

Focus on: Multi-Vessel Contingency Plans



New spill management team requirements

By July 18, 2021, vessels enrolled in a multi-vessel contingency plan must identify a state-approved spill management team to assume spill management duties after 24 hours. Read page 3 for more details.

Contact information

Spills Program
Plan Development Supervisor
360-407-7455
ecology.wa.gov/SpillsProgram

Special accommodations

To request ADA accommodation including materials in a format for the visually impaired, call Ecology at 360-407-7211 or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. People with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711. People with speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.

Requirements for vessel owners and operators enrolled in multi-vessel contingency plans

Companies whose vessels transit Washington State waters for arrival in Washington ports must be enrolled in a state approved contingency plan to ensure a rapid response to oil spills and other emergencies. Each company may have their own plan, or they may enroll their vessels in a Washington State approved multi-vessel contingency plan.

Multi-vessel contingency plan coverage areas

Three companies provide state-approved multi-vessel contingency plans for coverage in Washington State.

For vessels transiting Puget Sound, state coastal waters, and Grays Harbor, coverage may be provided by:

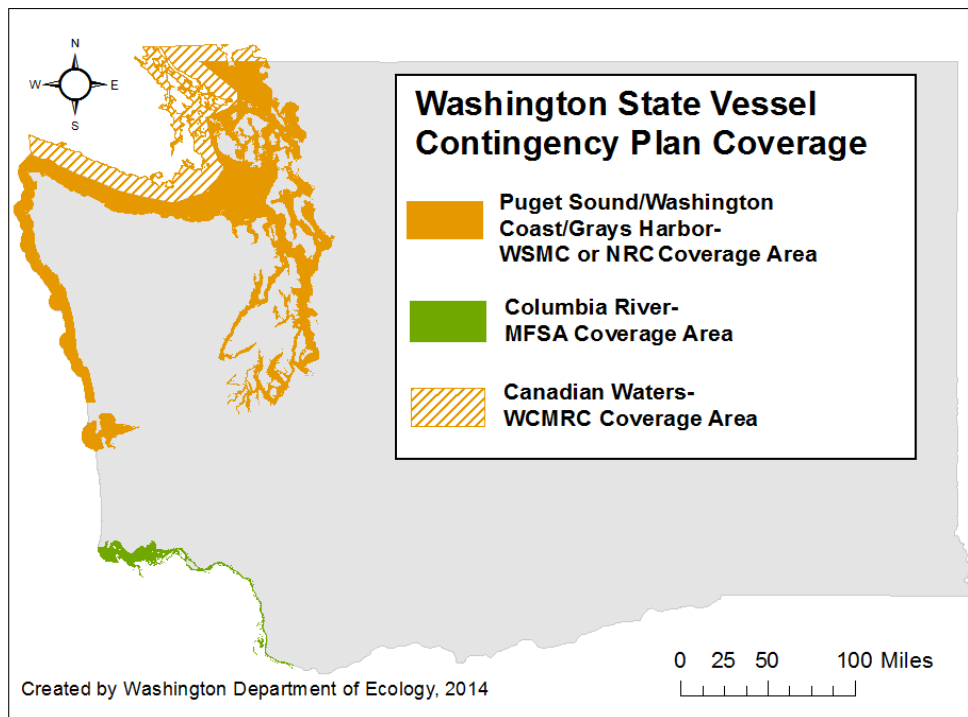
- National Response Corporation (NRC), or
- Washington State Maritime Cooperative (WSMC).

For vessels transiting the Columbia River, coverage may be provided by:

- Maritime Fire & Safety Association (MFSA).

For best advice in understanding limitations or restrictions in coverage, contact one of the above listed contingency plan holders.

Importantly, a vessel should only be enrolled in one contingency plan per geographic location. When transiting in the Puget Sound, state coastal waters, and Grays Harbor – contract with WSMC or NRC, not both. The master should immediately notify the operator and agent if double enrollment is discovered in both WSMC and NRC. The agent may be able to assist you to determine which plan to retain.



Following the contingency plan

When a company enrolls a vessel in one of the multi-vessel contingency plans, the master, as the company representative, is responsible to ensure the plan is followed. The master should become familiar with the plan, including notification procedures and initial response actions. Ecology recommends the master ensures the other ship officers are trained in the plan's use.

Field document

The field document is an important part of your Washington contingency plan and should be onboard your vessel before arrival in Washington waters. It contains time-critical steps the master must follow in the event of an oil spill, or a substantial threat of a spill, in Washington waters. The field document includes: spill control actions, Washington State's required notifications, and oil spill assessment tools.

Under WAC 173-182-240, covered vessels are required to have their approved contingency plan field document on board, and readily available at all times while the vessel is in Washington State waters. In addition to the field document, some plan holders have developed a notification placard to help guide initial notifications. **This notification placard is a notification aid and does not meet Washington's field document requirements.** The full field document must be on board at all times.

Vessel owners and operators must provide the field document to onboard vessel personnel before the vessel enters Washington waters. Usually, your company, your contingency plan holder, or your agent will fax or e-mail a copy of the field document as soon as your vessel is enrolled.

Copies of field documents for contingency plans are found online at:

- MFSA umbrella plan field document: www.mfsa.com
- NRC vessel plan field document and notification placard: <http://nrcwaplan.nrcc.com/>
- WSMC umbrella plan field document and notification placard: www.wsmcoop.org

Notification procedures

Washington State requires that vessel owners or operators follow the notification procedures in the contingency plan field document. In the case of a vessel covered under a multi-vessel plan, it is important to notify your plan holder immediately. Quick notification to the plan holder is crucial to a successful response, because it allows for the rapid deployment of equipment and personnel as necessary. The faster the response resource contractors begin mobilizing, the better the outcome. Your Qualified Individual (QI) may be able to assist you with notifications, but it is the responsibility of the vessel owner/operator to ensure that the proper notifications are made in a timely manner. All spills to water are reportable spills.

Required notifications

- Your multi-vessel contingency plan holder listed in your field document.
- **Washington Emergency Management Division (WEMD) within one hour of a spill or substantial threat of a spill : 800-258-5990**
- National Response Center: 800-424-8802

Emergency response towing vessel coverage

Enrollment with the emergency response towing vessel (ERTV) for transits through the Strait of Juan de Fuca is also required. Vessels enrolled in the WSMC contingency plan may enroll for ERTV coverage directly through their contract with WSMC; all other vessels must contact the Marine Exchange of Puget Sound to enroll. Details are at <http://marexps.com/supporting/ertv>.

Spill management teams

Spill management teams are representatives and trained personnel who integrate into an incident command system or unified command system and manage an oil spill. Spill management teams may be oil spill contingency plan holder personnel and/or contracted personnel directly responsible to a contingency plan holder.

Starting on January 18, 2020, the Department of Ecology will approve spill management teams. For vessel companies enrolled in multi-vessel plans, this means:

After July 18, 2021, upon enrollment in a multi-vessel plan, you must identify an approved spill management team willing and capable of assuming a transition of authority from the multi-vessel contingency plan holder to you. You may either contract with an approved spill management team or apply to become an approved spill management team to meet this requirement.

A list of approved spill management teams is available online at the Department of Ecology website <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Plans-policies/Contingency-planning-for-oil-industry/Spill-management-teams>.

Requirements for spill management teams

Approved spill management teams must commit to the following:

- Have a process to provide 24 hour per day contact for spill management.
- Begin mobilization efforts immediately upon notification but no later than two hours from notification of a spill.
- Ensure the incident commander is able to arrive in the state within six hours after notification of a spill, if the spill management team is contracted to fill the role.
- Assist plan holders in meeting requirements for plans and drills.
- Implement and use the contingency plan(s) to which they are contracted during a spill and substantial threat of a spill, and train personnel to implement the plan.
- Work in unified command within the incident command system to ensure that all personnel and equipment resources necessary to the response will be called out to clean up the spill safely and to the maximum extent practicable.
- Provide written notification to us and plan holders to whom they are obligated, within 24 hours, of any significant change in the information reported in the approved application.

Spill management team application

If you decide to apply to become a state-approved spill management team, you must submit an application. The application process includes providing information on the following:

- Your response personnel including their employment status as full-time, part-time, dedicated, or non-dedicated.
- You must identify the incident command system positions they are qualified to fill such as incident commander, planning section chief, operations section chief, logistics section chief, safety officer, and public information officer.
- Your 24-hour response personnel call-out process, phone number, and the response times for personnel to arrive in Washington State.
- Your personnel training program on topics including the incident command system, the Northwest Area Contingency Plan, geographic response plans, contents of the contingency plan, and worker health and safety including Washington state regulations.

Complete the spill management team application form at our website at:

<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/SummaryPages/ECY070609.html>. Send the completed application to: contractorapp@ecy.wa.gov. Our oil spill contingency plan rule requires a 30-day public review and comment period on spill management team applications.

More information

Multi-vessel contingency plans are regulated under Chapter 173-182 Washington Administrative Code (WAC) Oil Spill Contingency Plan Rule. The rule is available at: <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=173-182&full=true>.