



STATE OF WASHINGTON BOARD OF PILOTAGE COMMISSIONERS

BPC Mission: to ensure against the loss of lives, loss of or damage to property and vessels, and to protect the marine environment by maintaining efficient and competent pilotage service on our State's inland waters.

THE BPC PILOTAGE QUARTERLY

WINTER 2026

Announcements



*We wish you a healthy
and joyful 2026!*

Upcoming Conferences

Women on the Water
Professional Development
Conference
February 8-10, 2026
at MITAGS, Linthicum
Heights, MD

Women in Maritime
Leadership Conference
March 13-14, 2026
at Cal Poly Maritime
Vallejo, CA

Women in Maritime Leadership
Conference 2026



Image courtesy of Cal Poly.

Tug Escort Rule Implementation

On November 20, 2025, The Board of Pilotage Commissioners (BPC) adopted a new section of Chapter 363-116 WAC, Pilotage Rules, to establish tug escort requirements for oil tankers between 5,000 and 40,000 deadweight tons (DWT) and barges and articulated tug barges greater than 5,000 DWT. The adopted rule closes critical safety gaps for vessels carrying oil in bulk, reducing the risk of a catastrophic oil spill in Puget Sound and helping to protect wildlife, including endangered Southern Resident killer whales (SRKWs), fisheries, public health, and Washington's economy.

The adopted rule is designed to meet Best Achievable Protections (BAP), as defined in RCW 88.46.010, is informed by other considerations in ESHB 1578, such as minimizing impacts on Treaty fishing and underwater noise, and modifies the tug escort requirements established in RCW 88.16.190(2)(a)(ii), effective September 1, 2020.

The new rule keeps the tug escort requirements in Rosario Strait and connected waters east, as codified by statute in 2020, and expands approximately 29 miles to the northwest towards Patos Island. The rule also establishes minimum horsepower requirements for tugs escorting vessels based on the escorted vessel's deadweight tonnage, requires tugs escorting these vessels to have a minimum of twin screw propulsion, and requires a pre-escort conference between the escort tug and tank vessel to discuss the operational details of the transit.

Details about the new rule can be found at <https://pilotage.wa.gov/tug-escort-implementation>.



New rule area.

2026 WA State Marine Pilot Exam

YOU BELONG HERE

WA State Marine Pilot Exam
April 13, 2026

APPLICATIONS OPEN NOW!

exam job task analysis, exam blueprint, and sample questions. Go to <https://pilotage.wa.gov/2026-exam-resources> to find these resources as well as FAQs. Contact us at PilotageInfo@wsdot.wa.gov if there are any questions. And best of luck to those applying!

BPC 2026 Regular Public Meetings

At the November 2025 Regular Public Meeting of the BPC, the Board approved the meeting calendar for 2026. The dates of the meetings are listed below and can be found on our website at <https://pilotage.wa.gov/meetings>.

January 15	July 16
February 19	August 20
March 19	September 17
April 16	October 15
May 21	November 19
June 18	December 10



The September 2025 meeting of the BPC.

Meetings in 2026 will have a new start time of 11:00am. And, as always, they will continue to be hybrid. Links to the MS Teams online meetings are available on each meeting agenda. Agendas are posted to the website one week before each meeting. Come join us!

2025 in Pictures



The BPC Pilotage Quarterly is a publication of the Board of Pilotage Commissioners. It is available online at <https://pilotage.wa.gov>. To join our distribution list, email PilotageInfo@wsdot.wa.gov, or call (206) 515-3904.

District Snapshots

Puget Sound



Retirements:

Captain Don Soriano - October
Thank you for 39 years of exemplary pilotage service to Washington State!

License Upgrades to Unlimited:

Captain Joe Siddell (left)
Captain Neil McGourty (right)



Well done, Captains!

Training Program:

Currently training are Captains Shuler, Britton, Boullion, Woodworth, Bolton, Butterfield, Aherns, Anderson, and Rogers.

Grays Harbor



Training Program:

Currently training is Captain Ryan Campbell

