

SAN FRANCISCO BAY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

50 California Street • Suite 2600 • San Francisco, California 94111 • (415) 352-3600 • FAX: (415) 352-3606 • <http://www.bcdc.ca.gov>

February 22, 2013

TO: Commissioners and Alternates

FROM: Larry J. Goldzband, Executive Director (415/352-3653 lgoldzband@bcdc.ca.gov)
Linda Scourtis, Coastal Planner (415/352-3644 lindas@bcdc.ca.gov)

SUBJEC: **Temporary Safety Guidance for Large Vessels in the Bay**
(For Commission information only)

Staff Report

Guidance. The U.S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port (COTP) issued the following *Temporary Safety Guidelines for Navigating in Reduced Visibility*, effective February 14, 2013. The guidelines apply to large vessels and tugs with tows 1600 gross tons or greater, as well as to all tugs with tows in petroleum service. The guidelines were issued in response to the recent strike of the Bay Bridge by an outgoing tanker, and will remain in place while investigations into the incident continue. Locally, the Coast Guard, San Francisco Board of Pilot Commissioners and the Harbor Safety Committee (HSC) each will evaluate the causes of the incident and develop any further guidance as appropriate.

1. Vessels should make visibility reports to the Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) at any point in their transit when visibility conditions change substantially and navigation safety allows the report to be made.
2. Vessels transiting the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge (West of Yerba Buena Island) in any condition of reduced visibility should generally do so via the A-B or D-E span unless vessel traffic, environmental or other safety factors dictate otherwise.
3. Outbound/northbound vessels should not transit the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge (West of Yerba Buena Island) when visibility is less than 0.5 nautical mile.
4. Inbound vessels transiting the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge in restricted visibility are advised to exercise extreme caution during their transit.

Guidelines 3 and 4 require different levels of caution due to the location and availability of safe anchoring opportunities for ships whether they are leaving or entering the Bay. Vessels departing the Bay or transiting north from south of the Bay Bridge are either anchored within or will pass through Anchorage 9, and can remain there until visibility improves. Ships entering the Bay must either wait offshore with no pilot aboard, creating a dangerous situation for all vessels involved and not recommended, or transit the Central Bay to await conditions to improve in a Coast Guard designated anchorage. Anchorage 9 is the Bay's largest and is located immediately south of the Bay Bridge.



Making San Francisco Bay Better

Background. Following the January 7, 2013 allision of the tanker *Overseas Reymar* with Pier E of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, the COTP requested that the HSC review existing navigation safety guidelines for operating in restricted visibility. In response, the Chair of the HSC tasked the Navigation Work Group to conduct a review of the current Harbor Safety Plan Guidelines for navigating in restricted visibility and the associated Critical Maneuvering Areas that were established following the November 2007 allision of the *Cosco Busan* with Pier D of the Bay Bridge.

The Navigation Work Group met several times to review the existing guidance and consider potential enhancements. Due to the ongoing investigations into the incident, the Navigation Work Group agreed to conduct the review of the current guidelines in two phases:

1. Develop Temporary Safety Guidelines for immediate implementation while the Coast Guard, Board of Pilot Commissioners and National Transportation Safety Board incident reviews are ongoing.
2. Conduct a comprehensive review of the guidelines for navigating in reduced visibility as currently published in the Harbor Safety Plan with final recommendations to be forwarded to the HSC. This review should be informed by the findings of the investigations noted above.

The HSC approved the recommended temporary guidelines during its February 14, 2013 meeting, and the COTP promulgated the guidance the same day via Marine Safety and Security Information Bulletin (MSIB) 13-02. The guidelines will be monitored and enforced by the VTS, and supplement other limited visibility guidance adopted following the *Cosco Busan* spill.

Staff will monitor information as it is made available by the investigating entities, participate in related HSC Work Group activities and provide the Commission with updates as needed.