

Dead Ship Tows in San Francisco Bay

In today's maritime industry there are various operations that include the towing of a "Dead Ship." These operations can take place within a confined harbor, within the same port, and between Domestic and/or International destinations. During these operations there are many different variables that are to be considered during all stages of the operation. At times independent contractors are hired to coordinate all components involved that include but are not limited to hiring the tug companies, pilots and linesman. In other circumstances stakeholders directly contract with the towing companies for their services.

Regardless of how the project is contracted the objective of this Best Maritime Practice is to provide industry with a guideline for what is to be taken into consideration when planning and executing the towing operation involving a "Dead Ship".

1. **Vessel Representative Responsibilities:** The Vessel Representative of the Dead Ship Tow Project should execute the following measures directly after the Tow has been confirmed.
 - a. Fully review the vessel specifics of the ship to be towed.
 - b. Verify the vessel's seaworthiness and watertight integrity. Items to verify include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - All compartments have been entered and inspected
 - Sea valves are closed or wired shut
 - Bilges are free of oil and water
 - All moveable equipment is secured in place with wire or by welding
 - The rudders are locked by using structural steel of acceptable size and quantity (NOTE: the lock should transfer the rudder load from the yoke to structural members of the tow's hull)
 - The shafts are locked
 - Vents to tanks and other closed spaces should be covered to prevent water entry, but not plugged so as to prevent the escape of air or gas
 - All hatches, scuttles, doors, and other watertight closures are secure

c. Complete a Dead Ship Tow Plan to ensure a safe and efficient route that is sure to accommodate navigational clearances, tides/currents, marine projects, and vessel traffic. The tow plan should include but is not limited to the following:

- Vessel
- Vessel Type
- VIN (if applicable)
- LOA
- Draft
- Air Draft
- Beam
- Location of origin
- Vessel's destination
- POC Name/24hr Phone
- Weather Conditions
- Tides/Currents
- Lead Tug Name and Class
- Lead Tug Master Name
- Pilot Designator/Name if Applicable
- Assist Tugs Name and Class
- Tug Working Frequency
- Diagrams of Tow Configurations for Intended Route
- International voyage plan
(if applicable)*

* NOTE: For any dead ship greater than 79 feet LOA or 150 gross tons transiting on a coastwise domestic or international voyage, the vessel will require a single voyage Coastwise Load Line Authorization or an International Load Line Exemption Certificate from the U.S. Coast Guard Sector San Francisco Officer in Charge of Marine Inspections. To obtain a load line exemption certificate, contact the Inspections Division via (510) 437-3444 to schedule a vessel examination. Such requests for inspection should be made a minimum of 30 days in advance of the scheduled towing operation to accommodate scheduling limitations.

- d. Ensure that tugs assigned adhere to the minimum towing capacities listed below

Class	Static Bollard Pull Ahead	Static Bollard Pull Astern
A+*	100,000	100,000
A	85,000	55,000
B	60,000	45,000
C	35,000	20,000
D	20,000	10,000

* Tractor Tug

Vessel's LOA in Feet	Draft In Feet	Tugs Required
Greater Than 1000	N/A	A+, A+, A+, A+
900 - 1000	Greater than 38'	A+, A+, A+, A+
900 - 1000	Less than 38'	A+, A+, A+, A
750 - 900	All	A+, A+, A, A
550 - 750	All	A, A, B, or A, B, C, C
400 - 550	All	A, B, C
300 - 400	All	B, C
200 - 300	All	C, C
0 - 200	All	C

- e. Develop and employ a towing arrangement that enables the towing vessel(s) to maintain control of the dead ship at all times.
- f. Ensure that the personnel assigned to conduct the tow hold the appropriate licenses in accordance with Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 15.

NOTE: It is recommended that a State Licensed Pilot be contracted for all Dead Ship Tows greater than 500 feet LOA transiting through the UP Railroad Bridge.

- g. Contact Sector San Francisco Waterways Safety via (415) 399-7443 no less than 48 hours prior to the intended Dead Ship Tow to notify them of the intended operation and to verify that a Tow Plan has been completed and is in place.

NOTE: Sector San Francisco Waterways Safety Branch may request to review a copy of the Dead Ship Tow Plan at any time.

2. **Vessel Representative/Pilot Responsibilities:** Prior to the commencement of the scheduled tow, the Vessel Representative shall perform the following.
- a. Hold a pre-departure conference with all concerned parties to review the tow plan and discuss the communications protocol to be used during operations.
 - b. Be prepared to answer the following questions:
 - Do tugs assigned have the towing capacity to maintain control of the vessel at all times?
 - Do navigational clearances along the proposed route accommodate vessel specifications?
 - Are there any marine projects that would reduce clearances along proposed route?
 - Are the winds forecasted to exceed 25 knots along the intended route?
 - Is visibility less the ½ NM?
 - Does any of the above warrant any deviation from the existing Tow Plan?
 - c. Report to Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) San Francisco prior to conducting operations within the VTS Service Area and as dictated upon commencement of the operation in accordance with 33 CFR 161.18.
 - d. If special circumstances prevent the vessel or towing personnel from adhering to the best practice guidelines herein, the vessel representative should contact the Sector San Francisco Waterways Safety via (415) 399-7443 to justify deviation(s).