



PUGET SOUND PILOTS
Protecting your waterways since 1835

SAFETY INFORMATION ON SHARING THE WATERWAYS

Puget Sound Pilots offers the following advice to help you avoid large ocean going ships:

1. Know your position in relation to the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) – avoid the Shipping Lanes when possible

The TSS is a marine highway system of inbound and outbound shipping lanes and convergence zones. Ocean going ships traveling through Puget Sound, the Straits of Juan de Fuca and Haro and Rosario Straits in the San Juan Islands use these lanes. To reduce the chance of impeding or colliding with an ocean going ship, **AVOID the TSS**. Remember, the sight lines and size of these ocean going ships make them much harder to maneuver than your recreational craft.

2. Know the Rules of the Road

Rule 10 of the Collision Regulations requires that all vessels of less than 20 meters and vessels under sail are not to impede the progress of a ship following the traffic lane. One long blast means that a large ship is approaching and wants you to pay attention. Five or more whistle blasts is a danger signal. It means that your intentions are not understood and that **you may be in danger**. Take immediate and decisive action to avoid a collision.

3. Understand and use the Vessel Traffic System (VTS)

The VTS is operated by the Coast Guard and has radar coverage over the TSS. You can monitor traffic using your VHF radio. This will help you determine what large ships or tug and tow operations are in your area. Vessels may get "traffic advisories" by contacting VTS on:

Channel 14 – South of Bush Point, Whidbey Island
Channel 5A – North of Bush Point

4. Guidelines for Safe Boating

- Scan the horizon for deep draft traffic. Large ships appear slow but can be moving at surprising speed.
- Don't attempt to cross the bow of a ship, play it safe and **GO ASTERN**.
- Make passing arrangements with commercial vessels using channel 13 – they all monitor this channel and the appropriate VTS channel.
- **During periods of restricted visibility, your safest option is to remain at anchor or tied to the dock**, even if you're equipped with radar and/or GPS. If you must go out, make sure you are fully educated on use of your navigational equipment and that you know how to use your radar.

Thank you for taking the time to increase your knowledge for your safety and the safety of others. Enjoy these great cruising waters!

Puget Sound Pilots is an organization of marine pilots dedicated to the protection of Puget Sound's marine environment, economy, and security. More than eight thousand times a year, PSP members board oil tankers, cargo vessels and cruise ships to guide them safely through the waters of Puget Sound. Our expertise and commitment to excellence has produced an unparalleled safety record of more than 165,000 sailings over the last 20 years without a major incident.