Work Group completed an extensive rewrite of the plan, which was originally adopted in 1992. The update included revised maps and appendices and the status of previously adopted recommendations. This effort makes the plan relevant, with current practices and easily located information.
- The Navigation Work Group helped Coast Guard VTS design, develop and implement a new systematized, permanent dock numbering system for the Bay Region, enhancing navigational safety and security. The Work Group also investigated the allegation that large vessels were exceeding the 15-knot speed limit in the Central Bay and developed a plan with VTS to conduct speed surveys. Pilots and vessels were notified to ensure compliance.
- The Prevention through People Work Group produced the professional video, “Sharing the Bay” and accompanying brochure, “Rules 9 and 5 – Laws to Live By” to educate recreational boaters about safe interaction with ships, barges and ferries. The 200 videos are having wide distribution regionally and nationally through Coast Guard Auxiliaries, Power Squadrons, yacht clubs and the National Harbor Safety Committee. The Work Group also wrote the brochure “P.O.R.T.S.” describing the Physical Oceanographic Real Time System in the Bay.
- The Ferry Operations Work Group collected information relating to safety issues of high-speed ferry transits in the Bay. The Work Group is focused on establishing a recommended protocol and communication procedure for safe berthing at San Francisco Ferry Building terminals.
- The Tug Escort Work Group reviewed proposed state legislation, SB 403, which would mandate tug escorts for vessels carrying anhydrous ammonia or ammonium nitrate in “sufficient quantity” to be hazardous. The Work Group met with representatives of the maritime community, the state Office of Emergency Services, the state Senate and the environmental group proposing the legislation to analyze the specific risks, ship construction and transit procedures. As a result of these discussions, SB 403 was amended and is being reconsidered.
- The P.O.R.T.S. (Physical Oceanographic Real Time System) Work Group was reactivated to examine short term funding sources for the system, analyze user demands and components of the system, and to identify long term, permanent funding.

## **I. GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES**

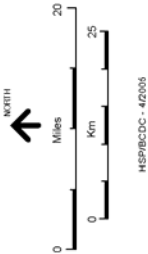
The policies and recommendations contained in the San Francisco Bay Harbor Safety Plan address vessel safety in the marine waters of the San Francisco, San Pablo and Suisun Bays, up to and including the Ports of Sacramento and Stockton, which establish the eastern boundary of the plan area. The western boundary of the plan is inscribed by a circle with a radius of six nautical miles (nm) centered on San Francisco Approach Lighted Horn Buoy SF (37° 45. 0'N., 122° 41.5'W) and includes the Main Ship Channel to the COLREGS demarcation line (see map opposite). This includes the Offshore Vessel Movement Reporting System, Vessel Traffic Service and Traffic Separation schemes within the area. NOAA charts 18649-18663 cover the Harbor Safety Plan Area.

**MAP 1**  
 San Francisco Bay Harbor Safety Plan  
**GEOGRAPHIC LIMITS**  
**OF THE**  
**HARBOR SAFETY PLAN**



**Geographic Limits**  
 The San Francisco Bay Harbor Safety Plan includes the marine waters of San Francisco Bay, San Pablo and Suisun Bays. For purposes of the plan, the easternmost boundary includes waters up to, and including, the Ports of Sacramento and Stockton. The westernmost boundary of the plan is inscribed by a circle with a radius of six nautical miles centered on San Francisco Approach Lighted Horn Buoys (37°45'0N, 122°41'5W) and includes the Main Ship Channel to the COLREGS demarcation line. The area includes the Offshore Vessel Movement Reporting System, Vessel Traffic Service and Traffic Separation Schemes within the area.

**Note:** Not all anchorages are shown.



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## II. GENERAL WEATHER, CURRENTS AND TIDES

The majority of the information presented here is derived from the *U.S. Coast Pilot, Pacific Coast*, published by NOAA and available from the following website: <http://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/nsd/cpdownload.htm>. The *Coast Pilot* information is augmented with observations from local sources.

Ships traveling into the Bay encounter diverse weather, currents, tides and bottom depths. Because of the often varied and changing set of harbor conditions, mariners must be observant about current conditions to navigate safely.

### WEATHER

#### Winds

Bay area weather is seasonably variable with three discernible seasons affecting the marine environment.

**Winter.** Winter winds from November to February shift frequently and have a wide range of speeds dependent on the procession of offshore high and low pressure systems. Calms occur 15 to 40 percent of the time inside the Bay and 10 to 12 percent outside. Extreme wind conditions of 50 knots gusting to 75 knots have occurred during the winter. The strongest winds tend to come from the Southeast to Southwest ahead of a cold front.

**Spring.** Spring tends to be the windiest season with average speeds in the Bay of 6-12 knots, with wind speeds of 17-28 knot winds up to 40 percent of the time. Wind direction stabilizes as the Pacific High Pressure System becomes the dominant weather influence. Northwesterly winds are generated and reinforced by the sea breeze. Inside the Bay, winds are channeled and vary from Northwest to Southwest.

**Summer.** Summer winds are the most constant and predictable. The winds outside the Golden Gate are normally from Northwest to North and are generated by the strong Pacific High Pressure System. This condition lasts through October until the system weakens and the winter cycle starts again. Winds inside the Bay are local depending on the land contours acting on the onshore flow. One of the few occurrences that will alter this pattern is when a high pressure system settles over Washington and Oregon. When this happens a Northeast flow develops, bringing warm dry air. This clears away the summer fog.

**Safety Considerations in Adverse Wind Conditions.** Adverse wind conditions may cause ships at anchor to change position and drag anchor away from the intended mooring position. Winds in San Pablo Bay may be particularly strong and must be taken into consideration. Significant discrepancies exist in the reported winds noted in the *Coast Pilot* and observations made by local professional mariners and recreational boaters. A possible cause for this is the location of reporting sites on land, where deflection and channeling of wind results in data that differ from conditions on the water.

## **Fog**

Fog is a common occurrence in the Bay Area, particularly around the Golden Gate. It is most frequent during the summer, occasional during fall and winter, and infrequent during spring. Although daily and seasonal fog cycles are predictable, long term fluctuations are not. Fog patterns can differ within the Bay region on the same day because of the unique geography of the Bay, which consists of two mountain ranges, the large expanse of bays and a major river system. Depending on the location, an area may experience high, dense or relatively little fog. The following is a brief summary of conditions in the Bay. For a detailed description, refer to the *Coast Pilot* (Weather Conditions, San Francisco Bay).

**Summer.** Summer fog is dependent on several routine conditions. The Pacific High becomes well established off the coast and maintains a constant Northwest wind. It also drives the cold California Current south and causes an upwelling of cold water along the coast. Air closest to the surface becomes chilled so that the temperature increases with altitude. This process forms an inversion layer at 500-1,500 feet, where the air is warmer at this level than the air below it. Moist, warm ocean air moving toward the coast is cooled first by the California Current, then more by cold coastal water. Condensation occurs and fog will form to the height of the inversion layer. This happens often enough to form a semi-permanent fog bank off the Golden Gate during the summer.

Under normal summer conditions a daily cycle is evident. A sheet of fog forms off the Golden Gate headlands during the morning and becomes more extensive as the day passes. As the temperature in the inland valleys rises, a local low pressure creates a steady onshore wind. By late afternoon, the fog begins to move through the Golden Gate at a speed of about 14 knots on the afternoon sea breeze. Once inside the Bay it is carried by local winds. In general, the northern part of the Bay is the last to be enveloped and the first to clear in the morning. There are times when the flow is strong enough to carry the sea fog as far east as Sacramento and Stockton. If this continues for a number of days, cooler ocean air replaces the warm valley air and causes the sea breeze mechanism to break down. Winds then diminish and the Bay Area clears for a few days; the valley then slowly reheats and the cycle begins anew.

**Winter.** Winter fogs are usually radiation fog or “tule” fog. With the clear skies and light winds of winter, land temperature drops rapidly at night. In low, damp places such as the Delta and Central Valley (where tules and marsh plants grow), this process creates a shallow radiation fog (moist sea air reacting to cold land mass), which can be very dense. In contrast to the summer fog that moves from sea to land at about 14 knots, the winter tule fogs move slowly seaward at about one knot.

**Safety Considerations in Adverse Weather Conditions.** Reduced visibility during periods of fog requires that mariners observe caution. During reduced visibility, vessels may remain docked, reduce speed if underway or anchor in or near a channel to await improved conditions. Extra vigilance must be used in reduced visibility, particularly in or near navigation channels. Vessels within the Bay at a dock or at a safe anchorage should not commence movement if visibility is less than .5 nautical miles throughout the intended route, unless the operator’s assessment of all variables is that the vessel can proceed safely. The operator’s local knowledge should include an understanding of historic weather patterns during that time of year, current weather reports and checking with reporting stations along the route. This guideline acknowledges that the Bay region is a series of bays and rivers, in-Bay distances are long and that there is not a single Bay region climate, but a series of many microclimates with variable fog. The Captain of the Port has the authority to prohibit movement of vessels within all or portions of the Bay during adverse weather conditions.

Because of the large size of the Bay (500 square miles), the longer distances traveled to the various ports, and the diverse weather conditions encountered in the Bay, mariners are dependent on accurate weather forecasting for vessel movements. The National Weather Service broadcasts marine weather information on VHF WX 1,2,3, and 4.

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## CURRENTS AND TIDES

### Currents

The currents at the entrance to San Francisco Bay are variable and can attain considerable velocity. Immediately outside the Golden Gate bar is a slight current to the North and West known as the Coast Eddy Current. The currents that have the greatest effect on navigation in the Bay and out through the Golden Gate are tidal in nature.

**Golden Gate Flood Current.** In the Golden Gate the flood or incoming current sets (direction of flow) straight in with a slight tendency to the northern shores and with heavy turbulence at both Lime Point and Fort Point when the flood is strong. This causes an eddy or circular current between Point Lobos and Fort Point.

**Golden Gate Ebb Current.** The ebb or outgoing current has been known to reach more than 6.5 knots between Lime and Fort Points. It sets from inside the northern part of the Bay toward Fort Point. As with the flood, it causes an eddy between Point Lobos and Fort Point, and a heavy rip and turbulence reach a quarter of a mile south of Point Bonita.

**Golden Gate Current Maximums.** In the Golden Gate the maximum flood current occurs about an hour-and-a-half before high water, with the maximum ebb occurring about an hour-and-a-half before low water. The average maximums are 3 knots for the flood and 3.5 kts for the ebb.

**Inner Bay Currents.** Inside the Golden Gate the flood sets to the Northeast and causes swirls and eddies. This is most pronounced between the Golden Gate, Angel Island and Alcatraz Island. The current sets through Raccoon Strait (north of Angel Island), taking the most direct path to the upper Bay and the Delta area. The ebb current inside the Golden Gate is felt on the south shore first. The duration of the ebb is somewhat longer than the flood due to the addition of runoff from the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers.

## **Tides**

Tides in the San Francisco Bay Area are semi-diurnal in that there are usually two cycles of high and low tides daily, but with inequality of the heights of the two. Occasionally the tidal cycle will become diurnal (only one cycle of tide in a day). As a result, depths in the Bay are based on “mean lower low water” (MLLW), or the average height of the lower of the two daily low tides. The mean range of the tide at the Golden Gate is 4.1 feet, with a diurnal range of 5.8 feet. During the periodic maximum tidal variations the range may reach as much as 9 feet and have lowest low waters 2.4 feet below mean lower low water datum.

**Safety Considerations Associated with Current and Tide Conditions.** In late 1991, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) stopped publishing the local tidal current charts due to significant errors in predictions that exceeded NOAA standards. Because safe navigation is highly dependent upon accurate tidal and current information, the Physical Oceanographic Real Time System (P.O.R.T.S.) was installed to give near-real time tide and current data updated every six minutes. P.O.R.T.S. is managed by the Marine Exchange of the San Francisco Bay Region (SFMX) with technical assistance from NOAA/NOS. Consistent funding is still to be identified for long term operation of the system in the Bay.

P.O.R.T.S continues to be of great benefit to recreational boaters, commercial shippers, vessel masters and pilots in providing accurate knowledge of winds, currents and other environmental parameters used by the San Francisco maritime community.

Data from the sensors is collected and subject to automatic preliminary quality-control at the Data Acquisition System (DAS) located at the SFMX. The data is quality-tested in much greater detail on a 24-hour/7-day per week basis under a program called the Continuous Operating Real Time Monitoring System or CORMS. CORMS employs knowledgeable oceanographers at NOAA's National Ocean Service headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, who monitor the data quality and sensor performance using data quality control tests and remote sensor and DAS diagnostics.

Management of P.O.R.T.S., including administration, field maintenance and repair and the DAS, was handed over to the SFMX, located at Lower Fort Mason Center in San Francisco. The P.O.R.T.S. Advisory Workgroup is studying various funding options in order to continue operating the system, and has made a recommendation to request general State funding.

Access to P.O.R.T.S. information may be obtained by logging onto the SFMX website at <http://www.sfm.org> or by contacting the automated voice response number: (866) 727-6787.

### III. AIDS TO NAVIGATION

The waters of the San Francisco Bay Area are marked to assist navigation by the U.S. Aids to Navigation System. This system encompasses buoys and beacons conforming to the International Association of Lighthouse Authorities. The U.S. Aids to Navigation System is intended for use with nautical charts. The exact meaning of a particular aid to navigation may not be clear to an individual unless the appropriate nautical chart is consulted. Additional important information supplementing that shown on charts is contained in the *Light List*, *Coast Pilot* and *Sailing Directions*.

Aids to navigation in the Bay region are regularly reviewed. These reviews, known as the Waterway Analysis and Management System Studies (WAMS), are conducted by the U.S. Coast Guard with input from pilots and other waterway users. One of the results of these reviews was the establishment of new precautionary areas in the Central Bay and its approaches. (The prior traffic routing scheme, originally established in 1972, corrected the problems of contrary vessel movements in the Bay at that time.) The revised traffic routing scheme established a deep water traffic lane and a precautionary area between the Main Ship Channel traffic lanes and the Deep Water Traffic Lane (DWTL). It also established the Central Bay traffic lanes and expanded the associated precautionary areas. The northern traffic lanes were redesigned and the separation zones in the channel deleted. The Coast Guard also established Regulated Navigation Areas (RNAs) for San Francisco Bay and the ship channels of Oakland Harbor, Richmond Harbor/Southampton Shoal Channel, North Ship Channel, Pinole Shoal Channel and the channel under the Union Pacific Railroad Bridge in the Carquinez Strait.

Lighted buoys mark many of the major rocks near shipping channels in the Bay. A lighted buoy and a racon (radar beacon) mark Harding Rock, a submerged rock near the DWTL northwest of Alcatraz Island. Arch and Shag Rocks, which are submerged near Harding Rock, are unmarked. The Coast Guard determined that it was not necessary to mark these rocks. However, in September 1996, the Coast Guard established the San Francisco Bay North Channel Lighted Buoy 1 in position 37-49.9N, 122-24.5W to mark the shoal east of Alcatraz Island for deep-draft vessel traffic.

In addition to the hazards posed by rocks both above and below the water, area bridges create an additional challenge when navigating the Bay. There are racons on most bridges in the Bay Region. This is of major importance because racons are invaluable for radar navigation, particularly in fog, which is common to the Bay. Racons appear on radar screens as large coded signals extending in an arc behind the racon position. With racons placed on the center span of bridges, the mariner can determine the center of the bridge span, even in limited visibility. The Harbor Safety Committee continues to emphasize the importance of racons on bridges.

## IV. ANCHORAGES

Due to the extent of the Bay, a number of federally designated anchorages have been established in the San Francisco, San Pablo, and Suisun Bays and the San Joaquin and Sacramento Rivers. The *Coast Pilot* lists the area's anchorages and limitations. See 33 CFR 110.224 for regulations governing anchorages in the San Francisco Bay region. The regulations can be found on the web in the Code of Federal Regulations at [www.gpoaccess.gov](http://www.gpoaccess.gov).

Anchorage 9 is the only anchorage designated by the U.S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port where lightering of tankers and bunkering of vessels is allowed. Because of the number of active military bases that were situated around the Bay, the Coast Guard established several explosive anchorages, primarily within Anchorages 5 and 9 (see Map 1). Explosive Anchorage 14, within Anchorage 9, was realigned in 1997 to provide deeper water in order to allow vessels laden with explosives, and with drafts of 38 feet or greater, to safely anchor. This also minimized potential overcrowding of vessels anchored within the northern portion of Anchorage 9. Notice of activation of an explosive anchorage is made in the Coast Guard Notice to Mariners to advise vessels not to anchor within the area while vessels are laden with explosives within the Anchorage.

It was recommended that the USCG adopt pre-designated anchorage areas within the existing general anchorages throughout the VTS SF area, and in particular within General Anchorage 9, in order that safer and more disciplined anchoring practices may be managed by VTS SF, with due consideration for pilot and vessel master concerns. The final resolution was to divide the Anchorage into two areas: the western side is designated for deep-draft vessels and the eastern side for lighter-draft vessels. In addition, VTS requires that vessels not anchor closer than 750 yards from one another.

## V. SURVEYS, CHARTS AND DREDGING

The rivers and streams that empty into San Francisco Bay carry large quantities of silt into the harbors and shipping channels of the Bay. Therefore, channel depths must be regularly maintained and shoaling controlled in order to accommodate deep-draft vessels. Beginning in 1868, Congress passed the River and Harbor Act and the federal government began dredging a channel to create a main ship channel in the approaches to San Francisco Bay. Maintenance dredging accounts for approximately 5,000,000 cubic yards of sediments dredged from the San Francisco Bay, Sacramento and San Joaquin ship channels annually.

Actual channel depths may vary from project depths and must be checked with the most recent hydrographic surveys. Presently the project depth of the Main Ship Channel from the Pacific Ocean into the Bay is 55 feet deep and 2,000 feet wide. However, continual sedimentation flowing out of the river systems into the ocean reduces the Main Ship Channel from its authorized depths. According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (CoE), there are no current plans to change the entrance channel's authorized width or depth. The depth of the main channel limits the draft of vessels able to enter the Bay.

During the past century, the federal government deepened a number of shipping channels, removed several shoals and reduced rocks near Alcatraz Island. There are a number of federally dredged channels in the Bay, some of which are narrow. For example, Pinole Shoal is 600 feet wide and the Stockton Main Ship Channel is 200 feet wide. Bay Area ports and channels are maintained to various authorized project depths. (Consult the latest *Coast Pilot* or NOAA charts.)

Deep-draft vessels in the Bay are often constrained to navigate only within the main shipping channels. Groundings have been reported in many areas of the region, in part due to the narrow width of many of the channels. Groundings can result in damage to vessels and property, with the potential for serious environmental consequences. A ship aground in a channel can block the transit of other vessels or create new shoaling, and may cause serious delays to Bay commerce. Maneuvering deep-draft ships in narrow channels with minimal underkeel clearance poses high navigational risks, given the complexities of tides, currents and weather conditions in the Bay.

## Surveys

Surveys provide information on actual channel depths, reducing the risk of vessel groundings. The frequent shoaling and silting in the channels of San Francisco Bay and its tributaries require channel surveys to be conducted on a routine basis. Emergency surveys should be conducted when there is evidence that shoaling has occurred. Due to seasonal shoaling, some areas are surveyed on a more frequent basis. Even charts based on modern surveys may not show all seabed obstructions or shallow areas due to localized shoaling.

The variable hydrodynamics of the Bay estuary are due to a number of factors such as drought and flood cycles, dredging projects and in-Bay dredge disposal that may affect navigation channels. Strong seismic events may alter the bottom topography of the Bay due to liquefaction and lateral spread. Recent observations have indicated that manmade channels may be influencing tidal currents to a greater degree than anticipated, affecting sediment accretion.

Accumulation of disposed dredged material at the disposal site near Alcatraz Island resulted in the need for a new approach to dredged material management, leading to adoption of the Long Term Management Strategy (LTMS) for the placement of dredged material in the San Francisco Bay region by the state and federal agencies that regulate dredging and disposal. The LTMS provides the basis for uniform federal and state dredged material disposal policies and regulations, with a focus on minimizing in-bay disposal of dredged material.

## Charts

NOAA's Office of Coast Survey (CS) designed a chart maintenance plan to provide support for the nation's largest commercial ports and trade routes. Selection of these ports and routes is based upon the tonnage and value of goods moving through them.

**Raster Chart Products:** NOAA has been active in developing electronic charts products. NOAA's entire suite of 1,000 nautical charts is available in raster format from nautical chart agents. There are 75 software developers that have produced 25 different navigational software applications utilizing these raster chart images.

**Print-on-Demand Charts (POD):** POD charts are available nationwide from contractors that are listed on the NOAA website: <http://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov>. The POD allows CS to update charts immediately and electronically transmit the updated information to users. ( means for the user to update raster charts is being investigated. The user will be able to download Notice to Mariner corrections and other chart corrections from the internet website or bulletin board that can be merged with the existing file (on CD-ROM or other media) using a “raster-differencing” application that in essence performs a pixel-by-pixel comparison between the existing chart and corrections to produce an updated chart version. Beta testing of this experimental process is still in progress.

<b>San Francisco Bay NOAA Nautical Charts</b>			
	<b>Chart Number</b>	<b>Chart Scale</b>	<b>Chart Title</b>
1	18640	1:207,840	San Francisco to Point Arena
2	18645	1:100,000	Gulf of the Farallones
3	18649	1:40,000	Entrance to San Francisco Bay
4	18650	1:20,000	S.F. Bay: Candlestick Pt. to Angel Island
5	18651	1:40,000	S.F. Bay: Southern Part
6	18652	1:80,000	Small Craft Chart: S.F. Bay to Antioch
7	18653	1:20,000	S.F. Bay: Angel Island to Pt. San Pedro
8	18654	1:40,000	San Pablo Bay
9	18655	1:10,000	Mare Island Strait
10	18656	1:40,000	Suisun Bay
11	18657	1:10,000	Carquinez Strait
12	18658	1:10,000	Suisun Bay: Roe Island and Vicinity
13	18659	1:10,000	Suisun Bay: Mallard Island to Antioch
14	18660	1:40,000	San Joaquin River, Antioch to Medford I
15	18661	1:40,000	Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers
16	18662	1:40,000	Sacramento River
17	18663	1:20,000	Stockton Deep Water Channel
18	18664	1:20,000	Sacramento to Colusa
19	18680	1:210,668	Point Sur to San Francisco

**Vector-Based Charts:** NOAA is building a database to produce an accurate and detailed vector electronic navigational chart (ENC) for major U.S. ports and shipping lanes. The vector charts include “active” information on navigationally significant features such as aids to navigation, bridges, anchorages, obstructions, wrecks, rocks, cables, traffic separation schemes, pipelines, platforms, cautionary and dredged areas. The ENCs for the SF Bay region are compiled and available online at <http://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov>.

**Hydrographic Surveys:** NOAA contracted for hydrographic surveys in the Bay in April 1999. Updates are continuously made by NOAA's Navigation Response Team and contract surveys.

### **Navigational Issues Associated with Channel Design and Dredging**

Harding, Shag, and Arch rocks are large submerged rocks located approximately one to one-and-a-quarter nautical miles northwest of Alcatraz Island. The tops of the rocks are 36, 37, and 33 feet respectively below the surface of the water at MLLW. The submerged rocks are within the westbound traffic lane that passes north of Alcatraz Island and is designated for large vessels over 1,600 tons drawing 28 feet or less outbound to sea. Most inbound vessels sail south of Alcatraz Island; however, ships with a draft of more than 45 feet sail north of Alcatraz in the deep water traffic lane in order to maintain safe depths in the deeper waters within this area. Blossom Rock is 40 feet below the surface of the water at MLLW and is located approximately one nautical mile to the southeast of Alcatraz Island, posing a potential hazard to navigation for deep-draft vessels transiting Central San Francisco Bay. Harding, Arch, Shag and Blossom Rocks were lowered many decades ago for the shipping lanes, but today's large tankers and container ships have deeper drafts and now must avoid the submerged rocks. Lowering the rocks to accommodate the most modern ships would help create sufficient depths for a new two-way navigation lane north of Alcatraz Island, as well as provide a greater margin of safety for vessels transiting the area between Alcatraz and Treasure Islands.

The San Francisco Central Bay Rock Removal Project was initiated in April 2000 to review potential actions to prevent groundings on these rocks. Removing this hazard would significantly reduce the possibility of a major oil spill resulting from a vessel striking one of the mounds. Although there are other obstructions to navigation within the Bay, these rock mounds are especially dangerous due to their close proximity to the confined shipping lanes.

The CoE, working with the Harbor Safety Committee's Underwater Rocks Work Group and the California State Lands Commission, investigated the economic and environmental feasibility of lowering the rock mounds to depths required for deeper draft vessels. After more than two years of study, the CoE concluded that with current shipping practices in place that are designed to ensure the safe passage of vessels within the Bay, the probability of a vessel actually grounding on the rocks became extremely remote. Non-structural measures (e.g., aids to navigation, tug support, emergency response) are regularly evaluated under the overall navigation safety mission of the Harbor Safety Committee. The low probability of occurrence, when applied to the potential damages that could result from a spill, reduced the project benefits well below the cost to lower the rocks. Therefore, the CoE determined there was not a federal interest in physically lowering some or all of the rocks.

## VI. CONTINGENCY ROUTING

Dredging and construction may impact the routing of vessels in the Bay. Dredging of the shipping lanes is essential for safe navigation to the ports and marine terminals because so much of the Bay is shallow and subject to sedimentation. Therefore, maintenance dredging occurs on an ongoing basis. In addition, major projects to deepen various ports have taken place to accommodate the modern deep-draft vessels.

The six major bridges that span San Francisco Bay shipping lanes require regular maintenance of bridge fender systems. In addition, there are projects to strengthen the supports of several bridges for the purpose of seismic safety. Maintenance and construction work on the bridges often impacts navigation lanes.

During the many stages of a dredging or construction project that might impact the navigation of vessels, the project proponent and managers consult with pilots, vessel operators, the U.S. Coast Guard, affected port authorities and appropriate agencies. This ensures that consideration is given to the safety of navigation and any restrictions that may impact the movement of vessels.

The USCG Vessel Traffic Service (VTS SF or VTS) has authority under the Ports and Waterways Safety Act to direct vessel movement in case of emergency to ensure the safety and security of the Port. The Captain of the Port has authority to create Safety Zones and to regulate vessel traffic in the event of an oil spill, disaster or emergency.

**San Francisco Vessel Mutual Assistance Plan (SF-VMAP).** SF V-MAP is composed of member vessels, the Coast Guard, and passenger vessel operators who came together to develop an emergency response plan that would ensure a sufficient level of safety exists on small passenger vessels and enhance local capabilities to manage a catastrophic, waterborne Search and Rescue incident.

**Contingency Routing.** Cooperation and consultation between pilots, the USCG, port authorities and appropriate agencies and contractors should continue from the project planning stage through the construction stage of projects that may impact safe navigation in the Bay. The planning stage should include an evaluation of various alternatives to ensure harbor safety. To reduce the risk of accidents occurring during harbor construction, dredging and waterway modification projects, the long-standing permitting procedures of the U.S. Coast Guard, the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board should be specifically referenced as mandates.

Contractors are responsible for informing the USCG in advance of their planned and actual construction so that the USCG may advise and establish Safety Zones and/or provide cautionary notices and/or rerouting orders to mariners. A Safety Zone is a

directive concerning a water area, a shoreline area or a combination thereof to limit access to authorized vessels. The Captain of the Port is authorized to establish temporary Safety Zones. Planning for alternate contingency routing during a construction project is not the responsibility of the Harbor Safety Committee.

The Oakland -50 foot deepening project is anticipated to be completed during the summer of 2006. The dredge company working on this project sends weekly status reports to VTS SF, the S.F. Bar Pilots, the USCG Marine Safety Office and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Additionally, project planning and construction are underway for seismic retrofitting of various major bridges in San Francisco Bay. These seismic retrofit activities will affect mariners on a daily basis for several years. The Coast Guard, with input from the Harbor Safety Committee, has worked with CalTrans, bridge owners and contractors to develop guidelines for construction activity on the bridges. The Marine Safety Office, VTS and S.F. Bar Pilots will continue to review the plans for mooring construction equipment at bridge sites to ensure a safe path for navigation. Bridge owners are responsible for ensuring that reliable communications exist between the bridge, the VTS and transiting vessels so they can pass information about the location of construction equipment or other factors affecting navigation.

The Eleventh Coast Guard District, Bridge Section provides information about bridge activities via telephone, letter, Local Notice to Mariners and Broadcast Notice to Mariners as appropriate. Mariners are reminded that heavy rain and high winter flows may result in reduced vertical and horizontal navigational clearances under bridges. Flotsam and drift may accumulate at bridge piers and abutments. Mariners should approach all bridges with caution and due consideration to existing navigational conditions. Notification of bridge-related discrepancies should be provided to the VTS via marine radio or telephone to ensure appropriate Notices to Mariners are issued.

Construction, retrofit and maintenance activities at bridges involve the use of scaffolds, temporary trestles, and marine construction equipment. (See Appendix K, Vehicular Bridge Inventory.) General information about construction activities is provided in the weekly Local Notice to Mariners. Immediate information is provided by Broadcast Notice to Mariners and VTS advisories. Some projects have special considerations such as minimum wake or scaffolding that reduces vertical clearance. The Local Notice to Mariners and VTS provide contact information to the various work sites, allowing mariners access to timely information. Commercial vessels may be asked to provide their "air draft" and their vertical clearance requirement directly to the bridges or to VTS to assist the bridges in anticipating the need for moving scaffolding. Mariners are advised to transit the work site with minimum wake to ensure safe working conditions at the bridge.

The cooperation of the maritime community during essential bridge work is greatly appreciated.

## **VII. VESSEL SPEED AND TRAFFIC PATTERNS**

### **Ship Traffic**

A variety of commercial, military and public vessels enter, exit and transit the Bay. Many vessels such as ferries and tugs remain entirely within the Bay. Container ships, oil tankers and bulk carriers account for the greatest percentage of ship arrivals; however, a broad range of cargo transits the region every year. Other categories of ships include vehicle carriers, break bulk, chemical tankers and passenger ships. Occasionally, surface combatants, submarines and naval auxiliaries such as oil tankers and supply ships transit the Bay. Public vessels often encountered on the Bay include those of the U.S. Coast Guard, the Army Corps of Engineers, NOAA, and the Military Sealift Command.

In order to safely transit the shipping channels to marine oil terminals in the North Bay and Carquinez Strait, some large oil tankers lighter oil to barges or to smaller ships. Lightering is the process of transferring oil from a larger ship tanker into smaller vessels to reduce the draft of the larger tanker. The large tanker can then proceed to a marine terminal and continue discharging the balance of its cargo. Lightering operations in the Bay take place in Anchorage 9 just south of the Oakland-Bay Bridge. The California State Lands Commission provides annual reports of the amount of oil shipped through the region (see Appendices).

### **Speed of Vessels**

In the Central Bay, where vessel traffic is heaviest, vessels must make abrupt movements to navigate around Alcatraz Island or transit under the Bay Bridge to the Port of Oakland.

In early 1993, the Coast Guard Marine Safety Office San Francisco Bay proposed that maximum speed limits be set for certain vessels in the Bay to improve safe navigation. The Vessel Traffic Service (VTS), in a two-week survey in early 1993, noted three large commercial vessels traveling at speeds between 18 to 20 knots within the Central Bay. These speeds were considered excessive, taking into consideration the narrow confines of the shipping lanes, the distance required for large vessels to stop, the many hazards and the number of other vessels generally present, such as commercial ships, ferries, recreational boats and tugs. During May 1993, VTS tracked the speed of 206 vessels inbound and outbound within the Central Bay, which included tankers, ships and tugs with tow. From this sample, it was concluded that the vast majority of vessels were traveling 15 knots or less.

The Captain of the Port requested the Harbor Safety Committee to formally comment on these findings. After a number of public meetings, the Committee agreed that maximum speed limits should be established for the main ship channels based on the operating characteristics of ships transiting the Bay. For example, industry related that lower speeds, such as a 12-knot limit, would unnecessarily restrict the maneuverability of some ships in swift currents. Also, certain ships can operate only in ranges of full ahead and half ahead, which may not coincide with an established upper speed limit. Taking this information into consideration, the Harbor Safety Committee endorsed the 15-knot speed limit. In addition, the Committee recommended that all vessels be in a response mode that would allow an immediate response to an engine order. It was agreed the maximum speed proposed would apply to an unescorted vessel of 1,600 or more gross tons. Vessels required to be escorted would still be governed by the speed at which assistance could be rendered as outlined in the tug escort regulations.

Federal regulation 33 CFR Parts 162 and 165 became effective May 3, 1995 (see Captain of the Port Advisory #05-095 below). These regulations state in part that the maximum speed for all power driven vessels of 1,600 or more gross tons shall not exceed 15 knots through the water from the COLREGS Demarcation Line to the southern tip of Bay Farm Island, Alameda and the Union Pacific Railroad Bridge in Benicia. The regulations can be found on the web in the Code of Federal Regulations at [www.gpoaccess.gov](http://www.gpoaccess.gov). This standard also applies to a tug with a tow of 1,600 or more gross tons. Power driven vessels of 1,600 or more gross tons shall in any case have their engines ready for immediate maneuver and shall not operate in control modes or with fuels that prevent an immediate response to any engine order ahead or astern or preclude stopping their engines for an extended period of time.

During the summer of 2004, OSPR received a letter from an environmental group alleging frequent violations of the 15-knot (speed through the water) speed limit. The Navigation Working Group met several times to address the issue, and steps were taken to more closely monitor the speed of vessels in the Bay. VTS conducted several speed surveys and by November 2004 determined there was substantial compliance. Those who were not in compliance were promptly notified.

#### **COTP Advisory #05-095 (4 May 1995): ENFORCEMENT OF NAVIGATION RULES IN SAN FRANCISCO BAY**

This advisory provides a listing of the major deep-draft channels in San Francisco Bay and adjacent waters which the Captain of the Port considers to be "narrow channels or fairways" within the meaning of the International and Inland Rules of the Road.

Rule 9, in both the International and Inland Rules of the Road, provide requirements for vessels navigating in the vicinity of narrow channels or fairways. Vessels and powerboats less than 20 meters (approximately 65 feet), all sailboats and vessels engaged in fishing shall not impede the passage of a vessel that can safely navigate only within a narrow channel or fairway. Additionally, a vessel shall not cross a narrow channel or fairway if such crossing impedes the passage of a vessel that can safely navigate only within that channel or fairway. The term "shall not impede" means a small craft must keep well clear and not hinder or interfere with the transit of larger vessels. Small craft and fishing vessels shall not anchor or fish in narrow channels if large vessels or barges being towed are transiting.

Coast Guard enforcement efforts, combined with a public education and information program, are further intended to draw public attention to the serious hazards created when smaller vessels impede large vessels. This effort should result in an improved level of navigational safety and reduce the risk of collisions, groundings and their potential consequences.

The Captain of the Port considers the following areas to be "narrow channels or fairways" for the purpose of enforcing the International and Inland Rules of the Road. This list is not all-inclusive, but identifies areas where deep-draft commercial and public vessels routinely operate. Included in this list and marked by an asterisk (\*) are the Regulated Navigation Areas (RNAs) in San Francisco Bay, which were designated in 33 CFR 162 and 165. [May 1995] The regulations can be found on the web in the Code of Federal Regulations at [www.gpoaccess.gov](http://www.gpoaccess.gov).

a. All traffic lanes and precautionary areas in the San Francisco Bay eastward of the San Francisco Approach Lighted Horn Buoy SF (LLNR 360) to the San Francisco -Oakland Bay Bridge and the Richmond -San Rafael Bridge to include:

- \*1. Golden Gate Traffic Lanes which include the Westbound and Eastbound Lanes west of the Golden Gate Precautionary Area.
- \*2. Golden Gate Precautionary Area.
- \*3. Central Bay Traffic Lanes, which include the Deep Water Traffic Lane, The Eastbound Lane (south of Alcatraz Island), and the Westbound Lane (south of Harding Rock).
- \*4. Central Bay Precautionary Area.
- \*5. North Ship Channel between North Channel Lighted Buoy "A" and the Richmond -San Rafael Bridge.
- \*6. Southampton Shoal Channel including the Richmond Long Wharf maneuvering area.

- \*7. Richmond Harbor Entrance Channel and the Point Potrero Reach ending at Point Potrero Turn and including the Turn Basin at Point Richmond.
- 8. Point Potrero Turn.
- 9. Richmond Harbor Channel in its entirety.
- 10. Santa Fe Channel in its entirety.
- \*b. Oakland Harbor Bar Channel including the Outer Harbor Entrance Channel and the Inner Harbor Entrance Channel.
- c. Oakland Outer Harbor.
- d. Oakland Inner Harbor from Inner Harbor Channel Light "5" (LLNR 4670) to, and including, the Brooklyn Basin South Channel.
- e. Alameda Naval Air Station Channel in its entirety.
- f. South San Francisco Bay Channels between the central Bay Precautionary Area and Redwood Creek Entrance Light "2" (LLNR 5180).
- g. Redwood Creek between Redwood Creek Entrance Light "2" (LLNR 5180) and Redwood Creek Daybeacon "21 " (LLNR 5265).
- \*h. San Pablo Straight Channel from the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge to San Pablo Bay Channel Light "7" (LLNR 5900).
- \*i. Pinole Shoal Channel in San Pablo Bay between San Pablo Bay Channel Light "7" (LLNR 5900) and San Pablo Bay Channel Light "14" (LLNR 5935).
- j. Carquinez Strait between San Pablo Bay Channel Light "14" (LLNR 5935) and the Benicia-Martinez Highway Bridge.
- k. Mare Island Strait between Mare Island Strait Light "2" (LLNR 6095) and Mare Island Causeway Bridge.
- l. Suisun Bay Channels between the Benicia-Martinez Highway Bridge and Suisun Bay Light "34" (LLNR 6655).
- m. New York Slough between Suisun Bay Light "30" (LLNR 6585) and San Joaquin River Light "2" (LLNR 6670).
- n. Sacramento River Deep Water Ship Channel from Suisun Bay Light "34" (LLNR 6655) to the Port of Sacramento.
- o. San Joaquin River from San Joaquin River Light "2" (LLNR 6670) to the Port of Stockton.

Rules of the Road Enforcement: Timely reporting and enforcement of Rules of the Road infractions promotes safer navigation. Vessel masters, pilots, and operators are encouraged to report incidents, which merit investigation. Reports will be fully investigated and may result in license suspension or revocation proceedings or the assessment of civil penalties.

## VIII: ACCIDENTS AND NEAR-ACCIDENTS

**Accidents.** The Coast Guard compiles reports of marine accidents or reportable casualties of commercial, military and recreational vessels. A “reportable casualty” is defined in Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 4 (46 CFR 4.05-1) as any accidental grounding or unintended strike of a bridge; loss of primary steering or propulsion or associated control system; an occurrence materially and adversely affecting the vessel’s seaworthiness or fitness for service; loss of life; injury beyond first aid; or damages over \$25,000. The regulations can be found on the web in the Code of Federal Regulations at [www.gpoaccess.gov](http://www.gpoaccess.gov). The San Francisco Marine Safety Office (MSO) provides accident summaries in monthly reports to the Harbor Safety Committee.

**Near-Accidents.** The Vessel Traffic Service (VTS), managed by the U.S. Coast Guard, summarizes near-accidents or close calls reported within the area covered by VTS. Incident reports are designed to include near-collisions, vessels impeding progress of other vessels, and violations of any navigation rules. Categorizing an incident as a “near-miss” is a subjective determination based upon available information.

**Reporting Requirements.** As soon as is practicable, a VTS user shall notify the VTS of any of the following: (1) a marine casualty as defined in 46 CFR 4.05-1; (2) the ramming of a fixed or floating object; (3) a pollution incident as defined in 33 CFR 151.15; (4) a defect or discrepancy in an aid to navigation; (5) a hazardous condition as defined in 33 CFR 160.203; (6) improper operation of vessel equipment required by 33 CFR 164; (7) a situation involving hazardous materials for which a report is required by 49 CFR 176.48; or (8) a hazardous vessel operating condition as defined in 33 CFR 161.2. The regulations can be found on the web in the Code of Federal Regulations at [www.gpoaccess.gov](http://www.gpoaccess.gov).

**Analysis and Actions Taken to Alleviate Accidents.** In 1971, two tankers collided in the Main Ship Channel west of the Golden Gate Bridge, resulting in an oil spill. As a direct result of this accident, the VTS was established for the Bay region. The VTS system is fully described in a separate chapter.

Major bridges span shipping channels, connecting various populated areas of the Bay. The bridges are important traffic connectors under which large vessels must carefully navigate between spans. Vessels have struck all Bay bridges during the past 25 years, resulting in damage to the vessels and/or the bridges. Radar beacons (racons) have been added to most of the region’s bridges to enhance the vessel operator’s ability to safely navigate between bridge spans in all types of weather.

The MSO for San Francisco Bay investigates all reported marine casualties occurring in the Bay region meeting the criteria set forth in Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 4. These investigations are conducted to obtain information surrounding the root cause of the casualty so that corrective action can be taken and subsequent casualties of the same nature can be avoided. In accordance with 96 CFR Part 5, investigations are also conducted to ascertain whether personnel misconduct, negligence or drug/alcohol use was a factor in the casualty. In such instances, a personnel investigation would be conducted. Procedures such as these are administrative in nature and can affect a person's Merchant Mariner's License or Merchant Mariner's Document. The regulations can be found on the web in the Code of Federal Regulations at [www.gpoaccess.gov](http://www.gpoaccess.gov).

Civil penalty procedures may be warranted in a situation where a law or regulation has been violated. Civil penalty procedures are the only actions appropriate in the following: foreign flag vessel; personnel aboard foreign flagged vessels licensed under the authority of another nation; federally licensed pilots operating aboard a foreign flagged vessel while acting under the authority of a State Pilot's license; and unlicensed U.S. citizens. If a violation is determined to be criminal in nature, such action is reported to and pursued by the U.S. Attorney's Office.

The Harbor Safety Committee has representatives from a broad section of the maritime community and provides a platform for educational efforts and ongoing dialogue. Its work groups and community outreach help to prevent accidents in the Bay. The USCG, NOAA, state agencies, S.F. Bar Pilots, industry and representatives of recreational and environmental groups are all active participants.

In 1992, the Harbor Safety Committee recommended that the Coast Guard and VTS devise a more consistent system of reporting accidents and near-accidents, standardized with other areas, and to analyze the statistics on an annual basis with recommendations for improvements. This recommendation has been essentially accomplished in San Francisco Bay.

As part of this effort, the Harbor Safety Committee worked for adoption of a statewide definition of "near-miss." The following definition was adopted by the five California Harbor Safety Committees:

A reportable "Near-Miss Situation" is an incident in which a pilot, master, or other person in charge of navigating a vessel, successfully takes action of a non-routine nature to avoid: a collision with another vessel, structure or aid to navigation; the grounding of a vessel; or damage to the environment.

The HSC also participated in establishing a system for voluntary reports of near-miss situations for the Coast Guard in order to prevent vessel accidents. A voluntary reporting form was adopted and included in the Vessel Traffic Service, San Francisco, June 1995 User's Manual. In addition, the Captain of the Port included the report form in the Marine Safety Office newsletter, and the San Francisco Bar Pilots Association made the report form available to its members. However, due to the Freedom of Information Act, the Coast Guard determined that anonymity could not be provided to persons making reports.

The USCG considered a program to address near-misses (or non-reportable near casualties); however, the program was put on hold in November 2002 due to a lack of funding.

## IX. COMMUNICATION

### Radio Communications

Ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore communication for the maritime community in the San Francisco Bay Area is almost exclusively on marine VHF (very high frequency) radio. The level of usage varies with periods of saturation depending on the time of day and level of vessel traffic. Additional communication modes include telex, fax, internet, cell phones and AIS (Automatic Identification System) messaging.

VHF radio is expected to continue as the primary method for ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore radio communications. Cell phones help to amplify or clarify information that would not normally be passed, or would be limited, over VHF radio. Nonetheless, cell phones are not a substitute for VHF radio as the primary means of communication with and between vessel traffic in the Bay Area.

AIS will help mariners to more quickly identify other vessels thereby reducing the duration and number of radio transmissions.

Please see Chapter XX for brochures that address radio communication and safe vessel operations available from the San Francisco Marine Exchange.

### Current Usage

CHANNEL	USE
SAN FRANCISCO BAY COMMON FREQUENCY USAGE	
06	Intership safety. Also often used for non-distress traffic between USCG and other vessels.
10	San Francisco Bar Pilots Pilot Boats Agents San Francisco Marine Exchange Chevron Richmond Long Wharf
12	Vessel Traffic Service San Francisco offshore traffic. Used between outer limit of Offshore Precautionary Area and VTS outer limit (38 nautical mile radius from Mt. Tamalpais).
13	Bridge to bridge navigation
14	Vessel Traffic Service San Francisco in-shore traffic. Use from outer limit of Offshore Precautionary Area, throughout San Francisco Bay, up to Stockton and Sacramento.
16	Hailing/distress/safety.
21A	U.S. Coast Guard reserved working frequency between USCG units only.

CHANNEL	USE
22	Notice to Mariners U.S. Coast Guard and public working channel
23A	USCG reserved working frequency for communications between USCG units and other vessels.
7A, 11, 77 18A, 19A	Common tug working frequencies.
79A, 80A, 88A	Commonly used by fishing vessels.
7A, 8, 9, 11, 18A, 19A	Port Operations — Commercial intership and ship to shore working channels. Commercial vessel business and operational needs.
9, 68, 69, 71, 72, 78A	Port Operations — Non-commercial; supplies repairs, berthing, yacht harbors/marinas.

TUG COMPANY CHANNELS	
9	Westar Marine Services
10	Crowley Marine Services Foss Maritime Company
18A	AMNAV Maritime Services Baydelta Maritime Brusco Tug & Barge Oscar Niemeth Towing SeaRiver Maritime Seaway Towing Company Starlight Marine Services
MARINE OPERATORS	
26, 84, 87	San Francisco
27, 28, 86	Sacramento, Stockton, Delta
VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICE RADIO COVERAGE	
VTS has complete radio coverage throughout the region on its designated frequencies.	

### Existing Limitations

Due to the many hills in the region that restrict line of sight, VHF Channel 13 has a number of blind spots because of the one-watt transmission limitation on the channel.

### Equipment

1. **San Francisco Vessel Traffic Service (VTS).** VTS communications equipment consists of four remote sites located throughout the region that ensure complete VHF radio coverage of the VTS area.

2. **San Francisco Bar Pilots.** The San Francisco Bar Pilots' headquarters is located at the East end of Pier 9, San Francisco. The antenna for their primary system is located on Mt. Tamalpais.

3. **San Francisco Marine Exchange.** The Marine Exchange is located at Fort Mason Center, San Francisco. The Exchange shares the antenna on Mt. Tamalpais with the Bar Pilots. Their communication equipment includes:

A 50-watt transceiver on Channel 10.

A standard transceiver with a local antenna monitoring Channels 13, 14, & 18A.

### **History of VTS Channel**

Due to increasing congestion on Channel 13, the USCG proposed to shift the primary VTS channel to Channel 14. A Harbor Safety Committee Working Group, consisting of persons from various maritime organizations in the Bay Area, also recommended the change, and the Harbor Safety Committee endorsed the Coast Guard's efforts to improve the communication system. On August 15, 1994, the VTS operating channel was changed to Channel 14 VHF and the change has significantly reduced the amount of radio traffic on Channel 13.

### **Marine Exchange Communication System**

The San Francisco Marine Exchange, a non-profit agency which serves as the Clearing House for tug escorting of regulated tankers and barges, has backup battery systems for its computer, phone, and radio systems.

## **X. BRIDGES**

The San Francisco Bay Area is crossed by a number of bridges that carry automotive and rail traffic. Most shipping traffic transits through areas covered by suspension or fixed bridges with adequate vertical clearance for normal passage.

### **Geographic Boundaries**

The boundaries of the area in this chapter are set in the West by the COLREGS Demarcation Line (Between Pt. Bonita and Mile Rocks), and in the East to include the Rio Vista Highway Bridge in the Sacramento River and the Antioch Highway Bridge in the San Joaquin River.

### **Schedule of Bridge Openings**

Oceangoing vessels may transit under two vertical lift bridges, the Union Pacific Railroad (Benicia-Martinez) Bridge (UPRR) and the Rio Vista Highway Bridge. Both bridges are operated 24 hours a day and open for vessel traffic upon request. Approximately 30 minutes notice is required and the bridges may be contacted by VHF or telephone.

For vessels intending to transit through the UPRR Bridge, there is a well established protocol for requesting a lift. Copies of the protocol are available at the VTS website, [www.uscg.mil/D11/vtssf/](http://www.uscg.mil/D11/vtssf/).

<b>BRIDGE</b>	<b>VHF CHANNELS</b>	<b>PHONE NUMBER</b>
Benicia-Martinez RR Bridge	13	(510) 228-5943
Rio Vista	9, 13, 16	(707) 374-2134

### **Adequacy of Ship-to-Bridge Communications**

Ship to bridge communications takes place via VHF radio on designated channels. Communications are considered to be adequate by the local maritime community.

## **Physical Characteristics of Bridges**

When required by the Eleventh Coast Guard Bridge Office, under the provisions of Title 33 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 118, bridges over navigable waterways in the Eleventh Coast Guard District, are lighted and marked as permitted obstructions on the waterway. Standard markings include a range of two green lights marking the center of the bridge, which in the case of drawbridges, will shift from green to red when the drawspan is in anything but the full open-to-navigation position. Bridge piers in or adjacent to the navigational channel may be lighted at night with fixed red lights to identify them as obstructions. When required, bridges are equipped with sound producing devices which are used during periods of reduced visibility.

The region now has 12 Racons mounted on bridges. A racon is a radar sensor (radar beacon) that sends out a radar emission that shows up as a distinctive mark on a ship's radarscope. The racons were installed because there is a high volume of vessel traffic transiting under bridges and the Bay Area has the highest number of foggy days in the nation when visibility is less than one-half mile.

Racons are located on the following Bay Area bridges:

- Benicia-Martinez (1)
- SF-Oakland Bay Bridge (3)
- Richmond-San Rafael Bridge (2)
- San Mateo-Hayward Bridge (1)
- Antioch Bridge (1)
- Rio Vista Bridge (1)
- Golden Gate Bridge (1)
- I-80 Crocket-Vallejo (2)

**Bridge Clearances** (See Appendices for most recent list of bridge clearances.)

### **Benicia-Martinez Railroad Drawbridge**

To improve navigational safety for all vessels sailing through the relatively narrow opening of the drawbridge at Benicia, the Coast Guard has completed a number of initiatives:

Established a Regulated Navigational Area (RNA) at the bridge, which prohibits deep-draft vessel transits when visibility is less than 1000 yards. The Coast Guard revised the RNA to change the name of the bridge to the Benicia-Martinez RR Bridge, added a third visibility checkpoint, and clarified the procedures for downbound vessels that are moored or anchored between the Railroad Drawbridge and New York Point (that intend to transit the RNA once underway).

Installed white lights on the main channel piers to better identify the primary navigation channel. The white pier lights recommended for installation on the main channel piers have provided better visibility in foggy conditions and have been made permanent.

Asked the UPRR to change the working frequency of the bridge radiotelephone to VHF Channel 13, to allow vessels and bridge operators to communicate directly instead of using Vessel Traffic Service Channel 14. This change went into effect in 2001.

Investigated bridge malfunctions and created natural working group to find solutions to process and equipment problems.

Had CalTrans make modifications to the RACON on the adjacent highway bridge, which has improved the signal to downbound vessels.

Evaluated the obstructive character of the bridge under the Truman-Hobbs Act of 1940, a long term process to determine if increasing bridge clearances will provide benefits to navigation greater than the costs of modifying the bridge. The outcome of such a study would determine if the bridge should be altered.

Most of the recommended bridge improvement items have been completed by UPRR. UPRR has installed a new auxiliary power system including new generators and transformers, along with a new signal system. New enhancements include replacement of the bridge lift motors, installation of a computerized system to monitor train locations and track conditions and a computer system to track vessels upbound or downbound for the bridge.

To address problems occurring with the operation of the UPRR Bridge, industry, the pilots and the Coast Guard continue to work with the bridge owners via the UPRR Bridge Working Group. The working group meets semi-annually to discuss problems with the bridge and to develop solutions. The working group is coordinated by the Bridge Section of the Coast Guard's Eleventh District and is regularly attended by representatives from both the rail and marine industries, as well as Coast Guard MSO and VTS. Under the working group's direction Union Pacific has developed a formal training program for bridge operators, which includes ship rides for familiarization and training from VTS on the communications protocol to help avoid potential or near-miss situations. The working group created a mishap matrix to track incidents involving the bridge. Both the Coast Guard and UPRR provide information to the matrix, which is used as a problem-solving tool and historical reference.

## **XI. SMALL VESSELS**

### **Background**

Within the Bay, many recreational boats and commercial fishermen transit navigational shipping lanes and some approaches to port and marine terminal facilities. The central part of the Bay, with the heaviest concentration of population in close proximity to the shoreline, has the largest number of small boat marinas along the San Francisco, Alameda, Contra Costa, and Marin County shorelines. Two-thirds of approximately 20,000 Bay Area marina berths are located in the Central Bay. This number does not include facilities on the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers. While only a percentage of boat owners are on the Bay at a given time, on a sunny weekend up to 1,000 boats may participate in races and various events on the Bay.

The last Sunday in April (Opening Day on the Bay), Memorial Day, Labor Day and Fleet Week are times of extreme congestion by small vessels. There are many occasions where six or eight races may be held in the same venue, vessels starting at five minute intervals. This may lead to more racing congestion than a single large popular regatta. Race instructions now carry a warning regarding interference with large vessels.

In addition to sailing and pleasure motor boats and personal water craft, which can attain speeds in excess of 60 mph, non-motorized vessels such as sailboards, kayaks, canoes and rowboats also frequent the Bay.

Coast Guard representatives and ship operators note that small craft are difficult to visually spot during periods of restricted visibility. Because of the size of the vessel, radar images are poor which may create a possible hazard to navigation.

In addition to the Bay's commercial fishing fleet, made up of approximately 1,000 boats, party boats carrying numerous fishermen also fish the Bay and areas west of the Golden Gate Bridge. However, of this number, about 150 to 200 boats are used full-time for commercial fishing, principally berthed in San Francisco, Sausalito and Oakland. Many of the licensed commercial fishermen are essentially part-time operators, fishing on weekends and holidays by trailering small boats to launch ramps. In the Bay the only commercial fish caught are herring and anchovies with herring the most important in-Bay fishery. During the December to March herring season, additional boats from other areas enter the Bay to lay their nets. The State Department of Fish and Game controls the number of boats fishing in the Bay during the herring season and regulates the manner of fishing. The herring fishery is highly competitive because during a short period of time large profits can be realized.

## Vessel Traffic Incidents

**Recreational Boats.** Thousands of recreational boats are concentrated near the major inbound and outbound Bay shipping lanes. While many sailboats and motorboats are on the Bay, particularly on weekends, few near-misses or accidents are reported to the Coast Guard or Vessel Traffic Service. A number of reported and unreported ‘near-misses’ occur which might be prevented by small boats properly yielding the right-of-way to large vessels that cannot change course.

**Boardsailors.** No accidents or near-accidents involving boardsailors and vessels have been reported to the Coast Guard or VTS during the past years. However, many boardsailors cross in front of tankers and container ships off Crissy Field which is close to the Golden Gate Bridge. Competitive races are sponsored at this location during the year.

**Personal Water Craft.** While a number of injury accidents involving personal water craft (jet skis) have occurred during the past three years, none involved a collision with a vessel and no fatalities have occurred in the Bay Area.

**Fishermen.** In 1994 a fatal accident occurred when a fishing vessel collided with an inbound container ship just west of the Golden Gate Bridge. The fishing vessel sank and two lives were lost. Various individuals have recounted possibly dangerous situations involving herring fishermen. A herring fisherman laid a large net around the oil skimmer boat at the Chevron Long Wharf; a herring net impeded a container ship docking in the Oakland harbor; a herring net delayed a pilot boat leaving to meet an inbound vessel; herring nets have been laid around fire boats at the Ports of Oakland and San Francisco. The nets may pose an impediment to emergency response vessels such as fireboats and oil skimmers. Nets near terminal docking areas may possibly cause unsafe ship maneuvers.

## Public Education

Currently, the following boater education programs are available to the boating public in the nine Bay area counties.

	<b>Subjects</b>
U.S. Power Squadrons	Boating Safety Rules of the Road, Basic Rescue (A home video course is available for purchase)
U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary	Boating Safety Rules of the Road, Basic Rescue
Department of Boating and Waterways	Water Safety/Grades K–12, General

In addition, the U.S. Coast Guard operates a Boating Safety Hotline that dispenses information and reference to local classes.

After reviewing information on licensing of small recreational boat operators, it was agreed that, at this time, emphasis on boater education and enforcement on the waterways would be a more effective approach to deal with unsafe operators rather than instituting the licensing of small boat operators.

## **XII. VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICE**

The U.S. Coast Guard established the Vessel Traffic Service (VTS SF or VTS) in San Francisco Bay in 1972, following a serious collision between two tank vessels that resulted in great environmental damage to the Bay. The Coast Guard continues to operate the VTS system and monitors nearly 400 vessel movements per day. The region is considered a difficult navigation area because of its high-traffic density, frequent episodes of fog and challenging navigational hazards. In 1996 Congress considered reducing the current level of funding for VTS SF. In response, the Harbor Safety Committee voted to support continued federal funding to maintain VTS SF at its current level in order to ensure navigational safety in the Bay.

The VTS for the San Francisco Bay region has six components: (1) Automatic Identification System (AIS), (2) radar and visual surveillance, (3) VHF communications network, (4) a position reporting system, (5) traffic schemes within the Bay, and (6) a 24-hour center that is staffed with specially trained vessel traffic control specialists.

The geographic area served by VTS SF includes San Francisco Bay, its seaward approaches, and its tributaries as far as Stockton and Sacramento.

### **VTS Mission**

The primary mission of VTS San Francisco is to coordinate safe, secure and efficient transit of vessels in San Francisco Bay, including its approaches and tributaries, in an effort to prevent accidents or terrorist actions, which could result in loss of life, damage to property or the environment.

VTS implements and enforces the portions of the Ports and Waterways Safety Act that enhance navigation, vessel safety and marine environmental protection and promote safe vessel movement, by reducing the potential for collisions, allisions and groundings, and the loss of lives and property associated with these incidents.

VTS provides the mariner with information related to the safe navigation of a waterway. This information enhances the safe routing of vessels through congested waterways or waterways of a particular hazard. Under certain circumstances, VTS may issue directions to control the movement of vessels in order to minimize the risk of collision between vessels, or damage to property or the environment.

The owner, operator, charterer, master or other person directing the movement of a vessel remains at all times responsible for the manner in which the vessel is operated and maneuvered and is responsible for the safe navigation of the vessel under all circumstances.

## **VTS Authority**

VTS regulatory authority comes from 33 CFR 161 Vessel Traffic Service Regulations. These regulations give VTS the authority to manage, control or direct vessel traffic within the VTS area. VTS may issue measures or directions to enhance navigation and vessel safety and to protect the marine environment, including, but not limited to:

1. Designating temporary reporting points and procedures;
2. Imposing vessel operating requirements; or
3. Establishing vessel traffic routing schemes.

The regulations can be found on the web in the Code of Federal Regulations at [www.gpoaccess.gov](http://www.gpoaccess.gov).

During conditions of vessel congestion, restricted visibility, adverse weather, or other hazardous circumstances, VTS may control, supervise, or otherwise manage traffic, by specifying times of entry, movement, or departure to, from, or within a VTS area.

Participation is required for all vessels that fall under the Bridge-to-Bridge Radio Telephone Act. Active participation (through a series of reports) is required for all vessels that fall under the Vessel Movement Reporting System (VMRS), defined as: power-driven vessels 40 meters in length or greater; tugs, 8 meters or greater while towing; and passenger vessels certificated to carry 50 or more passengers for hire.

Through the exchange of vessel transit information, VTS provides vessel operators with up-to-date information, thereby facilitating safe transits for vessels interacting on the waterways.

## **VTS Position Reporting Requirements**

Vessel position reporting requirements vary depending on a vessel's ability to transmit AIS information to VTS.

**Offshore.** Vessels are required to make radio reports on VHF Channel 12 when entering or exiting the offshore VTS reporting area, which extends approximately 30 miles west from the Golden Gate Bridge. Inbound vessels are required to report 15 minutes prior to crossing the offshore boundary, upon entering the respective Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS), and upon entering the precautionary area. Outbound vessels are required to report once at the San Francisco Sea Buoy, again at the TSS entrance buoy, at the terminus of the TSS and finally at the outer boundary of the VTS area. Radio reports include the name and type of vessel, route, course, speed, position and estimated times of arrival to various geographic locations. The VTS broadcasts a traffic report every 30 minutes: at minute 15 and 45 of each hour.

**Within the Bay.** Vessels report 15 minutes prior to and upon getting underway, docking, mooring, or anchoring or when departing from the VTS area. Position reports are also made when passing under most bridges, when pilots change, when emergencies arise and when deviating from standard procedures. Ferries operating on a scheduled route make one report prior to departure, and do not report again unless they deviate from their schedule or route.

### **Traffic Routing within San Francisco Bay**

On May 3, 1995, the Coast Guard established seven Regulated Navigation Areas (RNAs) to reduce vessel congestion where maneuvering room is limited. These RNAs apply to the waters of the Central Bay, Oakland Harbor, San Pablo Bay, and the Union Pacific Railroad Bridge. There are four VHF radio/communications sites located throughout the Bay which give VTS full radio coverage. VTS operates on channel 14 VHF for inshore traffic and channel 12 for offshore traffic, and monitors channel 13 throughout the VTS area.

### **VTS Training Program Overview**

VTS Operators undergo extensive training. Before these traffic management specialists begin on-the-job training in the Operations Center, they undergo three months of intensive training at the VTS in the classroom and self-study, plus a month of offsite training. Offsite training typically includes a one-week Radar Observer Course, a one-week Automated Radar Plotting Aid (ARPA) course, a one-week Basic Shiphandling course and a one-week course in Bridge Resources Management course. All training is tailored to the individual needs of the trainee.

After this initial classroom and self-study period, new Operators/Traffic Management Specialists then undergo three to four months of closely supervised on-the-job training. This training cycle can be shortened if the person has previous VTS experience; however, the average time for a new employee to become qualified in their primary job is six to seven months. New supervisors can take an additional two to three months before qualification.

### **Outreach and Partnership**

The San Francisco Bar Pilots and the U.S. Coast Guard Vessel Traffic Service San Francisco, as well as other members of the maritime community, continue to share professional information in order to foster a team approach to the issue of navigation safety within the San Francisco Bay Area. VTS participates in the following outreach and partnership programs:

**VTS-Pilots Issue Committee (VPIC).** Founded in 1995, the VPIC—comprised of VTS’ Commanding Officer, Operations Officer, Operations Administrator, Training Coordinator and members of the San Francisco Bar Pilots—meets approximately every quarter to discuss how VTS and the Bar Pilots can better serve each other. Both agencies might bring in scenarios or review recordings, then discuss the interactions from their respective points of view. For example, VTS may explain why a particular deviation request from RNA regulations was not granted. With the VPIC interaction, VTS can explain the response from a VTS perspective, and the pilots can then explain why a requested deviation seemed safer from the pilot’s point of view.

In addition to providing a forum for discussion, VPIC meetings have produced the automation of the transmission of ships’ arrival and departure information between VTS and the Pilots, the development of a communication protocol to resolve communication issues around marine construction projects, and the refinement of reporting procedures in order to provide mariners with more accurate reports of ongoing marine construction in the Bay area.

**San Francisco Vessel Mutual Assistance Plan (SF-VMAP).** SF-VMAP is composed of member vessels, the Coast Guard and passenger vessel operators who came together to develop an emergency response plan that would ensure that a sufficient level of safety exists on small passenger vessels and enhance local capabilities to manage a catastrophic, waterborne Search and Rescue incident. VTS was active in the creation of this plan and continues to participate in annual drills and meetings. The San Francisco Marine Exchange is working in partnership with the Coast Guard to perform the administrative requirements of SF-VMAP.

**Union Pacific Railroad Drawbridge Working Group.** This group is composed of members of the maritime community, the pilots’ organization, various offices within the Coast Guard, the Union Pacific Railroad and major train lines. The group was formed to address the ability of the bridge to consistently provide a prompt response to lift requests or provide timely notification to an approaching vessel if mechanical problems or train movements would cause a delay in the bridge’s response.

**Outreach.** VTS personnel spend many hours with people from various segments of the San Francisco Bay maritime community to learn about mariners’ concerns and to educate mariners on how VTS can assist them. VTS personnel have been active participants on the Underwater Rocks Work Group, AIS Joint Planning Partnership, the Prevention through People Work Group, the Tug Escort Work Group, the Ferry Operations Work Group and the Navigation Work Group. Outreach efforts also have included many non-traditional stakeholders in the Bay area, such as the California Department of Transportation bridge engineers responsible for overseeing the various seismic retrofit projects in progress throughout the Bay.

**Fishing Vessel Safety Group.** VTS is a participant in the FVSG. A VTS representative meets every other month with this group, which is comprised of representatives of other Coast Guard units, local fishermen groups and state agencies.

**Marine Events.** San Francisco Bay has more permitted marine events than any other port or city in the United States. VTS has an active outreach program to the boating public, which includes meeting with various recreational boating organizations throughout the year. VTS works closely with other Coast Guard personnel and yachting organizations during the permit process to prevent recreational vessels from impeding commercial traffic. The Coast Guard hosts annual Marine Event Workshops aimed at educating event coordinators about commercial maritime traffic, Rule 9 of the Navigation Rules and VTS operations.

**VTS Shipride Program.** All VTS personnel are required to participate in approximately six ship rides and/or shore-side visits each year. This, by far, is the best method for direct, person-to-person contact with port stakeholders and the sharing of suggestions. The requirements cover almost all areas of the maritime community: piloted ships, tugs, ferryboats and shore facilities.

### **VTS Operations and Requirements**

Over the years since the inception of VTS San Francisco, the Coast Guard has periodically identified the need for upgrading VTS equipment to include state-of-the-art technology. VTS' system of tracking vessels by computer was initially installed in 1997. In 2000, the software and hardware were upgraded, and a renovation of VTS' communications system was completed. This communication system upgrade involved replacing radios at each of the VTS' high sites, converting them from an analog to a digital microwave system and installing a new radio control system. In December 2004, VTS was upgraded with Automatic Identification System antennas and software.

### **XIII. TUG ESCORT / ASSIST FOR TANK VESSELS**

In 1990, Senate Bill 2040 (the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act) established that tug escorting was beneficial for tanker operations and directed expeditious development of escorting regulations for San Francisco Bay. The requirement is based on the legislative finding that there is a navigational safety advantage of tug escorts. Tug escorts can improve tanker safety in at least two ways. Tug escorts can serve as emergency maneuvering aids in the event of loss of steering or propulsion, and a tug escort may also assist as an independent aid in the navigation of a tanker.

The Final Report of the States/British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force (1990) concluded that the risk of an oil spill could be reduced by eight to 11 percent with the mandatory use of tug escorts. That report, endorsed by the State of California, suggested that the escorts be highly maneuverable, have speed complementary to the tanker with sufficient power to control tanker direction, and that the power and number of escort tugs should be proportionate to the deadweight tonnage of the tanker.

The Harbor Safety Committee (HSC) established a Tug Escort Subcommittee, which created Interim Guidelines for tug escorting in San Francisco Bay. The Interim Guidelines recommended: minimum requirements for tug escort equipment and crews; a formula for matching tugs to tankers; establishing a central Clearing House to measure bollard pull and monitor and document compliance with the regulations; setting tug escort zones in the Bay; and various operational considerations. OSPR caused emergency regulations to be established in the winter of 1992 based on the Interim Guidelines.

In the spring of 1993, the HSC adopted a revised set of Permanent Guidelines to supersede the emergency regulations. The Permanent Tug Escort Guidelines differed from the Interim Guidelines in a number of significant respects. The Permanent Guidelines altered the formula for matching tugs to vessels by changing the bollard pull formula from ahead static bollard pull equal (or greater) than the dead weight tonnage of a regulated vessel to the astern static bollard pull in the same ratio. Additionally, performance standards for stopping a tanker; equipment standards and inspection of tugs; positioning of regulated vessels; and training requirements for tug escort crews were established. During the State's administrative process, OSPR chose to reject the permanent guidelines on the basis of their lack of rationale and scientific basis for matching tugs to tankers.

The subcommittee began what grew into a two-year process of preparing a scientific study of how to match escort tugs to tankers, with the assistance of a consultant and by holding extensive public hearings on the results of the study. Based on state funding concerns and time limitations, industry volunteered to engage a consultant in conjunction with an industry-based Technical Advisory Group and the Tug Escort Subcommittee acting as a policy board. Glosten Associates was hired to prepare a professional study focusing on the specifics of tug escorting on San Francisco Bay. Additionally, the State funded a peer reviewer, Michael M. Bernitsas of the University of Michigan, to review the consultant's work and to mitigate concern regarding bias. Their reports were completed in the winter of 1994.

The Glosten Study had adopted a dual-failure standard (the simultaneous loss of both propulsion and steering) as the basis for measuring the force (tanker demands) required to recover from the tanker machinery failure and remain within the tactical area of performance. Further, the tactical area was based on the ninety-fifth percentile of success in stopping the tanker within the available reach and transfer. After review of the enabling scope of work and industry concerns regarding the likelihood of a dual failure and the attendant tanker demands, the dual standard was thought to be unreasonable. The subcommittee set up various working groups to review failure probability, waterway characteristics, and commercial and navigational safety implications of demand standards and requested that Glosten calculate demands based on single failures.

These efforts resulted in a second Glosten Study and reports on failure probability and waterway specific characteristics. The subcommittee reviewed these reports and adopted a single failure standard for the development of matching criteria.

The process involved close involvement and participation by the interested public and OSPR. On August 10, 1995, the full Harbor Safety Committee reviewed and adopted the Tug Escort Subcommittee's guidelines on a vote of twelve to one. The HSC promptly transmitted the new guidelines and recommendations to OSPR for implementation.

The Committee publicly reviewed the regulatory language proposed by OSPR. During the review of the regulations, several issues were identified as not being in compliance with the Committee's recommendations. The most critical issues were related to the intended use of checklists to review and develop a transit-specific plan versus OSPR's new requirements that plans be filed with OSPR thirty days in advance. OSPR subsequently agreed to modify its proposed language to comply with the intent of the Committee's guidelines, which the Committee adopted in January 1996.

OSPR held a public hearing on the proposed permanent tug escort regulations on March 19, 1996. Approximately 15 people testified at the hearing. Most supported the new regulations but a sizable group protested the use of a single-failure standard instead of a dual-failure standard. Many of those who commented also suggested minor modifications to the regulations, such as individualized, company-specific check lists and reducing pilot liability. Written comments were also received.

In addition to the public hearing process on regulations, OSPR is required by law to have regulations reviewed by the State Inter-Agency Oil Spill Prevention Committee, which reviewed and approved the regulations for implementation, and by the OSPR Technical Advisory Committee, which is purely advisory and has no approval or disapproval authority. The issue of dual- versus single-failure standard was again debated and it was concluded to continue with the single-failure standard.

The Tug Escort regulations became effective January 1, 1997. (See Appendices for current list of certified tug escorts, the current Clearing House Report on escorted vessel movements and for Amended Tug Escort Regulations.) There have been no significant issues in implementing the regulations.

It should be noted that the 1997 Tug Escort regulations require that:

The OSPR Administrator shall review the matching criteria and other program elements within two years of the effective date of this subchapter. The program review will include a survey of the tanker-related incidents in U.S. waters to determine the types of failures that have occurred, an assessment of tug technology and any advances made in design and power, and the tug escort organizations. At the conclusion of the review, the Administrator will determine whether it is necessary to modify the tug/tanker matching criteria or any other provision of the program requirements... .

The OSPR review to determine whether any changes should be made to the tug/tanker matching formula met the January 1, 1999 deadline; however, the regulations did not require a report and none was prepared. Rather than conduct a review every two years, the HSC, on behalf of the Administrator, reviews incidents on an ongoing basis at its monthly meetings. If further evaluation is warranted, issues are referred to the appropriate Work Group for additional analysis. Any findings and recommendations are brought before the full Committee for discussion and vote.

Subsequently, in 2001-2002, the HSC Tug Escort Work Group initiated a “sunshine” review of the entire tug escort regulations for the San Francisco Bay Region. The Work Group met for a one-and-a-half year period. The meetings were well attended by representatives of tanker operators, tug operators, the San Francisco Bar Pilots, marine terminal operators, the U.S. Coast Guard, OSPR, State Lands Commission, the San Francisco Marine Exchange and a host of other local maritime professionals.

The cornerstone of the regulatory review was a thorough examination of the tug/tanker matching matrix. The Work Group met with Dr. David Gray, Naval Architect of Glosten Associates from the Seattle-based company that developed the original tug/tanker matching matrix. Dr. Gray reviewed the assumptions upon which the matching formula was based and the present mix of tankers that call in the Bay. After much deliberation, the Work Group concluded that the tug/tanker matrix remains valid and should not be modified (determination made at the January 15, 2002 Work Group meeting and reported to the HSC at its February 14, 2002 meeting).

However, as a result of its study of the tug/tanker matching matrix, the Work Group determined that in order for tug escorts to be effective in an emergency, training of escort tug and ship crews under pilot direction should be addressed. The Work Group concluded that training exercises could not be mandated by regulation, as the training exercises must be individual to the tugs and vessels because of the wide variety of tankers, barges and tugs and variety of conditions on the Bay. The Work Group prepared guidelines entitled “Recommendations for Conducting Escort Training on San Francisco Bay,” which outlines procedures for tug and ship crews, as well as pilots, to participate in live training exercises under agreed-upon, non-emergency conditions. A draft of the Recommendations was circulated to various tug, tanker, and barge companies and to the S.F. Bar Pilots.

The guidelines were adopted by the full Committee on May 9, 2002 (see Appendices). The HSC Secretariat, through the Marine Exchange, then sent a letter to all affected parties in the maritime community, encouraging companies to adopt the Recommendations. The Tug Escort Work Group reports that tug escort emergency maneuvers are being conducted on a voluntary basis in accordance with the HSC’s Recommended Guidelines.

In 2003, the Harbor Safety Committee rescinded its prior recommendation to propose state legislation requiring tug escorts for vessels “carrying certain dangerous chemical cargoes in enough quantities to pose a risk” in San Francisco Bay, based on the following:

- It was extremely difficult to define dangerous cargoes and quantities that could be translated into legislation.

- Thorough analysis of this category of vessels in the Bay in calendar year 2001 did not reveal a pattern of problems or inadequate ship design.
- The Coast Guard has the authority through Port State Control to require tug escorts and to detain “problem ships” if necessary.

In 2004, State legislation (SB 1480) was proposed that would allow “[t]he OSPR Administrator, in consultation with the harbor safety committees, to adopt regulations governing tugboat escorts for other vessels carrying hazardous materials that are entering, leaving, or navigating in the harbors of the state.”

The Harbor Safety Committee opposed SB 1480 and companion legislation AB 2777 because:

1. The Tug Escort Work Group carefully reviewed the nine-year record of Coast Guard Casualty reports for Chemical Tankers, the seven-year record of Coast Guard Captain of the Port (COTP) orders to require Chemical Tankers to be tug escorted, and Chemical Tanker arrivals in the Bay for the year 2003. Of 23 reported casualties, only four were for loss of steering or power; four were for the same ship, and seven were tankers carrying oil. The other casualties were minor in nature because of the broad definition of a reportable Marine Casualty. Similarly, of the COTP orders for seven Chemical Tankers, five vessels carried oil and the other two most likely carried oil. The major increase in the number of Chemical Tankers was due to the change in definition of tankers by Lloyds of London. Also noted was the fact that most chemical tankers are double-hulled ships subject to strict standards and close vetting review.
2. The definition of “hazardous materials” is too broadly written to be meaningful in pinpointing the most dangerous chemicals and quantities hazardous to the public and the environment. As written, the legislation would affect almost every ship in the Bay, from cargo ships to tankers, and would not enhance safety.
3. The Work Group was concerned that, because the definition of hazardous materials is so broadly written, permanent broad powers would be granted to the OSPR Administrator with no criteria or analysis upon which to base his/her decision.

The Harbor Safety Committee sent its recommendation to the OSPR Administrator. The legislation was vetoed by the Governor.

## XIV. PILOTAGE

Pilotage is of primary import to Bay shipping because of complex local conditions consisting of narrow navigation channels, many bridges, swift tides and currents, variable weather patterns, and large numbers of ships and small vessels. For more than one-hundred-fifty years, the State has regulated pilotage over the Golden Gate bar through the State Board of Pilot Commissioners, which was created in 1850.

**San Francisco Bar Pilots.** This category of pilots is also referred to as Bar Pilots. A state license is required for a Bar Pilot to handle vessels entering the Bay and operating inside the Bay. A federal pilot's license is also required. The State Board of Pilot Commissioners regulates the number, licensing, training and disciplining of Bar Pilots for the Bays of San Francisco, San Pablo and Suisun.

**Federal Pilots.** Federal pilots are licensed by the U.S. Coast Guard to handle U.S. flag vessels under enrollment. State licenses for these pilots are not required.

**Inland Pilots.** An inland pilot is required to have both a state license and a federal license to pilot vessels solely inside of the Golden Gate. The State Board of Pilot Commissioners regulates inland pilots.

**Pilotage for the Ports of Stockton and Sacramento.** The Ports of Stockton and Sacramento have separate pilotage authority from the Board of Pilot Commissioners. In practice, these ports issue commissions to certain pilots licensed by the state.

**Docking Pilots.** Section 1179 of the Harbors and Navigation Code allows shipping companies who expressed their intent to the Board of Pilot Commissioners before July 1, 1983, to have their own employees used as pilots in lieu of Bar Pilots. In the Bay, a grandfathering clause allows one shipping company to use its own employee(s) who are not subject to State Board of Pilot Commission regulations as pilots for docking. These employees are federally licensed.

**Vessel Movements.** The decision-making process by the Master and the Pilot to move a vessel should consider all relevant factors, including, but not limited to:

- The characteristics of the vessel, such as maneuverability, size and draft;
- The capabilities of the vessel's navigation equipment;
- Tide, current and wind conditions on the intended route;
- Time of the day in relation to whether the fog may be in a cycle of "burning off" or lifting;

- Possible hazards along the route, such as bridges, and amount and nature of vessel traffic; and
- Visibility conditions at the dock, en route and at the destination, and assessment of whether these conditions are changing.

**Harbors and Navigation Code Preventing Unlicensed Person from Performing Pilotage.** State legislation requires the use of pilots on San Francisco Bay and provides penalties to prevent unlicensed persons from performing pilotage. The penalty for acting as a pilot while not holding a pilot license was increased to a maximum of \$25,000 (Harbors and Navigation Code Section 1126).

## **XV. UNDERKEEL CLEARANCE**

Many of the navigation channels within the Bay are subject to shoaling because of the nature of the Bay system, which is more fully described in Chapter V, Surveys, Charts and Dredging. Accurate tidal information is essential in order to calculate required underkeel clearances for vessel transit. This is particularly critical in the Bay region where minimal clearances may occur in certain channels. The committee reiterates its support for “real time” accurate measurement of tides, such as the P.O.R.T.S. system recommended in Chapter II, General Weather, Tides and Currents.

Underkeel clearance is the distance between the deepest point on the vessel and the bottom of the channel in still water conditions. Tank vessels carrying oil or petroleum products as cargo should maintain minimum underkeel clearances as listed below. The underkeel clearances are minimum standards during normal, calm conditions. Masters and pilots should use prudent seamanship and should evaluate the need for additional clearance to accommodate squat rolling, listing, sink and pitch.

The following are guidelines for underkeel clearance of tank vessels:

- a. Tank vessels west of the Golden Gate Bridge: Ten percent (10%) of the vessel’s draft.
- b. Tank vessels under way east of the Golden Gate Bridge: Two feet (2).
- c. Tank vessels at final approach to berth and at berth: Always afloat.

Regarding single hull tankers, on July 30, 1996, the Coast Guard published the Final Rule (33 CFR 157.455, effective November 27, 1996) on Operational Measures to Reduce Oil Spills for Existing Tank Vessels of 5,000 gross tons or more without double hulls. In part, the regulations require the Master to calculate the vessel’s deepest navigational draft, the controlling depth of the waterway and the anticipated underkeel clearance. In addition, the Master and Pilot are to discuss the tanker’s planned transit. The regulations can be found on the web in the Code of Federal Regulations at [www.gpoaccess.gov](http://www.gpoaccess.gov).

A Working Group was formed with representatives from the San Francisco Bar Pilots, Coast Guard, Port authorities and the maritime industry to evaluate the process of calculating, in a dynamic condition, underkeel clearances with the goal of promulgating Captain of the Port guidance on minimum clearances for the San Francisco Bay Area.

## XVI. ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The Harbor Safety Plan must identify and discuss the potential economic and environmental impacts of implementing the provisions of the plan, and describe the significant differences in the restrictions that could vary from port to port within the geographic boundaries of the plan.

### **Economic Impacts**

In order to make an economic assessment of the impacts of implementing the plan, recommendations that have a cost implication are identified with their potential economic impact. The following recommendations have a direct cost and an economic impact:

**Tides and Currents.** Federal, State and/or local funding is necessary for NOAA to conduct frequent, up-to-date surveys of major shipping channels and turning basins, and for the San Francisco Marine Exchange to operate and maintain the P.O.R.T.S. system.

**Harbor Depths, Channel Design and Dredging.** Conducting comprehensive annual condition surveys noting depths alongside and at the head of their facilities would be a cost for each facility owner or operator. Conducting more frequent, up-to-date surveys of channels known to shoal rapidly (i.e. Pinole Shoal Channel and Bulls Head Channel) would require an allocation of funds from the U.S. Corps of Engineers (CoE) and NOAA.

A new, two way traffic separation scheme north of Alcatraz was proposed that would require lowering areas such as Arch Rock, Harding Rock, and Shag Rocks to a minimum of -55' MLLW, and would cost between \$25 to \$43 million in federal and state (local) funds. The *San Francisco Bay Rock Removal Feasibility Study* was initiated in April 2000. The CoE, working with the Harbor Safety Committee's Underwater Rocks Work Group and the California State Lands Commission, investigated the economic and environmental feasibility of lowering the rock mounds to depths required for safe navigation. The CoE determined that there was not a federal interest in pursuing a structural alternative (physically lowering some or all of the rocks) as a result of the Feasibility Study. The San Francisco Central Bay Rock Removal Project was officially discontinued.

**Bridge Management.** The cost of installation and maintenance of energy absorbing fendering systems, bridge clearance gauges, water level gauges at bridge approach points, navigational lighting and racons on bridges over navigable waterways, where needed, would be borne by the individual bridge owners and operators such as the Union Pacific Railroad, CalTrans and the Golden Gate Bridge District.

**Tug Escorts.** The cost of tug escorts and standby tugs for ships and barges underway carrying more than 5,000 long tons of oil bulk as cargo in tug escort zones defined in the plan are directly borne by the shipper.

**Pilotage.** Future recommendations for pilotage may have cost implications.

**Small Vessels.** Federal, State and/or local funding is necessary to maintain and enhance the publication and distribution of pamphlets, brochures, videos, signs and other materials to increase boater education on shipping lanes, rules of navigation and safety guidelines for recreational boaters operating smaller vessels.

Each of the recommendations listed above has a cost that would be incurred by a commercial operator, port facility or government agency if that recommendation were implemented. To that extent, these would be economic impacts of the Harbor Safety Plan. Generally these items of cost are either capital items (such as new navigational equipment on bridges) or additional duties for an established agency.

The economic impact of the Harbor Safety Plan appears to fall equally on government agencies and private industry. The CoE, NOAA, bridge owners and operators, and each port and facility operator would be required to spend money to improve facilities they own or operate in order to meet the recommendations of the Harbor Safety Plan. In addition, private industry would be required to meet the cost of escort tugs and possible increased pilotage.

**Differences in Restrictions from Port to Port.** Seven ports are within the geographic boundaries of the Harbor Safety Plan: San Francisco, Oakland, Richmond, Redwood City, Benicia, Sacramento and Stockton. Nothing in this plan would create an advantage for any one of these ports as compared to any other port within the plan area.

### **Environmental Impact**

San Francisco Bay is a unique geographical area. It is the largest estuary on the Pacific Coast between Alaska and the tip of South America, with a shoreline, including sloughs, certain waterways and islands, of approximately 1,000 miles. Sixty-five percent of the rain and snowfall in California drains into rivers and creeks that feed the Bay.

Because of its size, depth and shelter from the open ocean, San Francisco Bay is a major harbor. Reflecting the trend in total U.S. commodities, a large percentage of the material shipped through the harbor is petroleum. The Bay presents a number of challenges to navigation, such as shallow waterways, narrow shipping lanes, vessel traffic, strong tides and currents, and occasional bad weather conditions, such as dense fog and strong winds. The Harbor Safety Plan has increased the level of navigational safety for the San Francisco Bay region, including the Ports of Sacramento and Stockton.

A major oil spill in the Bay would cause millions of dollars in damage to the marine environment, adversely affecting a variety of natural resources including wildlife habitats, water quality, commercial and recreational fishing, recreational areas, businesses, personal property and human safety. San Francisco Bay is part of the Pacific Flyway; in the winter months over one million birds use the area, which could be severely impacted by a sizeable oil spill. The wetlands, tidal flats, and open water of the San Francisco Bay Estuary provide essential habitat—food, water, shelter and other benefits—for over 500 species of fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals. A number of these species are threatened or endangered. In addition, there are almost as many invertebrate species in the ecosystem as all other animals combined, bringing the total number of species that use the Estuary to over 1,000. Just outside the Golden Gate, several marine sanctuaries protect some of the most productive coastal waters in the world. Spilled oil and certain clean-up operations can threaten the different types of marine habitats and other Bay resources.

As mentioned above, the Harbor Safety Plan has increased navigational safety throughout San Francisco Bay, thereby reducing the likelihood of a maritime accident that could result in the spill of a hazardous material, such as oil. Further, the Harbor Safety Committee, composed of representatives from the maritime community, port authorities, pilots, tug operators, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Office of Spill Prevention and Response, the petroleum and shipping industries, recreational boaters, the CoE and others with expertise in shipping and navigation, regularly meet to develop additional strategies to further safe navigation and oil spill prevention and to update the Harbor Safety Plan accordingly. As such, the Harbor Safety Plan has an overall beneficial impact on the environment since it furthers navigational safety and oil spill prevention, thereby helping protect the Bay from the adverse environmental impacts of a potential oil spill.

## **XVII. PLAN ENFORCEMENT**

The Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act (Act) provides for the Harbor Safety Committee to suggest mechanisms to ensure that the provisions of the Harbor Safety Plan be fully, uniformly and regularly enforced. Traditionally, the U.S. Coast Guard has been responsible for the regulation of vessel movements and inspections through the authority vested with the Captain of the Port. Within the geographic boundaries of the Harbor Safety Plan, almost all oil terminals are privately operated and outside of the jurisdiction of local port authorities. The USCG also has been the mainstay of enforcement within the plan boundaries, and it is expected that it will continue in this role.

Under the Act, the State Lands Commission and the California Department of Fish and Game are granted dramatically increased roles and enforcement responsibilities. The State Lands Commission inspects facilities and vessels that are moored alongside the above-mentioned privately operated terminals, and monitors the cargo transfer operations. In the event of a violation, the appropriate state or federal agency is notified. The Department of Fish and Game enforces state regulations under the Act and monitors vessel bunkering operations along with the Coast Guard, and has the power to impose criminal and civil penalties for violations.

Tug Escorts are monitored by the Clearing House (CH), which was established to monitor the tug escort program for the Department of Fish and Game. The Marine Exchange of the San Francisco Bay Region administers the CH. The CH will confirm that all applicable tankers are escorted by an appropriate tug, and that the escort tug is on station prior to the movement of the vessel. In the event that the tug is not on station, the CH contacts the pilot, the master of the vessel, and the shipping company and/or agent and advises them accordingly. The vessel may not proceed until the escort tug is on station. The CH notifies the Department of Fish and Game of suspected violations. In the event that the tug breaks down during an escort, the master and the pilot will determine the safest course of action: whether to stop, to return to dock or to proceed.

Review and update of the Harbor Safety Plan is mandated to take place annually on or before June 30th. At that time, all aspects of the Harbor Safety Plan are assessed and the findings and recommendations for improvements are sent to the Administrator.

### **2004 Tug Escort Violations**

After a four-year lull, 2004 saw a marked increase in violations of tug escort regulations within San Francisco Bay, San Pablo Bay and Suisun Bay. In 2004, the CH contacted the Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) 23 times in regard to possible violations. Of these, three notifications involved confusion over the alternate compliance status of one tanker operator and were ruled invalid by OSPR. The 20 remaining incidents were determined by OSPR to be infractions.

The majority of the infractions (13) involved tank barge movements in which the line-haul tug failed to notify the CH of the impending movement. Less frequent violations include failure of the escort tug to be certified for escort duties, failure of the escort tug to notify the CH, expired bollard-pull certificates and failure of the tanker pilot to notify the CH. Of the 20 infractions, the number of violations per company ranged from three companies with only one violation each to one company with seven violations.

### **OSPR Enforcement Process**

Due to the increase in violations that occurred in 2004, the Committee raised concerns with OSPR's enforcement procedures and requested that OSPR shorten the amount of time between reported violations and their resolution. In response, OSPR has streamlined its procedures as follows: First, the CH will now report violations directly to the OSPR Legal Branch. Second, the OSPR Legal Branch will immediately notify the company of the reported violation. Depending on the severity of the violation and the history of the violator, either a notice of violation (informal) or an administrative civil penalty complaint (formal) will be sent to the owner and/or operator outlining the specifics of the violation, civil penalty assessed and OSPR's costs for investigation.

OSPR will continue to make periodic reports to the Committee on the status of current violations.

### **Coordination of Enforcement Responsibilities**

The Coast Guard and the Department of Fish and Game coordinate policies and procedures to the greatest extent possible with each other and with other federal, state, and local agencies. Cooperation and coordination between agencies minimizes enforcement efforts required for all federal, state, and local regulations. This cooperation is essential since, relative to the Harbor Safety Plan, the Coast Guard is the primary enforcement agency for federal regulations, and the Department of Fish and Game is the primary enforcement agency for state regulations.

## **XVIII. SUBSTANDARD VESSEL INSPECTION**

### **Substandard Vessel Examination Program**

Beginning May 1, 1994, the U.S. Coast Guard implemented a revised vessel boarding program designed to identify and eliminate substandard ships from U.S. waters. The program pursues this goal by systematically targeting the relative risk of vessels and increasing the boarding frequency on high risk (potentially substandard) vessels. Each vessel's relative risk is determined through the use of a Boarding Priority Matrix, which factors the vessel's flag, owner, operator, classification society, vessel particulars and violation history. Vessels are assigned a boarding priority from I to IV, with priority I vessels being the potentially highest risk. This program also aligns Coast Guard efforts with international initiatives through reliance upon a two-tiered boarding process, where the greatest effort and most detailed examinations are reserved for the highest risk vessels.

The International Maritime Organization adopted an amendment to the 'International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974' with provisions entitled "*Special Measures to Enhance Marine Safety*," which became effective January 1, 1996. These provisions allow for operational testing during Port State examinations to ensure Masters and crews are familiar with essential shipboard procedures relating to ship safety.

The USCG Port State Control Branch continues its mission in identifying and eliminating substandard foreign commercial vessels from U.S. waters by use of the USCG's risk-based boarding priority matrix system.

At the HSC monthly meetings, the MSO reports on steering and propulsion casualties and other incidents impacting maritime safety.

## **XIX. RECOMMENDATIONS IMPLEMENTED OR ADDRESSED**

The Harbor Safety Committee, through its work groups, adopted the following recommendations to reduce the risk of oil spills in the San Francisco Bay Region. The respective chapter of the Harbor Safety Plan includes background discussion of the issues addressed by each recommendation. The following recommendations have been implemented by the responsible agency.

### **I. Geographical Boundaries**

No recommendations.

### **II. General Weather, Tides and Currents**

No recommendations.

### **III. Aids to Navigation**

No recommendations.

### **IV. Anchorages**

It was recommended that the USCG adopt pre-designated anchorage areas within the existing general anchorages throughout the VTS SF area, and in particular within General Anchorage 9, so that safer and more disciplined anchoring practices may be managed by VTS SF. The final resolution was to divide the anchorage into two areas: the western side has been designated for deep-draft vessels and the eastern side for lighter-draft vessels. In addition, VTS requires that vessels not anchor closer than 750 yards from one another.

### **V. Surveys, Charts and Dredging**

4 a) The recommendation to “establish a new two-way Traffic Separation Scheme north of Alcatraz to allow safer navigation of deeply laden tankers” has been implemented, and is now referred to as the “Deep Water Traffic Lane.” (Date established: 1992)

4 b) The recommendation requesting the Corps of Engineers to further evaluate the lowering of Harding, Arch, Shag and Blossom Rocks has been implemented. The COE determined that there was not a Federal interest in pursuing a structural alternative (physically lowering some or all of the rocks) as a result of the Feasibility Study for the proposed project. No further action. (See Ch. V, section on Navigational Issues Associated with Channel Design and Dredging.)

5. The recommendation to eliminate the dogleg at buoy “C” of the San Rafael main ship channel to maintain proper two-way traffic separation” has been addressed. This action was evaluated and found cost prohibitive. (Date addressed: 1993)

## **VI. Contingency Routing**

No recommendations.

## **VII. Vessel Speed and Traffic Patterns**

For the San Francisco main ship channels from the COLREGS Demarcation Line to and between the southern tip of Bay Farm Island and the Dumbarton Railroad Bridge:

- a) The maximum speed for all power driven vessels of 1,600 or more gross tons shall not exceed 15 knots through the water from the COLREGS Demarcation Line to and between the southern tip of Bay Farm Island and Dumbarton Railroad Bridge; and
- b) Power driven vessels of 1,600 or more gross tons shall in any case have their engines ready for immediate maneuver and shall not operate in control modes or with fuels that prevent an immediate response to any engine order ahead or astern or preclude stopping their engines for an extended period of time.

## **VIII. Accidents and Near-Accidents**

1. The Committee adopted a definition of a reportable ‘Near Miss’ situation to standardize reporting along the California Coast. However, after consulting with the other California Harbor Safety Committees, the idea to establish a systematic reporting of a ‘near miss’ was abandoned because of the issue of potential liability by the reporting party. The USCG considered a program to address non-reportable near casualties on a national and international level, but put the program on hold in November 2002 because of lack of funding. (Date addressed: 2002)

## **IX. Communication**

1. The recommendation to alleviate congestion on Channel 13 was implemented when the USCG shifted the primary VTS channel to Channel 14. The Harbor Safety Committee endorsed the Coast Guard’s efforts to improve the existing system. (Date addressed: 1994)

2. The Harbor Safety Committee recommends the acquisition of adequate backup power supplies for the San Francisco Bar Pilots and San Francisco Marine Exchange communications systems. At a minimum, portable diesel generators obtainable commercially should be procured and arrangements made to provide means of powering minimal lighting and communications circuits.

## **X. Bridges**

2. Bridge clearance gauges should be installed where needed, particularly drawbridges. (Note: USCG requires bridge clearance gauges. Please notify CG District 11 Bridge Administration of any discrepancies.)

3. Water level gauges should be installed at approach points to bridges. (Note: Water level gauges are not under the jurisdiction of the USCG. However, proposals to install gauges or other items on bridges will require permission from the bridge owner, followed by review and approval from the CG District 11 to ensure permitted bridge structures are not altered without approval.)

4. Request the Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District to install a RACON (radio beacon) to mark the center of the channel between the towers of the Golden Gate Bridge to better serve the mariner, particularly during periods of restricted visibility and heavy seas. (Note: RACONS were installed some time ago. Please notify CG District 11 Bridge Administration of any discrepancies.)

5. Request the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to install racons on the D-E span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge (instead of the G-H span), and the A-B span because the spans vary in height and width and currents can reach considerable velocities running parallel to the towers. (Note: RACONS were installed some time ago. Please notify CG District 11 Bridge Administration of any discrepancies.)

6. Request Caltrans and the Golden Gate Bridge District to shield bridge floodlights to reduce the glare for ships. (Note: Completed)

## **XI. Small Vessels**

1. A meeting should be convened by the Harbor Safety Committee with the state OSPR, Fish and Game officials, herring fishermen, Coast Guard, and representatives of the Ports to discuss ways to avoid problems such as nets impeding navigation lanes or berthing areas, nets blocking the egress of fire boats, oil spill response boats and pilot boats, etc. This meeting could result in yearly pre-season meetings with fishermen, Fish and Game mailers to the fishermen informing them of spill prevention concerns, or other actions.

2. Pilots, Masters, and other interested parties should be invited to witness a series of races from the St. Francis Yacht Club race deck to obtain a view of events from the competitors' level.
3. Race officials and other interested parties should be invited aboard a large tanker while underway to get the pilot's perspective of racing vessels.
4. The Yacht Racing Association of San Francisco Bay should furnish full annual race schedules to all interested shippers, and, in particular, the Harbor Safety Secretariat for distribution.
5. The Yacht Racing Association should furnish optional courses and rounding marks used by participating entities. The race committee for each day's event should choose a course compatible with anticipated large vessel traffic.
6. The Coast Guard Auxiliary should observe and report infractions. The U.S. Coast Guard suggested that a mailer be prepared, to be inserted with vessel license renewal notices, advising owners of Inland Steering and sailing rules, Rule 9.
7. Expand the distribution of existing educational pamphlets available from the U.S. Coast Guard. These pamphlets provide information regarding the above-mentioned courses and the phone number for the Boating Education Hotline at (800) 336-2628 that would provide information regarding the scheduling of these classes. Distribute these educational pamphlets by: enclosing them in the boat registration renewal notices sent to boat owners by the Department of Motor Vehicles in the State of California (a follow-up mailing might also be considered to remind boat owners of these courses); enclosing them in local boat marina mailings to slip renters; requesting marinas to offer a one-time slip rental rebate for completion of a safe boater course.
8. Encourage vessel operators to document and report violations of the Rules of the Road to the local U.S. Coast Guard office. This would include a direct request to the San Francisco Bar Pilots to assist in this reporting effort.
9. Make public by publishing punitive actions taken against offenders by the U.S. Coast Guard. This information should be distributed to local yachting and boating magazines and marina newsletters. In addition, the California Department of Motor Vehicles should distribute a summary of punitive activities to registered boat owners.
10. Encourage the ongoing efforts of the local U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and Power Squadron organizations in their boating education and safety efforts.

## **XII. Vessel Traffic Service**

1. Scope of Coverage
  - a. Develop standard VTS traffic management procedures for U.S. ports that conform to international standards.
  - b. Make mandatory for civilian and military vessels the current voluntary participation in VTS and extend required participation to include vessels certified to carry 49 passengers or more (i.e., ferries).
  - c. Incorporate the provisions of International Rule 10 in the federal regulations regarding VTS.
  - d. Expand the area of sensor coverage by VTS SF to monitor the navigable waters of San Pablo Bay north of the San Rafael-Richmond Bridge and east of the Carquinez Straits to New York Point and Antioch. It is anticipated by this committee that San Pablo Bay may be covered by radar surveillance alone while television monitors, in addition to radar, may be needed in the area of the Strait where continuous change of heading could make radar monitoring alone difficult. Sensor coverage expansion has been repeatedly requested.
2. Changes in VTS Operations and Requirements
  - a. Adopt a dedicated VHF working frequency, Channel 14, for the exclusive use of VTS SF ship/shore communication system. Channel 13 should continue to be monitored and used for ship/ship communications.
  - b. Upgrade the current equipment used by VTS SF to include state-of-the-art technology (U.S. Coast Guard, *Port Needs Study: Vessel Traffic Services Benefits*, Volume I: Study Report and Volume II, Appendices, Part 2).
3. The Harbor Safety Committee supports continued federal funding for VTS San Francisco in order to ensure navigational safety in the San Francisco Bay Area.

## **XIII. Tug Escort/Assist for Tank Vessels**

Over a period of five years, the Harbor Safety Committee took the following steps to establish tug escorting in the Bay:

- 1) Adopted Interim Tug Escort Guidelines in 1992.
- 2) Adopted Permanent Tug Escort Guidelines in 1993.

- 3) Adopted Revised Permanent Tug Escort Guidelines in 1995.
- 4) Amendments to Revised Permanent Guidelines Adopted January 1996 (Revised tug escort regulations effective January 1, 1997).
- 5) Recommended establishing a technical pilotage committee to review waterways specific maneuvers of tankers and tugs.

#### **XIV. Pilotage**

1. The recommendation that the California Harbor and Navigation Code be amended to add requirements for shipping company employees eligible to pilot vessels in the Bay Area has been addressed by State and Federal regulation. (Date addressed: 1996)
2. The recommendation that Coast Guard regulations be amended for pilotage has been deleted as not under the purview of the Harbor Safety Committee.

#### **XV. Underkeel Clearance and Reduced Visibility**

1. The recommendation that “guidelines for underkeel clearances of tank vessels carrying oil or petroleum products as cargo” be established has been implemented by establishing the following minimum clearances:
  - Tank vessels west of the Golden Gate Bridge: Ten percent (10%) of the vessel’s draft.
  - Tank vessels under way east of the Golden Gate Bridge: Two feet (2).
  - Tank vessels at final approach to berth and at berth: Always afloat.

These clearances are incorporated in the Bar Pilots’ Operational Guidelines, which are updated regularly.

2. Because it may be more dangerous for a vessel to remain offshore in the Pacific Ocean in the approaches to the Bay during periods of restricted visibility, vessels inbound from the Pacific Ocean should continue to proceed from the Pilot Area into the Bay to a safe anchorage.
3. Ships within the Bay at a dock or at a safe anchorage should not commence movement if visibility is less than .5 nautical miles throughout the intended route, unless the Pilot’s assessment of all variables listed under general principles is that the vessel can proceed safely. The Pilot’s local knowledge should include knowledge of historic weather patterns during that time of year, current weather reports, and checking with reporting stations along the route.

## **XVI. Economic and Environmental Impacts**

No recommendations.

## **XVII. Plan Enforcement**

The Coast Guard and the State Department of Fish and Game should coordinate policies and procedures to the greatest extent possible with each other and with other federal, state, and local agencies.

## **XVIII. Substandard Vessel Inspection Program**

Support the U.S. Coast Guard vessel inspection program of targeting substandard vessels in the Bay.

## XX: HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

The Harbor Safety Committee has produced a number of educational materials in an effort to increase safe use of the Bay. Copies of the following are available by contacting the San Francisco Marine Exchange at 415.441-6600.

*Your Guide to Recreational Marine Radio Communications for San Francisco Bay.* Brochure. July 2001.

*Where The Heck Is Collinsville?* Brochure. February 2002.

*Mariners, Do You Speak Channel 14?* Brochure. April 2003.

*Sharing the Bay.* Video, also available in CD and DVD format. Early 2004.

*Rules 9 & 5....Laws To Live By.* Brochure. May 2004.

*P.O.R.T.S. (Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System)* Brochure. December 2004.