Pre-booming Requirements for Vessels and Facilities Delivering Oil

Spills Prevention, Preparedness & Response

Washington's pre-boom requirements

The Washington Department of Ecology's oil transfer rules are designed to prevent spills when oil is transferred over water. All delivering vessels and facilities must pre-boom a **Rate A** transfer when it is safe and effective to do so. When transferring at **Rate B**, a deliverer may choose to either pre-boom or use the alternative measure requirements. Transfers of highly volatile products are not required to be pre-boomed.

Do these rules apply to me?

Any vessel or facility delivering oil in bulk to a non-recreational vessel or facility on or over Washington waters must meet the requirements of WAC 173-184 and 173-180. Delivering vessels bunkering a covered vessel must also meet the requirements of WAC 317-40. Covered vessels are defined in RCW 88.46.010.

What are Rate A and Rate B transfers?

Rate A or Rate B refers to the gallons per minute pumping transfer rate of an oil transfer operation.

- **Rate A** – over 500 gallons per minute.
- **Rate B** – 500 gallons per minute or less.

What are highly volatile products?

Examples of highly volatile products include gasoline, aviation gasoline, ethanol, and nonene.

What if I am delivering a highly volatile product and another product simultaneously?

Simultaneous transfers involving highly volatile products are not appropriate to pre-boom, however, if there are at least 3 hours remaining in the transfer after pumping of the highly volatile product is complete, the remainder of the transfer must be pre-boomed.

Is there flexibility for unique environments?

Pre-booming a transfer means surrounding the vessel(s) and/or facility dock area involved in the oil transfer however, the rules allow flexibility for unique environments. In environments where spilled oil will always travel in one direction, such as a river, the delivering vessel must boom to provide for maximum containment of any oil spilled. In river environments, it may be more appropriate to use a boom configuration that provides containment downstream of the transfer rather than a configuration that surrounds the transfer.

Unique pre-booming configuration used on the Columbia River. This configuration accounts for river current.

What if it is not safe to pre-boom?

When it is not safe or effective to pre-boom, the deliverer must submit a Boom Reporting Form (BRF) and meet the alternative measures per WAC 173-180-221(3) and 173-184-115(3). The conditions precluding pre-booming must be re-evaluated throughout the transfer and a Boom Reporting Form must be resubmitted every 4 hours for transfers at anchor and every 6 hours for transfers at a terminal.

What if it is safe but not completely effective to pre-boom?

We encourage booming whenever it is safe to do so because boom will contain some oil, regardless of weather conditions, until additional resources arrive on scene. Delivering vessels must consider pre-booming when water currents are 1 kt or less, when it is safe to do so, even if the boom is less than fully effective.

What is a Boom Reporting Form?

The Boom Reporting Form (BRF) is a form used to document conditions that exceed the safe and effective thresholds at the time and location of the transfer. The BRF helps us verify compliance with pre-booming requirements.

What must a Boom Reporting Form include?

The Boom Reporting Form must describe the conditions (wave, wind, water current, or safety data) that is exceeded at the time and location of the transfer.
It is not sufficient to simply write 'small craft advisory' or 'gale warning' on the form. These warnings and advisories cover a large geographic area and do not provide sufficient information to determine whether the thresholds in the Safe and Effective Determination Report were exceeded at the time and location of the transfer. The information in the form should align with the specific weather ranges or safety conditions listed in the approved Safe and Effective Determination Report.

When is a Boom Reporting Form not appropriate?

It is not appropriate to use a Boom Reporting Form to document conditions that make pre-booming more difficult, but do not exceed the safe and effective thresholds. Examples include:

- Damaged or unavailable boom.
- Favorable weather conditions at the transfer site, but poor weather conditions during transit to the transfer site.
- Weather conditions that make pre-booming difficult but are not addressed in the safe and effective threshold report (fog, temperature).

Why is inclement weather on the transit to the transfer location not acceptable in a Boom Reporting Form?

WAC 173-180-220(4) and WAC 173-184-110(4) both state "All boom and associated equipment, including the equipment used to deploy the boom, must be of the appropriate size and design for safe and effective deployment in the expected environmental conditions encountered in the transfer area(s) as described in the approved safe and effective threshold determination report." The transit of the pre-booming vessel to a transfer location is not a consideration in Safe and Effective Threshold Determination Reports. It is the responsibility of fuel deliverers to ensure they have arrangements in place to pre-boom when it is safe and effective to do so given the conditions at the time and location of the transfer.

What are the consequences if a Boom Reporting Form is used inappropriately?

If you have a spill from a transfer that was not pre-boomed due to an inappropriately used Boom Reporting Form it could result in an increased penalty.

Why are alternative measures part of the Boom Reporting Form?

Alternative measures are part of the Boom Reporting Form because they ensure the availability of spill response equipment when conditions do not allow safe and effective pre-booming. The alternative measures section of the Boom Reporting Form provides details on the ability to meet alternative measure requirements. The equipment that will be used to meet the alternative measures should be capable of operating during the weather conditions anticipated at the time and location of the transfer. The boom reporting form is available at: https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/documents/ecy070215.pdf

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To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-464-0324 or email at jasmin.adams@ecy.wa.gov, or visit https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341