

U.S. Department
of Transportation

United States
Coast Guard



Commanding Officer
U.S. Coast Guard
Marine Safety Office/Group
Los Angeles-Long Beach

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16601 APPENDIX - D

AUG 20 1997

CAPTAIN OF THE PORT LOS ANGELES-LONG BEACH PUBLIC NOTICE 03-97

Subj: INSTRUCTIONS FOR EMERGENCY MERCHANT VESSEL DISPERSAL

1. PURPOSE. To promulgate instructions for the safe and efficient dispersal of merchant vessels from the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach in emergency situations.

2. DIRECTIVE AFFECTED. COTP LA-LB Public Notice 01-91 of 20 December 91 is hereby cancelled.

3. DISCUSSION.

a. The Coast Guard Captain of the Port Los Angeles-Long Beach (COTP LA-LB) has the authority under 33 CFR 6.04-8 to supervise and control the movement of any vessel within the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

b. The enclosed instructions detail merchant vessel movement coordination actions within the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach in the event of a major oil spill, explosion, fire, natural disaster, impending enemy attack, or other potential port emergency which necessitates dispersal of merchant vessels. COTP LA-LB will only direct merchant vessels to depart port in cases where vessels, due to their location, are at higher risk of loss of life, property damage or could interfere with emergency response activities.

c. Pilots and tugboats should be used to get underway whenever possible, but there may be extreme emergency situations where vessel masters believe actions must be taken without these safeguards. Nothing in this plan prohibits vessel masters from taking safe and prudent actions to safeguard personnel, the vessel, the environment, the cargo and/or the facility.

4. ACTION.

a. When directed by the Coast Guard Captain of the Port, merchant vessels shall execute emergency dispersal in accordance with enclosure (1).

b. Questions concerning Merchant Vessel Dispersal may be directed to this office at (562) 980-4454.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. F. Wright".

G. F. WRIGHT
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard
Commanding Officer

Encl: (1) Merchant Vessel Dispersal Instructions and Procedures

MERCHANT VESSEL DISPERSAL PLAN
FOR LOS ANGELES-LONG BEACH HARBORS

Nothing in this plan will preclude a vessel master from taking prudent action whenever and wherever necessary, up to and including, in extreme emergencies, getting underway without a pilot or tugboat assistance. Masters always have the option of taking prudent actions necessary to protect their vessel, their cargo, their crew, the facility and the port.

SECTIONS IN THIS PLAN:

1. WHY DO WE NEED THIS DISPERSAL PLAN?
2. WHAT HAS TO HAPPEN FOR THIS DISPERSAL PLAN TO BE IMPLEMENTED?
3. WHO WILL GIVE THE VESSEL DISPERSAL ORDER?
4. HOW WILL THE DISPERSAL INSTRUCTIONS BE BROADCAST?
5. WHICH VESSELS WILL NEED TO DISPERSE ("AFFECTED VESSELS")?
6. WHAT SHOULD AN "AFFECTED VESSEL" MASTER DO?
7. AFTER I DEPART THE PORT (AND DISEMBARK MY PILOT IF EMPLOYED), WHERE SHOULD I GO?
8. WHICH VESSELS WILL "DISPERSE FIRST"?
9. WHAT SHOULD THE PILOT ORGANIZATIONS AND TUGBOAT COMPANIES DO?
10. WHAT IF I NEED TO DEPART FOR THE SAFETY OF MY CREW AND VESSEL, BUT THE COAST GUARD HAS NOT CONTACTED ME?
11. WHAT IF I AM ON AN "AFFECTED VESSEL" BUT CAN'T GET UNDERWAY?

1. WHY DO WE NEED THIS DISPERSAL PLAN?

a. To minimize the possibility of personnel casualties and property damage through timely and orderly departure of affected vessels.

b. Outline expectations and provide clear, easy to understand steps to all vessel masters should such an incident occur so that they may take appropriate actions to ensure a timely and orderly departure of their vessel.

c. To provide vessel dispersal instructions and procedures that can be followed by all personnel involved in the movement of vessels both in and around the LA/LB port complex should communication systems fail.

2. WHAT HAS TO HAPPEN FOR THIS DISPERSAL PLAN TO BE IMPLEMENTED?

a. The occurrence of a catastrophic event that will negatively impact the ability of a vessel(s) to remain safely moored or at anchorage: a natural disaster such as an earthquake, a fire, an explosion, a toxic gas release, an oil or chemical spill, etc.

b. The expectation or forecast of a possibly catastrophic event that will likely impact the ability of a vessel(s) to remain safely moored or at anchorage: an approaching severe storm, a predicted tsunami, an impending enemy attack, etc.

c. The possibility of being "trapped" at berth/anchorage by an oil or chemical spill. If affected by the spill, vessels must wait at berth until the vessel and the surrounding area can be cleaned to the satisfaction of the response agencies involved and a clear departure path is available.

3. WHO WILL GIVE THE VESSEL DISPERSAL ORDER?

a. Under the authority of the Ports and Waterways Safety Act, the U. S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port (COTP) will be the final authority in determining which vessels will be subject to an emergency vessel dispersal.

b. The COTP will immediately notify both pilot stations and VTIS (this includes the Marine Exchange) via the Harbor Traffic Information System (HTIS) and confirm verbally with the affected areas, the affected vessels and the urgency of the dispersal. In addition, the COTP will request that the Marine Exchange notify the line handling and water taxi companies of the pending short-notice departures.

c. The COTP will ensure immediate notification of the three primary escort and assist tug companies with the approximate number of affected vessels and the urgency of the dispersal. This may done with the assistance of the Marine Exchange and the pilot dispatchers.

d. The COTP will immediately contact CUSTOMS, both verbally and through the HTIS to inform them of emergency vessel departures.

e. The COTP will coordinate efforts with the cooperation and teamwork of pilots, pilot dispatchers, tugboats, tugboat dispatchers, vessel masters, vessel agents, port wharfingers and others.

4. HOW WILL THE DISPERSAL INSTRUCTIONS BE BROADCAST?

Dispersal instructions may be passed from the COTP by the following means of communication (listed by priority):

a. OVER THE RADIO. Channel 16 (156.8 mhz)

b. OVER THE TELEPHONE. Telephone conversation between COTP representative or harbor pilot and vessel's master or agent.

c. IN WRITING. COTP representative delivers message to vessel master or agent at vessel location.

APPENDIX - D

d. Harbor Traffic Information System (HTIS) written instructions from the COTP to VTIS, both pilot organizations and Customs. Pilots will notify the vessel's master of estimated departure time.

e. OVER THE FAX. FAX to VTIS and both pilot organizations. FAX will be handled similarly to a HTIS message.

5. WHICH VESSELS WILL NEED TO DISPERSE ("AFFECTED VESSELS")?

a. The COTP will determine the "affected area" depending upon the impacted area and/or the area "potential damage." The affected area may be large in the case of an earthquake or approaching storm; perhaps the entire port complex, but may be localized in the case of an explosions, fire or oil spill.

b. All vessels within the affected area will be directed to disperse.

6. WHAT SHOULD AN "AFFECTED VESSEL" MASTER DO?

a. On a local and individual basis, the vessel master is likely the best person to determine if his/her vessel is "affected." If remaining at berth/anchorage will pose a danger to the vessel or crew, the master should consider their vessel "affected" or in the "affected area." If it is not readily apparent to the master whether the vessel is within the affected area, the master should contact the Coast Guard or the appropriate pilot station by telephone or radio as soon as possible in order to make that determination.

b. Prepare to get underway as soon as possible.

c. Secure all loading and discharge operations

d. Recall all crew members

e. Set a live radio watch to receive information and emergency instructions on the following VHF-FM frequencies (radio operator must be capable of effectively communicating in English):

- Channel 16 (156.8 mhz), Distress, Safety & Calling

- Channel 14 (156.7 mhz) (if capable)

- if moored in LA, Channel 73 (156.675 mhz), LA Pilots

- if moored in LB, Channel 12 (156.6 mhz), LB Pilots

f. Arrange for a pilot, line handlers (if moored) and adequate tugboat assistance (as necessary).

g. Call the COTP (FAX: (562) 980-4415 or verbally at (562) 980-4454 or (562) 980-4444) and report your vessel's equipment and departure status (estimated time of departure).

h. Remain at berth/anchorage as long as it is safe to do so while waiting for pilot and tugboat assistance (if necessary).

The respective pilot station will contact you with a scheduled departure time. Vessels desiring to leave port without a pilot on board must receive COTP permission prior to getting underway, unless the master has a LA/LB pilotage endorsement or the circumstances are such that remaining at berth/anchorage will pose a serious danger to the vessel and crew.

i. Depart as soon as the harbor pilot and master have assessed the situation and conflicting traffic and are ready to proceed.

7. AFTER I DEPART THE PORT (AND DISEMBARK MY PILOT IF EMPLOYED), WHERE SHOULD I GO?

a. NEXT PORT OF CALL. Vessel masters desiring to transit to their next port of call upon departure should inform VTIS of their intentions 15 minutes prior to exiting the breakwater, or when practical to do so.

b. DISPERSAL AREA OFF SHORE. Vessel masters desiring to remain in the area should inform VTIS of their intentions 15 minutes prior to exiting the breakwater, or when practical to do so. Vessel masters will be assigned an anchorage location outside of the federal breakwater by VTIS on channel 14. Vessel crews should limit radio transmissions to those necessary for navigational safety.

8. WHICH VESSELS WILL "DISPERSE FIRST"?

a. In general, vessels that have the greatest potential for large loss of life or involvement of dangerous cargo will have priority and should be scheduled by pilots, tugboats and masters alike in this order (listed highest priority to lowest):

- Passenger vessels (if passengers aboard)
- LHG vessels
- Tank vessels (oil and chemical)
- All other vessels

b. Proximity to danger, propulsion plant readiness and vessel maneuverability should be taken into account as well. On the spot alterations of dispersal instructions may be made by harbor pilots and vessel masters; ensuring vessels/crews in greatest danger depart first.

c. If enemy attack is imminent, U.S. Military vessels will have highest priority. Note that U.S. Military vessels are not required to embark a pilot, unless the Commanding Officer deems it necessary.

d. AT NO TIME should vessel masters, vessel crews, harbor pilots, tugboat crews, line handlers, and/or facility personnel take actions that unduly place themselves or others at greater risk.

APPENDIX - D

9. WHAT SHOULD THE PILOT ORGANIZATIONS AND TUGBOAT COMPANIES DO?

a. Upon receipt of the dispersal instructions, respective pilot organizations should make arrangements to board vessels (considering the above priorities) and have sufficient tug assistance to safely navigate vessels out of port. Respective pilot stations should notify vessels of scheduled sailing times and should notify the COTP or the VTIS COTP representative..

b. Pilot and tugboat companies should consider recalling additional pilots/crews to meet the demand of vessel departures (based on the number of affected vessels).

c. Vessels may exit to the east of the LB breakwater if the Long Beach pilot deems it safe for the vessel, considering the size, maneuverability and draft, if necessary to facilitate a more rapid dispersal. The pilot should notify VTIS LA-LB of this route.

10. WHAT IF I NEED TO DEPART FOR THE SAFETY OF MY CREW AND VESSEL, BUT THE COAST GUARD HAS NOT CONTACTED ME?

a. All mariners responsible for the safe movement of vessels should remain calm, use good marine practice, and abide by the rules of the road to ensure the safe, effective and environmentally sound dispersal of all affected vessels.

b. Vessel masters desiring to leave port without a pilot on board must receive COTP permission prior to getting underway, unless the master has a LA/LB pilotage endorsement or the circumstances are such that remaining at berth/anchorage will pose a serious danger the vessel and crew.

c. The one thing we don't want to happen, is to have a collision, allision and/or grounding that would make the situation even worse. We must all work together to efficiently and safely execute the Emergency Dispersal Plan.

11. WHAT IF I AM ON AN "AFFECTED VESSEL" BUT CAN'T GET UNDERWAY?

a. If unable to get safely underway vessel masters should consider doubling up all lines, securing all machinery and even directing the crew to evacuate the vessel and seek landside shelter - depending upon the situation. Vessel masters should notify the COTP of these or similar actions if time allows, or immediately upon arrival to safe area.

Enclosure (1) to COTP LA-LB Public Notice 03-97

b. In cases of approaching oil, vessel masters should take all prudent steps to minimize vessel hull contamination, and should take into consideration the hazards associated with the spilled oil and provide assessments and recommendations to the spill responders as appropriate.