

U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security

United States  
Coast Guard



Commander  
United States Coast Guard  
Sector Los Angeles – Long Beach

1001 S. Seaside Ave., Bldg 20  
San Pedro, CA 90731  
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16601

3 OCT 2011

Los Angeles – Long Beach Harbor Safety Committee  
Marine Exchange of Southern California  
P.O. Box 1949  
San Pedro, CA 90733-1949

Dear Los Angeles – Long Beach Harbor Safety Committee:

This letter is to promulgate procedures to vessel masters for the safe and efficient dispersal of merchant vessels from the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach in emergency situations. These procedures were a joint effort between all key members of the Harbor Safety Committee.

The Coast Guard Captain of the Port Los Angeles – Long Beach (COTP LA–LB) has the authority under The Ports and Waterways Safety Act (33 USC 1221 et seq.) to supervise and control the movement of any vessel within the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. When directed by the COTP, merchant vessels shall execute emergency dispersal in accordance with the enclosure.

The enclosed instructions are the COTP's procedures for coordinated merchant vessel movement 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 the dispersal of merchant vessels. The COTP will only direct merchant vessels to depart 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.

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. In this situation, vessel masters desiring to leave port without tugs and/or a pilot on board must notify the COTP, via Vessel Traffic Services, prior to getting underway. Nothing in these procedures prohibit vessel masters from taking safe and prudent actions to safeguard personnel, the vessel, the environment, the cargo and/or the facility.

Subsequently, COTP LA–LB Public Notice 03-97 of August 20<sup>th</sup> 1997 is hereby cancelled.

If you have additional questions or comments, please contact the Sector Waterways Management Division at (310) 521-3860 or the Sector Command Center at (310) 521-3801.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. R. LaFerriere", written over a white background.

R. R. LAFERRIERE  
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard  
Captain of the Port,  
Los Angeles – Long Beach

Enclosure: Merchant Vessel Dispersal Plan for Los Angeles – Long Beach Harbors

MERCHANT VESSEL DISPERSAL PLAN FOR LOS ANGELES – LONG BEACH  
HARBORS

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. In this situation, vessel masters desiring to leave port without a pilot on board must notify the Captain of the Port (COTP), via Vessel Traffic Services (VTS), prior to getting underway. 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.

SECTIONS IN THIS PLAN:

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11. COTP LETTER TO VESSEL MASTERS TEMPLATE
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13. UNANNOUNCED INCIDENT FLOWCHART
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1. INTRODUCTION:

- a. These instructions are the COTP's procedures for vessel masters to ensure coordinated vessel movements 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 the dispersal of merchant vessels.
- b. The COTP will only direct merchant vessels to depart 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.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN IS:

- a. To minimize the possibility of personnel casualties and property damage through timely and orderly departure of affected vessels, during a port emergency.
- b. To outline expectations and provide clear, easy to understand steps to vessel masters regarding appropriate actions for ensuring a timely and orderly departure of their vessel, if necessary.

- 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 normal communication means become hampered.

3. THE DISPERSAL PLAN IS IMPLEMENTED WHEN:

- a. An event negatively impacts or threatens to impact vessel(s) moored or at anchorage. Examples of these events include: natural disasters, such as an earthquake, or severe storms or events such as fires, explosions, toxic gas releases, and oil or chemical spills.
- b. A serious event is forecasted that may negatively impact the ability of a vessel(s) to remain safely moored or at anchorage. Examples include an approaching severe storm, a predicted tsunami, and a possible enemy attack.
- c. The possibility of being "trapped" at berth/anchorage by an oil or chemical spill is predicted. If affected by a 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.

4. THE CAPTAIN OF THE PORT WILL:

- a. Determine the affected area depending upon the impacted area and/or the area's potential damage. The affected area may be large in the case of an earthquake or approaching storm (perhaps the entire port complex), or may be localized as in the case of an explosion, fire or oil spill.
- b. Determine which vessels will be subject to emergency vessel dispersal, under the authority of The Ports and Waterways Safety Act (33 USC 1221 et seq.).
- c. Immediately notify both pilot stations and VTS (this includes the Marine Exchange). The COTP will request the Marine Exchange and pilot dispatchers to notify local escort and assist tug companies, line handling and water taxi companies with the approximate number of affected vessels and the urgency of the dispersal order.
- d. Immediately contact U.S. Customs and Border Protection, both verbally and via Homeport AWS 2.0, to inform them of emergency vessel departures.
- e. Contact Facility Marine Operators, HSC members, and agents via the Homeport Alert Warning System (AWS) 2.0 to inform them of the affected areas, the affected vessels and the urgency of the dispersal order.
- f. Coordinate efforts, through the Maritime Transportation System Recovery Unit (MTSRU) Sub-Committee Chair, with the cooperation and teamwork of pilots, pilot dispatchers, tugboats, tugboat dispatchers, vessel masters, vessel agents, port wharfingers and others.

5. THE BROADCAST OF DISPERSAL ORDER WILL:

- a. Be passed from the COTP by the following means of communication (listed by priority):
  - i) OVER THE RADIO: Channel 16 (156.800 mhz)
  - ii) BY TELEPHONE/TEXT/E-MAIL: Homeport AWS 2.0
  - iii) COTP LETTER TO VESSEL MASTERS: Vessel dispersal order from the COTP will be sent to Commander, Eleventh Coast Guard District (dpi), vessel agents, VTS/Marine Exchange, Los Angeles and Long Beach pilots, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The COTP letter will be posted on the Marine Exchange website [www.mxsocial.org](http://www.mxsocial.org). A COTP letter template is located in section 11.

6. ALL VESSELS IN AFFECTED AREA WILL:

- a. Be directed to disperse. If a vessel intends to stay in an affected area, it must receive permission from the COTP by filling out and sending in a Request to Remain in Port Application, located in section 12. The request will be reviewed and the COTP will make a determination on whether or not the vessel can stay.

7. VESSEL MASTERS ARE RESPONSIBLE:

- a. For taking safe and prudent actions to safeguard personnel, the vessel, the environment, the cargo and/or the facility. On a local and individual basis, the vessel master is likely the best person to determine if their vessel is affected. Nothing in this plan prohibits masters from identifying extreme emergency situations where they believe actions must be taken without the safeguards of pilots and tugboats to get underway.
- b. To determine if remaining at berth/anchorage will pose a danger to the vessel or crew. If it is not readily apparent to the master whether the vessel *is* within the affected area, the master should contact the VTS by telephone at (310) 832-6411 or radio Channel 14 VHF/FM as soon as possible in order to make that determination.
- c. To 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 (156.800 MHz) Distress, Safety & Calling
  - Channel 14 (156.700 MHz) VTS for information
  - If moored in LA, Channel 73 (156.675 MHz), LA Pilots – for dispersal
  - If moored in LB, Channel 74 (156.600 MHz), LB Pilots – for dispersal

- d. To receive permission from both the pilots and VTS, if they desire to exit to the east of the LB breakwater to facilitate a more rapid dispersal. Masters must use extreme care and caution to ensure all factors are thoroughly evaluated (i.e. shallow water, crossing vessel traffic from the east, vessels in the anchorages, etc.).
- e. If their vessel is deemed to be an affected vessel:
  - i) Prepare to get underway as soon as possible including;
    - securing all load/discharge operations
    - recalling all crew members (however not to delay sailing)
    - setting sea watches
    - other requirements in accordance with local Standards of Care
  - ii) Contact pilots to report any equipment deficiencies, vessel readiness, and request your departure status (estimated time of departure, remain at berth/anchorage), i.e. vessel's sailing priority. Tugboat assistance will be determined by pilots (as necessary).
    - **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. In this situation, vessel masters desiring to leave port without tugs and/or a pilot on board must notify the COTP via VTS, prior to getting underway.**
  - iii) The queuing order will be set by the Captain of the Port, with the assistance of the harbor pilots and VTS. No vessel shall depart a berth or anchorage without first notifying USCG and the VTS.
  - iv) In some cases, COTP guidance may direct vessels to a dispersal location, if the vessel wishes to remain within the COTP jurisdiction.

8. VESSEL DISPERSAL PRIORITY WILL:

- a. Ensure the safe, effective, and environmentally sound dispersal of all affected vessels.
- b. Be determined by the COTP with recommendations and input from local pilot companies and VTS. Some factors used to determine vessel priority are (in no particular order): type of event, location of the event, vessel's proximity to the danger, location of the vessel in the port, vessel cargo, propulsion plant readiness, tug availability, vessel maneuverability, time required to be ready for departure, etc. This is not an inclusive list; other factors not listed may affect the dispersal priority and will be taken into account during the situation.

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

9. IF AN AFFECTED VESSEL IS UNABLE TO SAFELY GET UNDERWAY:

- a. Depending on the situation, the master should consider doubling up all lines, securing all machinery and possibly directing the crew to evacuate the vessel and seek landside shelter. In all cases, vessel masters shall notify the COTP.
- b. In cases of approaching oil, the vessel master shall take all prudent steps to minimize hull contamination, and take into consideration the hazards associated with the spilled oil and provide assessments and recommendations to the spill responders as appropriate.

10. PILOT ORGANIZATIONS AND TUGBOAT COMPANIES WILL:

- a. Pilot organizations shall notify vessels in their Area of Responsibility (AOR), as well as VTS, of scheduled sailing times. Pilots will then make arrangements to board vessels (considering the above priorities) to safely, and as quickly as possible, navigate vessels out of port. Sufficient tug assistance is highly encouraged, but in some cases may not be fully or readily available. Pilot and tugboat companies should make every attempt to recall additional pilots/tug crews to meet the increased and immediate demands of vessel departures (based on the number of affected vessels).

11. COTP LETTER TO VESSEL MASTERS TEMPLATE:

- a. The letter template can be found on the following page.

U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security

United States  
Coast Guard



Commander  
United States Coast Guard  
Sector Los Angeles – Long Beach

1001 S. Seaside Ave., Bldg 20  
San Pedro, CA 90731  
Phone: 310-521-3801  
Fax: 310-521-3813

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TO ALL VESSELS CURRENTLY WITHIN THE (AFFECTED AREA) WITHIN THE PORTS  
OF LOS ANGELES AND LONG BEACH

Dear Master:

Due to an (emergency) and for the safety of all vessels and crews, I am ordering the immediate dispersal of all vessels from the (affected area). The goal is to safely and efficiently dispersal all merchant vessels from the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach during this emergency situation.

Pilots and tugboats should be used to get underway whenever possible, but there may be extreme emergency situations where you believe actions must be taken without these safeguards. In this situation, if you desire to leave port without a pilot on board you must notify the Captain of the Port, via Vessel Traffic Services through Channel 14 (156.700 MHz), prior to getting underway. Nothing in these procedures prohibits you from taking safe and prudent actions to safeguard your personnel, vessel, cargo, the environment, and/or the facility.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter, please refer to the enclosed Merchant Vessel Dispersal Plan for Los Angeles – Long Beach Harbors or contact the U.S. Coast Guard, Sector Los Angeles – Long Beach Command Center at 310-521-3801.

Sincerely,

R. R. LAFERRIERE  
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard  
Captain of the Port,  
Los Angeles – Long Beach

Enclosure: Merchant Vessel Dispersal Plan for Los Angeles – Long Beach Harbors

Copy: Commander, Eleventh Coast Guard District (dpi)  
Vessel Agents  
VTS/Marine Exchange  
Los Angeles and Long Beach Pilots  
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

**12. REQUEST TO REMAIN IN PORT APPLICATION – COMMERCIAL VESSEL SURVEY**

This vessel information is required by the Captain of the Port for vessels and barges, requesting to remain in port during the port dispersal. This form should be completely filled out and faxed to 310-521-3813.

Vessel Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Call Sign: \_\_\_\_\_  
Official Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Flag: \_\_\_\_\_  
Vessel Master: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Location/Facility: \_\_\_\_\_  
Facility POC Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Agent Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Charter/Operator Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Owner Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Vessel Particulars**

Length: \_\_\_\_\_ Gross Tonnage: \_\_\_\_\_ Hull Type: \_\_\_\_\_

**Onboard Vessel**

Bunkers: \_\_\_\_\_ Lube Oil: \_\_\_\_\_ Diesel Oil: \_\_\_\_\_

Ballast Capacity: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated draft when ballasted: \_\_\_\_\_

Availability of vessel main propulsion: \_\_\_\_\_

Current condition/why requesting to remain: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of crew to remain aboard and qualifications: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Operational status of machinery aboard: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Firefighting capability of vessel: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**REQUEST TO REMAIN IN PORT APPLICATION – COMMERCIAL VESSEL**  
**SURVEY CONTINUED**

Any unusual conditions affecting vessel seaworthiness: \_\_\_\_\_

**Facility Particulars**

Berth name and location: \_\_\_\_\_

Facility POC name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of moorings: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: A diagram showing mooring arrangements with size and number of mooring lines or wires is required as part of the checklist.

Fendering configuration and condition (attach plan if needed):

Shoreside firefighting capability: \_\_\_\_\_

Tugboat assistance available: \_\_\_\_\_

Condition of bollards, dolphins and deadmen: \_\_\_\_\_

Is facility capable of holding vessel: \_\_\_\_\_

Study done by: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Vessel person in charge

\_\_\_\_\_  
Facility person in charge

**\* ONLY TO BE COMPLETED IF DISPERSAL IS FOR HEAVY WEATHER  
(STORM, TSUNAMI, ETC) \***

Has the facility had an engineering study done to determine the maximum size of vessel with maximum winds which could safely moor at facility: \_\_\_\_\_

Distance to nearest obstruction (crane, drydock, building, tank, etc.) that may cause damage to vessel:

\_\_\_\_\_

**REQUEST TO REMAIN IN PORT APPLICATION – COMMERCIAL VESSEL**  
**SURVEY CONTINUED**

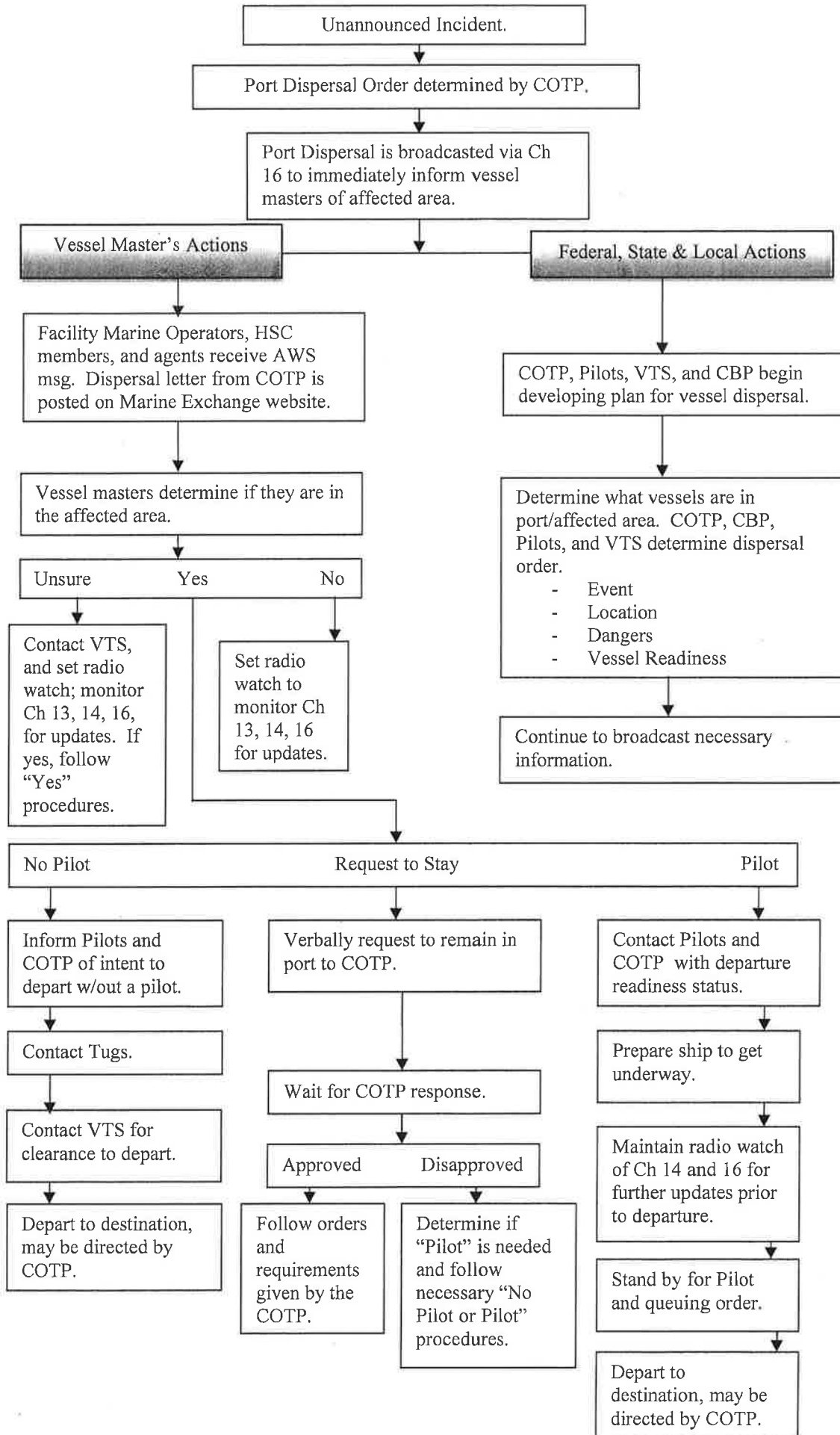
\* ONLY TO BE COMPLETED IF DISPERSAL IS FOR HEAVY WEATHER  
(STORM, TSUNAMI, ETC) \*

Distance to nearest oil storage facility, oil pipelines, hazmat facility, oil or hazmat storage tanks at facility where vessel is to be moored: \_\_\_\_\_

Open areas of docks, wharves and piers cleared of missile hazards: \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>POST-DISPERSAL SURVEY</b></p> <p>Survey team comments: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Survey team: _____ Team leader: _____</p> <p>Survey date: _____ Survey time: _____</p>
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### 13. UNANNOUNCED INCIDENT FLOWCHART



## 14. ANNOUNCED INCIDENT FLOWCHART

