

Vessels of Opportunity: Supporting Oil Spill Response Activities

What is a Vessel of Opportunity?

A Vessel of Opportunity (VOO) is a local, commercial or recreational vessel that has volunteered their vessel to assist in responding to oil spills. Types of commercial vessels that have historically participated in spills as VOO may be fishing, charter, deck barges, or other types of smaller work boats.

VOOS have been used worldwide for oil spill response

Around the world, the use of VOO has been an important part of major oil spill response. A large oil spill can significantly disrupt the economy of an area for weeks or even months while oil is cleaned up. Employing VOO and boat crews to assist in the response can help our communities recover during this period of disruption. VOO can support spill response efforts in the following ways:

- Remove oil from the water - enhance oil skimming operations.
- Deploy and maintain oil spill containment boom - help minimize impacts to natural, cultural, and economic resources.
- Provide logistics support - transport food, equipment, and people.
- Provide communication equipment and command post space on board vessels.

WHY IT MATTERS

Preventing oil spills is our number one goal but we must also ensure we have a strong response system in place - one that is rapid, aggressive and well coordinated.

Ecology developed a database to manage Vessels of Opportunity in an effort to expand our state's oil spill response system during a major spill. Enroll now at www.oilspills101.wa.gov

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS

If you need this document in a format for the visually impaired, call the Spills Program at 360-407-7455.

Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.

Planning for the safe and effective use of VOO in Washington State

During 2011 the Legislature passed HB 1186; mandating Ecology update the Oil Spill Contingency Plan rule to ensure our state achieves the highest standards of oil spill protection. The bill required the use of best technology, training procedures, and operational methods in oil spill plans. In addition, the bill also required Ecology to develop a volunteer registration and management system.

To meet this directive, the Department of Ecology has developed a database to register volunteers, and include them in the oil spill response system for the state. This volunteer registration system for VOO, and other volunteer roles, is now active and enrolling registrants at www.oilspills101.wa.gov.

While preventing spills is the number one goal for the state, the Spills Program also invests in emergency preparations to ensure there is a strong system in place to respond if a large spill should occur.



For more information about the Vessels of Opportunity program, or other volunteer opportunities, visit www.oilspills101.wa.gov.