



Southern Gulf Island anchorage jurisdiction

The Vancouver Fraser Port Authority is the federal agency responsible for the stewardship of the lands and waters that make up the Port of Vancouver, Canada's largest port. As a Canada Port Authority, our mandate is to enable Canada's trade through the Port of Vancouver, while protecting the environment, and considering local communities. As cargo volumes in the Port of Vancouver continue to grow, the port authority is working to improve the way we manage ship traffic within the port to support our vision for the Port of Vancouver to be the world's most sustainable port. Within the Port of Vancouver, the port authority manages vessel traffic and where these vessels can anchor (called an anchorage) while waiting to access a terminal. Through an interim protocol introduced by Transport Canada in 2018, the port authority manages the assignment of the 33 anchorage locations around the Southern Gulf Islands to ensure a balanced use of anchorages.

Marine vessel traffic management

Marine vessels (commercial ships) travel under guidance of a captain and crew, carrying cargo between various origins and destinations across the world. When accessing constrained waters like the Port of Vancouver, the ship's captain is supported by a qualified marine pilot, who determines the safest route, based on their local knowledge and experience of the waterways, to the intended marine terminal. Active vessel traffic management is the system by which we prioritize and optimize how piloted vessels and tug-and-barge traffic move within the port authority's jurisdiction. The port authority is designing a new collaborative system to manage marine traffic flow at the Port of Vancouver and in the Southern Gulf Islands. This work is being done in cooperation with supply chain partners and industry stakeholders, and with support from the Government of Canada. We are also seeking input from Indigenous groups, various levels of government, and community stakeholders.

As [announced by the federal Minister of Transport](#) in August 2021, the new system is intended to strengthen marine safety, make the flow of goods more efficient, manage environmental impacts, and help better manage the effects of marine vessel traffic on local communities.

Gulf Island anchorages

Outside of the Port of Vancouver's jurisdictional waters, vessels are free to anchor for a reasonable period of time per the common law right of navigation, including around the Southern Gulf Islands. Ships have anchored at specific locations in and around the Southern Gulf Islands for years as these anchorages are in deep water and can therefore accommodate larger vessels. Demand for these anchorages has increased in recent years, as a result of upstream supply chain, weather-related delays, and the changing characteristics of vessels.

Role of Transport Canada

Transport Canada is responsible for regulating anchorages. Transport Canada, with support from the Canadian Coast Guard, is also responsible for vessel safety and protecting the marine environment through a number of statutes.

When developing the interim protocol, Transport Canada collaborated with the Chamber of Shipping of British Columbia, the Shipping Federation of Canada, the Pacific Pilotage Authority, the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority, and the Nanaimo Port Authority. Transport Canada also took into account the views of local communities and Indigenous groups about the impact of increased use of anchorages when developing the protocol.

Role of the port authority

Within the Port of Vancouver's waters, the port authority is responsible for vessel traffic management and anchorages. In 2018, Transport Canada introduced the interim protocol and requested the port authority assign anchorages at 33 locations around Vancouver Island and the Southern Gulf Islands, with the objective of addressing the increase in use of anchorages and balancing usage across sites, ensuring an equitable rotation for vessels so as not to impact any single community more than others.

The protocol is an interim measure put in place while a comprehensive national review of anchorages is being conducted.

The protocol area extends from Race Rocks, Haro Strait, and Boundary Pass in the south to Gabriola Island in the north, and is bounded to the east and west by the Strait of Georgia and Vancouver Island. Six anchorages at the Nanaimo Port, the five at Esquimalt (Royal Roads), and the Constance Bank anchorage, are not part of this protocol, and the port authority has no role in assigning or managing these. The port authority tracks the use of anchorages in the Southern Gulf Islands, and uses an algorithm to assign anchorages fairly, considering the following factors:

- Size of vessel
- Anchorage use in Vancouver
- Number of days an anchorage has been vacant
- When the anchorage was last used
- Average number of days it was occupied

The anchorages that we assign are illustrated in Figure 1.

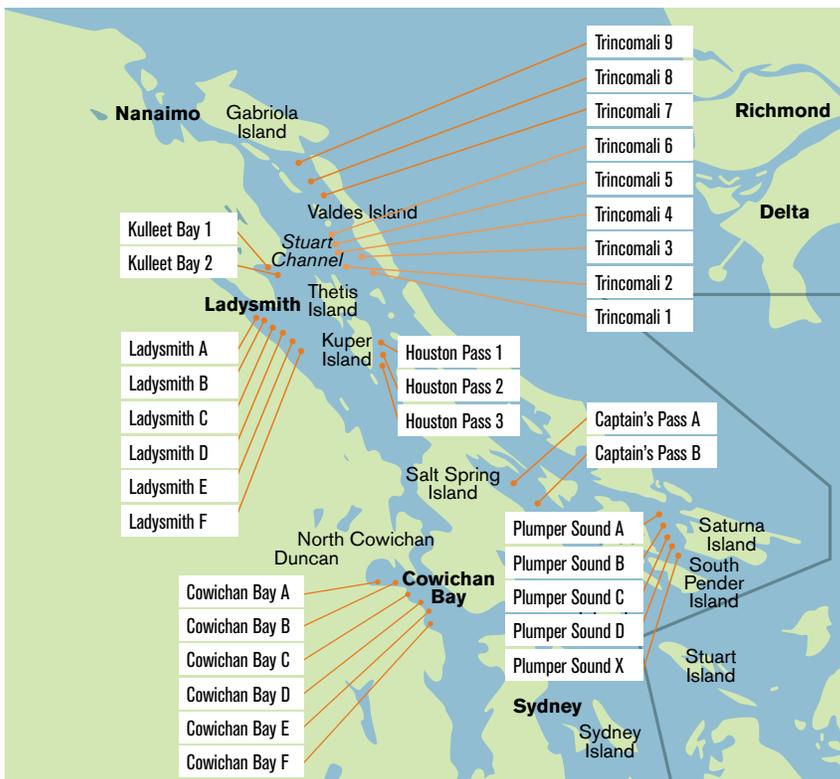


Figure 1: Anchorages in the Interim Protocol Agreement

Role of the Pacific Pilotage Authority

The Pacific Pilotage Authority's principal mandate is to provide safe, reliable and efficient marine pilotage, and related services in the coastal waters of British Columbia including the Fraser River. The marine pilots support the ship's captain to safely access terminals and anchorages.

Role of Canadian Coast Guard

The Canadian Coast Guard supports safe vessel navigation by providing marine communications and traffic services. The Coast Guard also supports emergency response if required and supports Transport Canada in providing oversight of vessels at anchor.

Learn more and share your ideas

Throughout summer 2022, we're sharing information about how vessel traffic and anchorages are managed today at and around the Port of Vancouver and seeking input as we develop a new vessel traffic management system. We invite you to:

- Register to attend an online information session
- Complete the survey
- Learn more about ship traffic management
- Watch recording of the online information session

In fall 2022, we'll invite feedback on solutions for:

- How anchorages are assigned
- Minimizing noise and light effects
- Understanding environmental impacts
- Enhancing port efficiency and vessel safety
- Information sharing and complaint resolution

We invite you to be part of this process. **Visit for more information**

 portvancouver.com/AVTMengagement