

VESSELS OF OPPORTUNITY

www.oilspills101.wa.gov

Help your community recover from an oil spill:
Volunteer Your Vessel!

Message from
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Spills Program Manager



The Department of Ecology Spills program works to prevent, prepare for, and respond to oil spills; to be our best for the state of Washington. Our goal of “zero oil spills to water” supports our mission to protect Washington’s environment, public health, and safety, through rapid, aggressive and well-coordinated efforts.

To further our goals, I am pleased to introduce the launching of our statewide effort to recruit volunteer vessels for large oil spill response support.

The term “Vessels of Opportunity” (VOO) describes the contributions of local commercial and recreational vessel owners to respond during major oil spills in this state, a rare but potentially devastating occurrence. A major oil spill can significantly disrupt the economy of the state for weeks, or even months, during the clean up process. Employing VOO and boat crews to assist in emergency response efforts can help our communities recover during a period of disruption. Using the local knowledge that vessel operators possess will greatly aid in a response.

This pamphlet provides an overview to Washington communities, potential and current VOO enrollees, and industry oil spill plan holders about their role in the VOO program.

Vessel owners that volunteer to be part of the VOO program can further their commitment to clean water by using best management practices to prevent spills. Together we can protect the environmental, economic, and cultural resources that make Washington a beautiful place to call home.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dale Jensen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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Vessels of Opportunity

Contracting and program considerations

What are Vessels of Opportunity (VOO)?

VOO may be a local commercial or recreational vessel identified to assist in responding to large oil spills in Washington, a rare but potentially devastating occurrence. Vessel owners who volunteer in the VOO program will be a supplement to the system of organized professional spill responders already in place throughout the state. All vessel types are welcome to volunteer: fishing, charter, deck barges, or other types of smaller passenger and pleasure boats.

How does the VOO program work?

The Department of Ecology Spills Program will collect and manage VOO volunteer enrollment information at www.oilspills101.wa.gov. Private entities, such as professional response contractors or oil companies, will use this information to find vessel owners they choose to contract with. If a company decides to contract your vessel's services, you will sign a private agreement with the company. You will be trained, assigned to a duty, and paid for your occasional, part-time work. All contracts are made between the contractor and the VOO program participant. The Department of Ecology does not participate in these agreements.



How are VOO used during a spill response?

VOO participants can support spill response efforts in several ways. The jobs VOO may be assigned will depend on the oil spill response

Vessels of Opportunity

Contracting and program considerations

needs, your type of vessel, and your experience in boat handling skills. VOO support many activities, here are examples of a few:

- Assist in oil skimming operations to remove oil from affected waters.
- Transport or deploy oil spill containment boom.
- Provide logistical support by moving equipment, food, or people.
- Provide space on your vessel for communication equipment or command posts.
- Provide a platform to search for oiled or injured wildlife.

There may be other uses for VOO participants. All types of vessels are needed.

Can I choose my level of participation in the VOO program?

Yes. There are two levels of participation: Tier 1 and Tier 2.

- **Tier 1** means you are ready to be contracted before an emergency situation happens. If selected as an active VOO, you will receive training, participate in drill exercises, be assigned specific tasks during an emergency response, and be paid for your time.
- **Tier 2** is a list of volunteers that Ecology will maintain to be contracted in the event of a big spill. Tier 2 VOO will receive just-in-time training to support response efforts, and you will be paid for your time.



Vessels of Opportunity

Contracting and program considerations

Does enrolling in the VOO program, and expressing my interest in Tier 1, guarantee I will be contracted?

No. The contracting company will set the terms and qualifications you must meet to be eligible for participation. The company will likely assess your vessel's current location, certifications, level of crew training, general vessel condition, indicated level of VOO participation, and other important factors.

If you indicate interest in being a Tier 1 VOO but are not selected, you will remain on the registration system's Tier 2 list.

Anything else I should know about the VOO program?

Here are a few other issues for you to consider while making your decision to volunteer:

- Your U.S. Coast Guard vessel certificate may limit your activities during a response.
- You must be a Washington home-ported vessel. Your home port will determine the region of your vessel's assignment. This is an opportunity for contractors to use local volunteers, rather than relying on vessels from out-of-state to help during an oil spill.
- Registration is an ongoing effort. Your information needs to be updated each year to maintain an active status in the database.
- If you are engaged in an oil spill response, your vessel could be operating in oil. There will be a plan to clean your vessel, but there is some risk of oiling on your vessel if you participate in the VOO program.

Become a VOO Participant!

Steps for registration and required information

To be considered for the VOO program, vessel owners and operators should register through the online process developed by the Washington State Department of Ecology at www.oilspills101.wa.gov. Click on the “Vessels of Opportunity” link from the main menu.

Depending on the type of vessel you own, the registration information you may need to provide include:

- Contact Information.
- Vessel Information.
- Training records relevant to oil spill response.
- Date of most recent Marine Survey.
- Vessel homeport and hailing port.
- Seasonal operations of the vessel.
- Information about any drug testing programs for captain and crew.

Additional information for commercial vessels:

- Lloyds Registry, IMO number, or Official Number.
- Date of most recent USCG compliance inspection or boarding.
- Date of expiration of any USCG certifications.

Additional information for recreational vessels:

- State registration number, USCG documentation number, or other official number.
- Date of most recent USCG Auxiliary Dockside Courtesy Inspection.

Become a VOO Participant!

Steps for registration and required information

Step 2: Complete the Vessel Information Survey.

- This will include giving detailed information about your vessel. Refer to page 7 for more details about the type of information requested. *

* If there are changes to your vessel information, you will need to complete a new survey.

The screenshot shows the 'Vessel of Opportunity Survey - Commercial' form. The form is titled 'Vessel of Opportunity Survey - Commercial' and includes a 'Consent' checkbox. The form is a multi-page document with a 'Next' button at the bottom. The form contains various sections for providing detailed information about the vessel, including name, address, contact information, and vessel specifications. The form is a multi-page document with a 'Next' button at the bottom.

Industry Information

VOO regulations and phase-in requirements

In Washington, companies invest millions of dollars to ensure oil spill response equipment is maintained in a constant state of readiness. Oil spill plans are written and tested in drills. A major oil spill, just like a natural disaster, will test the limits of our investments and plans. VOO participants can be used to supplement the system of organized professional spill responders we already have in place throughout the state.

What is the VOO program?

In December of 2012, the Department of Ecology updated contingency plan regulations to enhance the use of VOO during an oil spill. The rule addresses VOO registration, contracting, and training relative to the assignments VOO could support during a spill. Covered vessel oil spill plan holders have a variety of phase-in dates for contracting with VOO over the next several years. If you would like more information, you can read the updated regulations in Chapter 173-182 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC).

All vessels that enroll in the Ecology-sponsored database are considered Tier 2 VOO until a contract is signed with a third party designating the vessel as a Tier 1. Tier 2 VOO will receive just-in-time training to support response efforts, and will be paid for their time cycle.

How will I use VOO?

The first step is to think about your oil spill plan and how VOO might enhance your ability to respond. Then seek out the number and type of vessels that fit your needs. VOO can be trained for

Industry Information

VOO regulations and phase-in requirements

supporting on water recovery, near shore booming, or logistical tactics. However, no more than 50% of your VOO should be trained solely for logistical tactics. Once contracts for Tier 1 VOO have been established, there are requirements for exercising VOO participants in drills.

What are my obligations?

The regulations specify the minimum number of Tier 1 vessels required for six regions identified in the state. See the map and table summarizing the regional requirements on pages 12 and 13. The rows are color-coded to match the map. Since VOO are non-

dedicated, it is assumed that one out of two VOO will be available at any given time. The regions are an administrative way to keep track of compliance.

If there are an insufficient number of vessel volunteers in a region, please work with Ecology on an alternative compliance option.



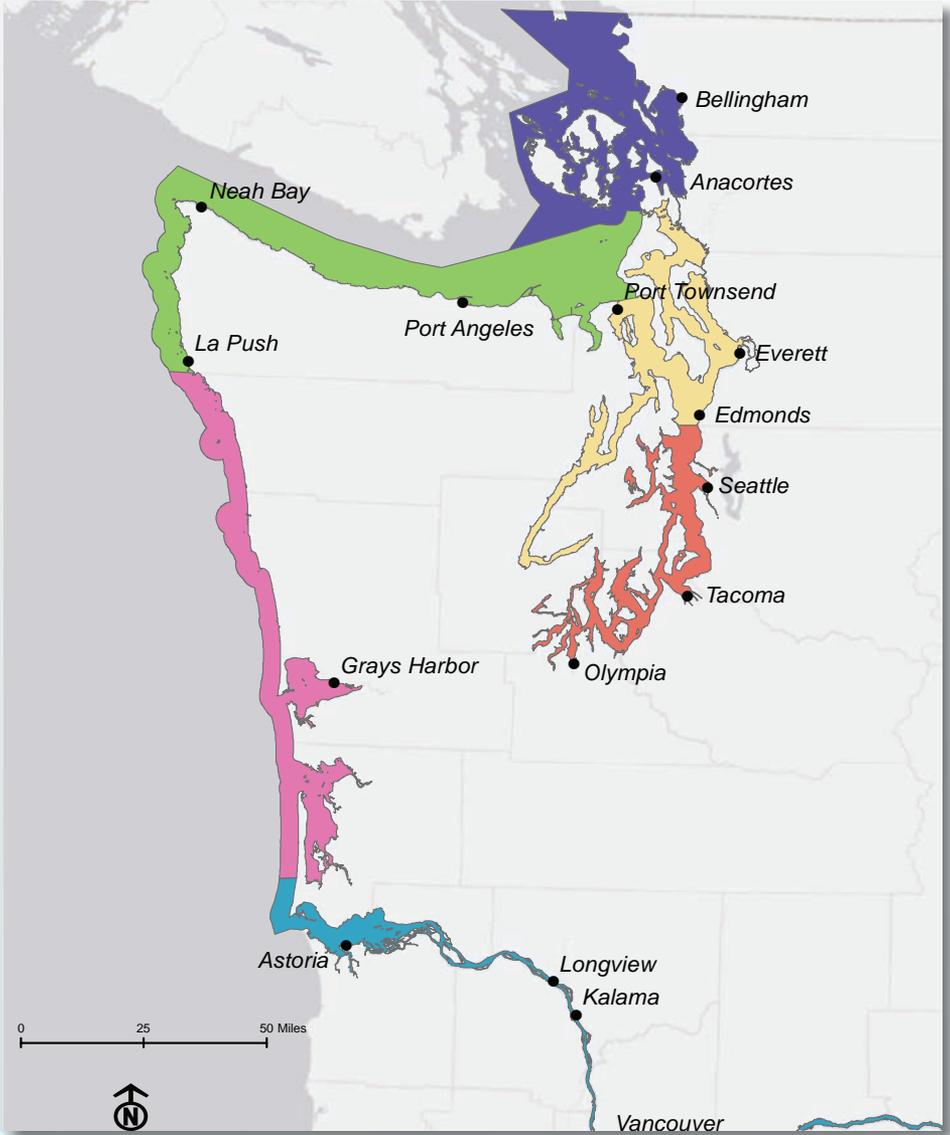
How do I use the PIER site?

To access the list of vessels whose owner's have volunteered to enroll as VOO:

- Log onto to www.oilspills101.wa.gov. You will need to register as a guest at the site in order to access the list of VOO volunteers.
- On the home page, click on "I am a Plan holder" or "Response Contractor."

Industry Information

VOO regulations and phase-in requirements



Industry Information

VOO regulations and phase-in requirements

Region	Minimum Number of Tier 1 Vessels	Phase-in Dates
1	18	July 2014
2	12	January 2016
3	12	January 2017
4	12	January 2016
5	12	January 2017
6	6	January 2017

Legend

Region

- 1- Strait of Juan de Fuca
- 2- San Juan Islands / North Puget Sound
- 3- South Puget Sound & Central Puget Sound
- 4- Lower Columbia River
- 5- Admiralty Inlet / Hood Canal & North Central Puget Sound
- 6- Grays Harbor

Oil Spill Prevention

Do your part to protect Washington's water quality

All oil spills cause environmental harm, regardless of size. Oil is toxic to the environment and the damage starts as soon as the oil hits water. Prevention of spills is the primary goal. When spillers quickly remove oil from the water they reduce impacts to the environment.

All boat owners play an important role in protecting our water quality. If you own a boat, you have responsibilities. To minimize environmental damage, report any oil spills immediately by calling 1-800-OILS-911 (state requirement) and the U.S. Coast Guard at 800-424-8802.

Here are some common sense suggestions you can follow to protect Washington State waters.

- The most common cause of spills is human error. Make sure you have a written operations and maintenance plan for crew to use.
- Ensure crews are regularly trained on the vessel's fueling, operations and emergency procedures.
- Don't consider absorbent pads and rags as permanent fixes for hydraulic leaks.
- Keep oil off the deck. Rain will wash it overboard.
- Don't "top off" oil tanks. Know tank capacities, how much you need and how much each tank can take before pumping.

For more information about oil spill prevention, you can visit the following website

www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/nonpoint/CleanBoating/index.html.

Together we can make a difference.

Resources

Information for vessel owners

Department of Ecology Spills Program

If you have questions about the VOO program, or any spills-related issue, contact the Ecology Spills Program at 360-407-7455 or visit www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/spills/spills.html.

To report a spill, you must immediately call

- The US Coast Guard at 1-800-424-8802
AND
- 1-800-OILS-911

United States Coast Guard Resources

Connect with the US Coast Guard District 13 auxiliary for boating safety and vessel inspection information at www.d13cgaux.com/sites.

To receive information about damage claims from oil spills, visit the National Pollution Fund Center Oil Spills Claims at www.uscg.mil/npfc/Claims/default.asp.

Pacific Oil Spill Prevention and Education Team (POSPET)

For education and outreach tools, visit Pacific Oil Spill Prevention Education Team and OILS 911 webpage at <http://oilspilltaskforce.org/products/education-and-outreach-tools>

For information about oil spill initiatives, visit the Pacific States/ British Columbia Oil Spill Task Force at <http://oilspilltaskforce.org>.

Washington Clean Marina Program

For more information about the Washington Clean Marina Program initiative, visit www.cleanmarinawashington.org.

**Washington Department of Ecology
Spill Prevention, Preparedness,
and Response Program**

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Special Accommodations:

To request this document in a format for the visually impaired, please call the Ecology Spills Program at (360) 407-7455. Persons with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711. Persons with speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.

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