

General Information and Use of Royal Roads Anchorages

The Department of National Defence, in the form of the Queen's Harbour Master (QHM), officially acts as the Port Authority for Esquimalt Harbour, including the Royal Roads Anchorages. As this is a Public Harbour, under the *Canada Marine Act*, QHM's role is to assign available space to vessels that make a request, through a Ship's Agent, collect any required fees, and respond in the event of any emergencies.

The anchorages have been in place for many decades, to assist ships conducting business in west coast ports, an important component to our west coast economy. There has been a steady rise in port activities, which has seen an increase in usage for anchorages and staging areas throughout the area, including Esquimalt Harbour.

In part, this is because there are many ships waiting for their berth in Vancouver to take on various products, such as coal. Vancouver is also Canada's primary port for the shipment of grains, which play a big part in the country's economy. This has meant, unfortunately, that in some cases ships have been waiting for as long as two weeks, although most move on considerably faster. Despite the wait times, no ships anchored in the Royal Roads Anchorage will stay there indefinitely; as soon as berths open up at their final destinations they move on as quickly as possible.

Aside from the vessels attributed to a backlog in Vancouver Ports other vessels utilize the anchorages associated with Victoria Harbour marine activities, including cruise ships awaiting a change in weather conditions, commercial ships awaiting a berth at Ogden Point or ships directed to the anchorages by the Pilotage Authority.

Fuel spill response protocols are in place should one ever happen. This would include an immediate response by CFB Esquimalt's Environmental Protection Group, working in conjunction with the responsible vessel's Ships Oil Pollution Emergency Plan, monitoring and assistance from the Canadian Coast Guard who would ensure the vessel responsible cleans up the spill, and even support from the U.S. Coast Guard in certain circumstances. All of these groups are training continually to address issues like this and investing in better equipment to deal more effectively with problems if they arise in challenging environmental conditions.

All vessels seeking anchorage at the Royal Roads Anchorage are subject to strict regulations and inspection by Transport Canada. These are exceedingly comprehensive and include requiring ships to have on-board sewage treatment plants as well as ensuring ships switch from using heavy bunker fuel to a lower emitting diesel fuel. These regulations also require the use of on-board lights at night in order to increase the ships' visibility, provide illumination for the bridge crew, and ensure the security of the ship by preventing anyone from boarding the vessel without being seen. A further requirement is that these vessels maintain power to the ship at all times, thereby necessitating the use of a generator. This would allow the ship to immediately respond with full power in the event of an emergency.