

Voluntary Waterway Guide

2008



Marine Safety Task Force
Southeast Alaska

SOUTHEAST ALASKA VOLUNTARY WATERWAY GUIDE

Revisions

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Cover by Greg Styrk, Northstar Navigation Web Design*

The Southeast Alaska Voluntary Waterway Guide (VWG) was developed by the Marine Safety Task Force (MSTF) and is intended for use by deep-draft vessels, primarily cruise vessels which are subject to pilotage. The VWG is published by the Southeast Alaska Pilots Association and is distributed by Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska and the United States Coast Guard. The MSTF includes representatives from:

- The United States Coast Guard
- The North West Cruise Ship Association
- Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska
- The Southeast Alaska Pilots' Association
- The Alaska Marine Highway System

Mariners should be aware that the Marine Safety Task Force has additional guidance for deep draft vessels operating in Southeast Alaska. The most recent version can be found at http://www.seapa.com/waterway/waterway_guide.pdf.

For more information contact

Southeast Alaska Pilots' Association ▪ 1621 Tongass Avenue, Suite 300
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901 ▪ Phone 907-225-9696 ▪ Fax 907-247-9696
email: pilots@seapa.com ▪ www.seapa.com

Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska P.O. Box 8080 ▪ Ketchikan, Alaska 99901
Phone 907-225-0999

North West Cruise Ship Association
100-1111 West Hastings Street ▪ Vancouver, BC, V6E 2J3

U.S. Coast Guard Sector Juneau
2760 Sherwood Lane, Suite 2A ▪ Juneau, Alaska 99801
Phone 907-463-2450

Alaska Marine Highway System ▪ 7559 N. Tongass ▪ Ketchikan, AK 99901
Phone (907) 228-7255

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Disclaimer

Prudent seamanship should be the mariner's guide.

The VWG recommends guidelines intended to assist pilots, bridge teams, cruise ship operators, and agents in improving the safety standards on Southeast Alaska's waters.

The VWG is meant to complement, not replace, federal Colregs, state laws and regulations that govern maritime traffic in the region. Prudent mariners will comply with applicable laws and not rely on the VWG as their only source of information for Southeast Alaska. Mariners are advised that traffic patterns and maritime conditions in Southeast Alaska are constantly changing.

The Marine Safety Task Force expressly disclaims any liability which may arise from the use of, or reliance on, this VWG.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. GENERAL

Good communications are essential for the marine industry to run efficiently and safely. The MSTF encourages all involved parties including pilots, bridge teams, agents, shore-based operators, the State Board of Marine Pilots, and the U.S. Coast Guard to form and maintain an efficient communications network to ensure that relevant information is quickly distributed via the most efficient means available, including written memorandums; faxes; emails; and/or telephone, cell phone, radio and personal communications.

2. BRIDGE-TO-BRIDGE COMMUNICATIONS

Vessels are encouraged to communicate via VHF Channel 13 to ensure that intentions are understood. Radio broadcasts should be kept brief and concise. Mariners should be aware that there are numerous blind spots in Southeast Alaska where radio communications are sporadic; resulting in lost transmissions. Vessels equipped with AIS are encouraged to utilize this technology and the information it provides for better awareness and safer vessel navigation.

3. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SECURITE CALLS

- a. The MSTF recommends that Primary Securite Calls be initiated on VHF Channels 13 and 16, 30 minutes prior with a 15 minute follow up call when:
 - i) Departing from docks or anchorages
 - ii) Entering harbors or anchorages
 - iii) Entering narrow channels

When departing docks or anchorages, an additional call once the vessel is underway.

- b. It is recommended that Primary Securite Calls include the following information:
 - i) The vessel's present position and direction of travel with estimated time of departure (ETD) from docks or anchorages
 - ii) The estimated time of arrival (ETA) at harbors, anchorages, narrow channels or active fishing areas
 - iii) The vessel's voyage plan, principally the destination and intended route
 - iv) Any other relevant information that may be useful to other vessels in the area

- c. The MSTF recommends that mariners adhere to the Primary Securite Calling Points listed below. Mariners are encouraged to be aware that other considerations such as fishing openings, inclement weather, congested vessel traffic, changes in voyage plans, suspected radio blind spots, or any uncertainty regarding the intentions of other vessels might result in the necessity of additional, secondary securite calls.
- d. It is recommended that *Secondary Security Calls* include the following information:
 - i) The vessel's present position and direction of travel
 - ii) The estimated time of departure (ETD) from docks or anchorages
 - iii) The estimated time of arrival (ETA) at harbors, anchorages, narrow channels or active fishing areas
 - iv) The vessel's voyage plan, principally the destination and intended route
 - v) Any other relevant information that may be useful to other vessels in the area

4. SECURITE CALLING POINTS

- a. Revillagigedo Channel/Nichols Passage/Ketchikan Harbor
 - i) Hog Rocks Light (northbound)
 - ii) Spire Island Reef Light (secondary) (northbound)
 - iii) Kelp Rocks Buoy (northbound)
 - iv) Blank Island Light (secondary) (northbound)
 - v) Guard Island Light (southbound)
- b. Misty Fjords
 - i) New Eddystone Rock (inbound)
 - ii) At the turn-around point (prior to departure from the fjord)
- c. Snow Pass
 - i) Key Reef Light (northbound)
 - ii) Nesbit reef (secondary northbound)
 - iii) Point Colpoys Light (southbound)
 - iv) Rookery Island (secondary southbound)
- d. Wrangell Narrows
 - i) Station Island (northbound)
 - ii) Point Alexander (northbound)
 - iii) Mountain Point Light (northbound and southbound)
 - iv) Sukoi Island Light (southbound)
- e. Point Baker
 - i) Point Colpoys Light (westbound)
 - ii) Caulder Rocks Buoy (eastbound)
 - iii) Buster Bay (secondary) (westbound)
 - iv) Point Baker Light (secondary) (westbound and eastbound)

- f. Decision Pass
 - i) 30 minute call with a 15 minute follow up call (eastbound and westbound)
- g. Tracy Arm
 - i) Fifteen minutes prior to crossing Tracy Arm Bar (inbound and outbound)
 - ii) Mile 8 and Mile 16 (inbound)
 - iii) Mile 20 and Mile 10 (outbound)
- h. Taku Inlet (secondary) (during fishing openings)
 - i) Limestone Inlet (northbound)
 - ii) Marmion Island Light (southbound)
 - iii) Icy Point (southbound)
- i. Gastineau Channel/Juneau Harbor
 - i) Icy Point/Pt. Arden (inbound)
 - ii) Marmion Island Light (inbound)
 - iii) DuPont Dock (outbound)
- j. Saginaw Channel/Point Retreat
 - i) Outer Point (north- and westbound)
 - ii) Favorite reef northbound (secondary)
 - iii) False Point Retreat Light (north- and eastbound)
 - iv) Little Island Light (southbound)
- k. Favorite Channel
 - i) Outer Point (northbound)
 - ii) Vanderbilt Reef Light (southbound)
- l. Upper Lynn Canal
 - i) Eldred Rock Light (northbound)
 - ii) Fifteen minutes prior to Taiya Point (southbound)
 - iii) Battery point northbound
- m. Rocky Island Light
 - i) 30 minutes prior to, with a 15 minute follow up (northbound and westbound)
- n. Glacier Bay
 - i) Fifteen minutes prior to Jackie Point north of Lamplugh Glacier (inbound and outbound: Tarr and Johns Hopkins Inlets)
- o. North Inian Passage
 - i) Point Adolphus Light (westbound)
 - ii) Lemesurier Island Light (secondary) (westbound)
 - iii) Cape Spencer Light (eastbound)
- p. Sitka
 - i) Cape Edgecombe Light (inbound)
 - ii) Vitskari Rocks Light (inbound)
 - iii) The Eckholms (outbound)
- q. Sergius Narrows
 - i) Hoggat Island Light (southbound)
 - ii) Kane Island Light (northbound)
- r. Whitestone Narrows
 - i) Kane Island Light (southbound)
 - ii) Big Gavanski Island Light (northbound)

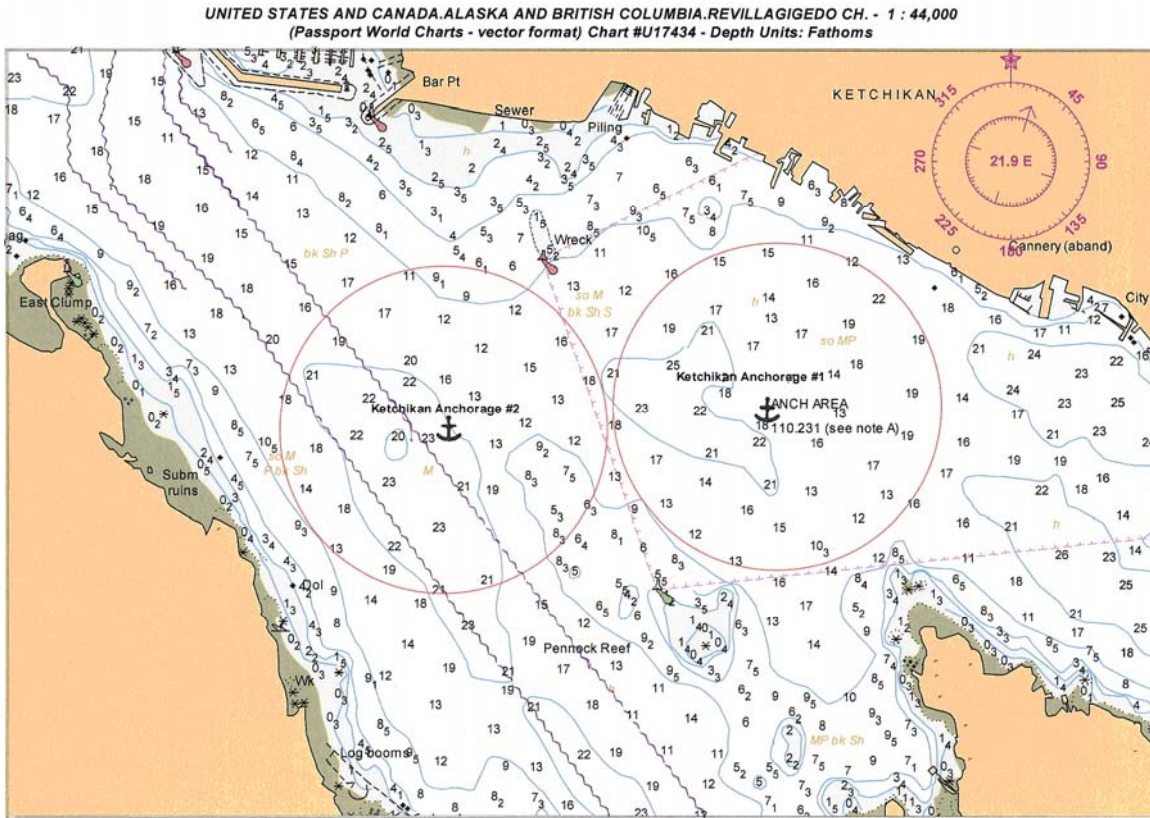
- s. Yakutat Bay
 - i) Fifteen minutes prior to Ocean Cape, Buoy #2 (inbound and outbound)

RECOMMENDED OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

1. TONGASS NARROWS/KETCHIKAN HARBOR

- a. The MSTF recommends that vessels adhere to the Primary Securite Calling Points and conditions as provided on pages 3-5.
- b. The MSTF encourages vessels to observe the following speeds while transiting Tongass Narrows:
 - i) Mountain Point to Saxman 12 knots
 - ii) Saxman to Channel Island 7 knots
 - iii) Channel Island to Rosa Reef 12 knots
 - iv) Rosa Reef to Guard Island 16 knots
- c. Mariners are advised that there may be simultaneous vessel arrivals from both the north and south. The MSTF recommends in the event where two deep-draft vessels are maneuvering simultaneously in the Ketchikan Harbor that it only be done by PRIOR mutual consent between the Masters and Pilots of the vessels involved.
- d. The USCG Base Ketchikan is the recommended separation point for successive northbound vessels approaching the harbor from the south. Similarly, successive southbound vessels departing the harbor are advised to consider the USCG base as the separation point.
- e. The Harbor Wreck Buoy WR6 is the recommended separation point for successive southbound vessels approaching the harbor from the north. Similarly, successive northbound vessels departing the harbor should consider the buoy as the separation point.
- f. Successive vessels traveling in the same direction should maintain a safe and appropriate distance from one another taking into consideration the weather, the tide and current, and each vessel's maneuverability and speed.
- g. The MSTF recommends the anchorage positions as set forth by the USCG (see chartlet page 7). When one or more vessels are anchored in Ketchikan Harbor, any subsequent maneuvering vessel should consider using adequate tug assist, taking into consideration the weather, the tide and current, the maneuvering characteristics of the vessel, and the position of the anchored vessel(s).
- h. Tongass Narrows is a congested waterway, especially during May through September. Local user groups have united and established specific voluntary guidelines for all users

within this area. The Tongass Narrows Voluntary Waterway Guide outlines these guidelines. Copies of this document are available from the United States Coast Guard, Ketchikan Harbor Master, and Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska.



2. SNOW PASSAGE

- a. The MSTF recommends that vessels adhere to the Primary Securite Calling Points and conditions as provided on pages 3-5.
- b. Vessels are encouraged to be fully maneuverable while transiting Snow Passage.
- c. Successive vessels traveling in the same direction should maintain a safe and appropriate distance from one another taking into consideration the weather, the tide and current, and each vessel's maneuverability and speed.
- d. The MSTF recommends that no more than one vessel transit Snow Passage at any one time. When another vessel is transiting Snow Passage; subsequent vessels should delay, until the transiting vessel has cleared the Passage.
- e. When conditions such as inclement weather and vessel traffic congestion warrant, Stikine Passage is recommended as an alternate route.

3. DECISION PASS

- a. The MSTF recommends that vessels adhere to the Primary Securite Calling Points and conditions as provided on pages 3-5.
- b. When conditions such as inclement weather and vessel traffic congestion warrant, it is recommended that all vessels be fully maneuverable while transiting the pass.

Tracy Arm Bar Vessel Operation Parameters

4. TRACY ARM

- a. The MSTF recommends a Tracy-Arm-specific Master/Pilot conference prior to arrival. The conference should take into consideration varying conditions such as weather, tidal and ice conditions, and limited VHF communications.
- b. For scheduling and planning purposes, vessel arrivals and departures at the Tracy Arm Bar should also take into consideration, the following:
 - i) Daylight transit
 - ii) Visibility
 - iii) Ice
 - iv) Squat
 - v) Height of tide
 - vi) Minimum 10 feet under-keel clearance
- c. The MSTF recommends that vessels adhere to the Primary Securite Calling Points and conditions as provided on pages 3-5.
- d. Vessels in Tracy Arm are advised to maintain a safe and appropriate distance from one another taking into consideration the weather, the tide and current, ice conditions, the recommended Passing Zones, and each vessel's maneuverability and speed. There are two recommended *Passing Zones* in Tracy Arm:
 - i) Between Tracy Arm Bar and Mile 8
 - ii) Between Mile 10 and Mile 16
- e. It is recommended that no more than three vessels of greater than 50,000 gross tons be in Tracy Arm at any one time, and no more than two vessels greater than 50,000 gross tons be northeast of Mile 12 at any one time.
- f. When more than one vessel is in Tracy Arm, only one vessel should transit inbound beyond Mile 17 unless prior agreement is made with an outbound vessel. Only one vessel greater than 50,000 gross tons should be North or East of Sawyer Island at any one time. The MSTF recommends that vessels not transit on the Southwest side of Sawyer Island.

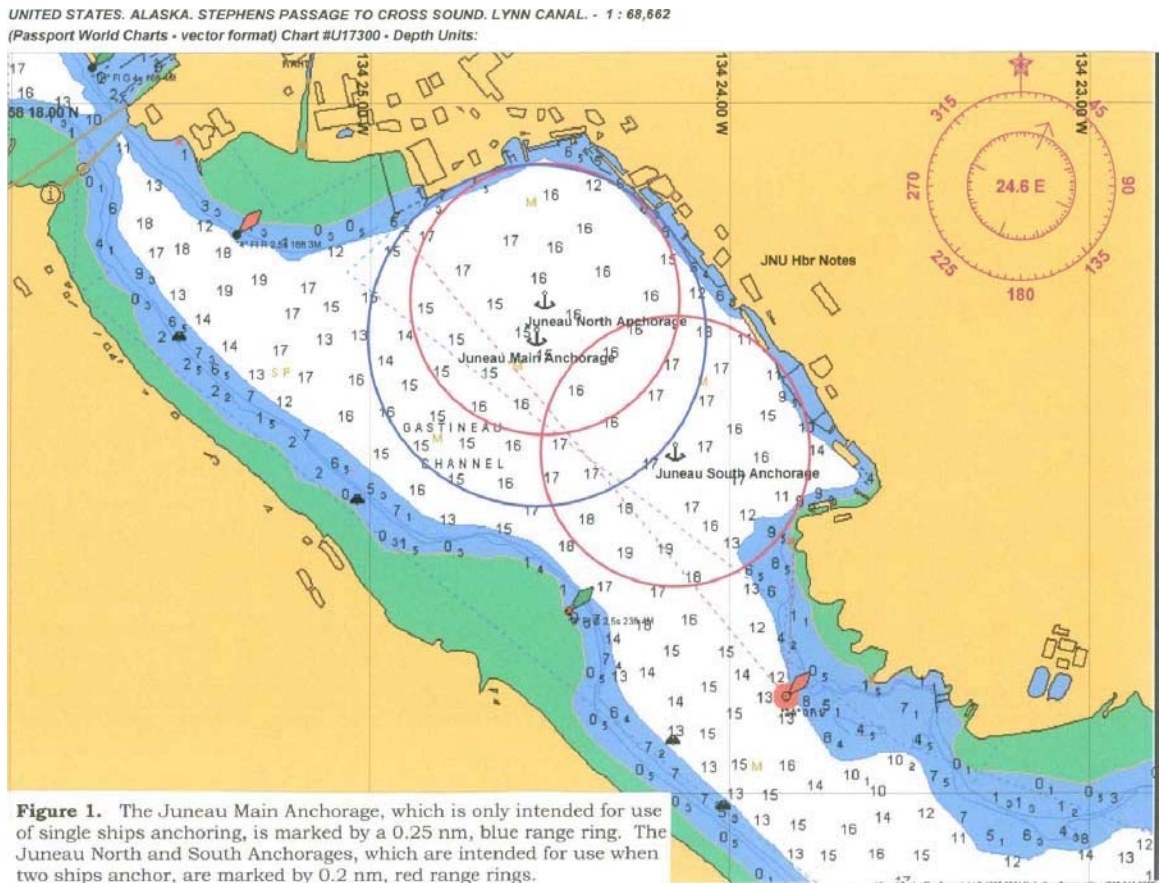
5. ENDICOTT ARM

- a. The MSTF recommends that vessels adhere to the Primary and Secondary Securite Calling Points and conditions as provided on pages 3-5.
- b. When two or more vessels are present in Endicott Arm, they are encouraged to coordinate itineraries via VHF radio communication and stagger their arrivals and departures at the entrance to the arm.
- c. The MSTF recommends that vessels in Endicott Arm maintain a safe and appropriate distance from one another taking into consideration the weather, tide and current, ice conditions, and each vessel's maneuverability and speed.

6. GASTINEAU CHANNEL/JUNEAU HARBOR

- a. The MSTF recommends that vessels adhere to the Primary Securite Calling Points and conditions as provided on pages 3-5.
- b. It is recommended that vessels arriving and departing Juneau Harbor maintain a safe and appropriate distance from one another taking into consideration the weather, tide and current, and each vessel's maneuverability and speed. Notwithstanding concerns for weather, environmental conditions, and small boat/fishing vessel operations, the MSTF recommends the following speed limit guidelines while transiting Gastineau Channel:
 - i) Between Marmion Is. and DuPont Dock 16 knots
 - ii) Between DuPont Dock and Sheep Creek 14 knots
 - iii) Between Sheep Creek and Juneau Isle 10 knots
 - iv) Between Juneau Isle and Juneau Harbor 7 knots
- c. Vessels requiring tug assist are encouraged to set their ETA's to allow extra time to complete their maneuvers.
- d. The Rock Dump buoy is recommended as the separation point for successive arriving or departing vessels.
- e. After any vessel has departed Juneau, subsequently departing vessels should confirm that the departed vessel has attained proper steerage and has cleared the Rock Dump buoy, prior to letting their own lines go.
- f. The MSTF recommends that where two deep-draft vessels are maneuvering simultaneously in the Juneau Harbor that it is done only by PRIOR mutual consent between the Masters and Pilots of the vessels involved.
- g. The MSTF advises that no vessels be underway in Juneau Harbor if there are two vessels at anchor. When two vessels are at anchor, a tug shall standby to assist.

- h. When a vessel is anchored in Juneau Harbor, any subsequent vessel maneuvering in the harbor should contemplate using adequate tug assist, taking into consideration the vessel's maneuvering characteristics, the weather, the tide and current, and the position of the anchored vessel.
- i. The MSTF recommends the anchorage positions, as set forth by the USCG (See Figure 1), taking into consideration weather conditions, tendering docking assignments, berth assignments for other vessels, and the arrival and departure times of other vessels.
- j. The MSTF recommends that assignments to anchorage positions be prearranged in agreement with cruise ship operators, pilots, and the USCG; and that notice of these assignments be communicated to all parties by the agent.



7. SAGINAW AND FAVORITE CHANNELS

- a. The MSTF recommends that vessels adhere to the Primary Securite Calling Points and conditions as provided on pages 3-5.

- b. The MSTF recommends against vessels meeting or overtaking one another in Saginaw Channel between Faust Rock and Symonds Point.
- c. Mariners are encouraged to utilize the Lynn Canal traffic separation scheme as explained below.

8. SKAGWAY

- a. The Two Mile Rockslide is recommended as the separation point for successive vessels approaching the harbor.
- b. Vessels arriving and departing Skagway are advised to maintain a safe and appropriate distance from one another taking into consideration the weather, the tide and current, each vessel's maneuverability and speed, and tug assist needs.
- c. Vessels requiring tug assist are encouraged to set their ETA's to allow extra time to complete their maneuvers.
- d. Successive vessels bound for Skagway should be positioned in their order of arrival by Eldred Rock.
- e. The MSTF recommends that vessels scheduled for the Broadway Dock be the first to arrive in the west harbor.
- f. After any vessel has departed Skagway, subsequently departing vessels should confirm that the departed vessel has completed its turn and attained proper steerage, prior to letting their own lines go. Mariners should be aware that departure times may vary; especially in instances where assist tugs are being utilized.
- g. Departing vessels are encouraged to communicate any changes in their ETD, which might affect the departure or arrival of any other vessel.

9. ROCKY ISLAND AREA

- a. The MSTF recommends that vessels adhere to the Primary Securite Calling Points and conditions as provided on pages 3-5.
- b. Vessels passing or meeting in the Rocky Island area should maintain a safe and appropriate distance from one another taking into consideration the weather, the tide and current, and each vessel's maneuverability and speed.
- c. The MSTF recommends that vessels passing one another in the Rocky Island area make port-to-port passing arrangements. These passing arrangements should be facilitated by westbound vessels rounding Rocky Island at a distance of 1.0 mile off and eastbound

vessels rounding the island at 2.0 miles off.

10. ICY STRAITS

- a. When traffic patterns warrant, vessels transiting Icy Straits should consider routing north of Sisters Island when westbound and south of Sisters when eastbound.

11. GLACIER BAY

- b. Vessels in Glacier Bay are advised to comply with National Park Service requirements which are detailed in the CFR's, Coast Pilot and the annual port information packet distributed by the agent.
- c. The MSTF recommends that vessels adhere to the Primary Securite Calling Points and conditions as provided on pages 3-5.
- d. When two or more vessels are in Glacier Bay, they are encouraged to coordinate itineraries via VHF radio communication.
- e. Vessels in Glacier Bay are advised to maintain a safe and appropriate distance from one another taking into consideration the weather, the tide and current, ice conditions, and each vessel's maneuverability and speed.
 - i) The recommended CPA from any glacier face is 2.5 cables (0.25 nm).

12. NORTH INIAN PASS

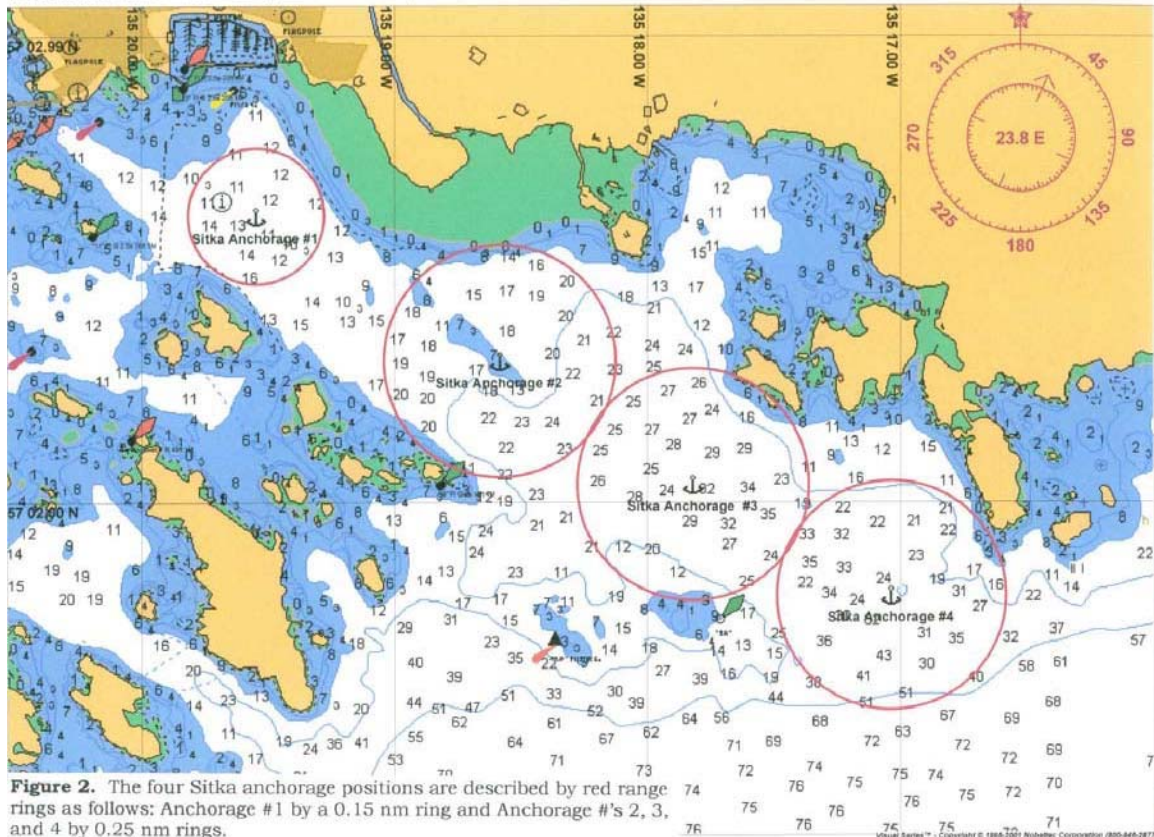
- a. The MSTF recommends that vessels adhere to the Primary and Secondary Securite Calling Points and conditions as provided on pages 3-5.
- b. The MSTF recommends against vessels meeting or overtaking one another in the narrows of North Inian Pass.

13. SITKA

- a. The MSTF recommends that vessels adhere to the Primary Securite Calling Points and conditions as provided on pages 3-5.
- b. Vessels arriving and departing Sitka are advised to exercise prudent safety practices and maintain a safe and appropriate distance from one another taking into consideration the weather, the tide and current, each vessel's maneuverability and speed, vessels at anchor, and concentrations of fishing vessels.

- c. The MSTF recommends the anchorage positions, as set forth by the USCG (See Figure 2), taking into consideration weather conditions, tendering dock assignments, and the arrival and departure times of other vessels.
- d. The MSTF recommends that assignments to anchorage positions be prearranged in agreement with cruise ship operators, the pilots, and the USCG; and, that notice of these assignments be communicated to all parties by the agent.
- e. Vessels desiring to anchor in Anchor Position #1 (the Inner Anchorage) should take into account weather conditions; as well as, vessel size and maneuverability. Requests for the Inner Anchorage should be forwarded to the Sitka agent for compilation on the port's schedule.

U.S. ALASKA - SOUTHEAST COAST. CORONATION ISLAND TO LISIANSKI STRAIT. - 1 : 97,823
 (Passport World Charts - vector format) Chart #U17320 - Depth Units:



14. YAKUTAT BAY/DISENCHANTMENT BAY

- a. The MSTF recommends that vessels adhere to the Primary Securite Calling Points and conditions as provided on pages 3-6.
- b. When two or more vessels are in Disenchantment Bay, they are encouraged to coordinate itineraries via VHF radio communication.

- c. When multiple vessels are scheduled for Yakutat Bay, they are advised to allow an hour of separation between ETA's at Ocean Cape.
- d. The MSTF recommends that vessels in Yakutat Bay maintain a safe and appropriate distance from one another taking into consideration the weather, the tide and current, ice conditions, and each vessel's maneuverability and speed.
- e. The MSTF recommends against vessels transiting between Hanke Island and the East shore.
- f. The recommended CPA from any glacier face is 5 cables (0.5 nm). Mariners are advised of the strong currents and rapidly shifting icebergs in the vicinity of Turner and Hubbard Glaciers. (See US Coast Pilot 9).

15. SPEED

It is recommended that vessels observe established harbor speed limits and comply with Colregs rule 6, Safe Speed. Vessels are encouraged to reduce speed for sensitive shore-line areas and other vessels susceptible to wake damage (e.g.; log tows and tugs alongside barges).

16. TRACK LINES

- a. The MSTF advises pilots and bridge teams to engage in route planning, prior to and during each voyage.
- b. Upon request, pilot associations are encouraged to provide cruise ship operators with safe and appropriate, generic track lines. Operators should recognize that these track lines are for voyage planning purposes only.
- c. It is recommended that specific track lines be discussed and agreed upon by pilots and bridge teams. All parties should be aware that track lines are meant to indicate a vessel's intended route only. Inclement weather, congested traffic, concentrations of fishing vessels, or other conditions may necessitate changes from planned routes.

17. NATURAL SEPARATION ZONES

The geography of Southeast Alaska affords several natural bifurcation zones which provide for vessel traffic separation schemes; as well as, opportunities for deviations from planned routes, if inclement weather, congested traffic, concentrations of fishing vessels, or other conditions warrant.

Lynn Canal affords multiple routes, for north- and southbound traffic. Considerations for traffic

or weather may dictate route selection. Any departure from these routes should be made with the mutual agreement of the bridge team, pilot and other vessels affected by the change. Vessels should avoid meeting or overtaking in Favorite or Saginaw Channels.

18. RESTRICTED MANEUVERING AREAS

Vessels are encouraged to avoid narrow or congested waterways while delaying for arrival at any port or waterway.

19. MASTER SHIP SCHEDULES

- a. Prior to each Alaska cruise season, cruise ship operators should provide the agent with each vessel's voyage information. From this information the agent consulting with the regional pilot association, should prepare a master ship schedule containing individual vessel schedules, berthing assignments, and other relevant operational information. This master schedule should be distributed to the pilot association, the cruise ship operators, the individual vessels, the USCG Marine Safety Office, the Alaska Marine Highway System, and any other appropriate parties (e.g.: harbor masters, etc.).
- b. Upon commencement of the cruise season, any substantial and premature changes or deviations from the master ship schedule should be reported and approved by the agent and regional pilot association and be distributed to the waterway users listed above.
- c. Vessels are encouraged to report to the agent and regional pilot association any anticipated or intended deviation from the recommended operational guidelines or master ship schedule. In turn, the agent should advise all affected parties.[If time does not allow for prompt reporting to the agent, the] vessel should ensure that other affected vessels and/or authorities are notified.

20. VOYAGE PLANNING

- a. Pilots and bridge teams are encouraged to give the highest priority to voyage planning prior to, and during, vessel transits. Voyage planning should utilize all resources available and follow the guidelines outlined below. Pilots and bridge teams are reminded that good communication and teamwork are essential for safe vessel operations.
- b. The MSTF recommends that pilots and bridge teams conduct Master/Pilot conferences and Bridge Resource Management meetings following the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Bridge Procedures Guide or the American Pilot Association's Bridge Resource Management Guidelines, as set forth below:

Each vessel transit should begin with a Master/Pilot conference taking into consideration the following:

- i) The initial conference should serve as an opportunity to exchange relevant information and establish an appropriate working relationship between the pilot and the master.
- ii) It is not necessary that all relevant information be exchanged in the initial conference. The amount and type of information exchanged may be determined by the difficulty of any immediate maneuvers and the length and navigational parameters of the transit. Additional information may be exchanged later, as the transit proceeds.
- iii) All parties should acknowledge that the pilot and each member of the bridge team have important roles to perform in the safe operation of the vessel.

WEATHER AND ICE CONDITIONS

1. WIND AND TUGS

- a. When inclement weather is anticipated in any port, vessels are encouraged to give sufficient advance notice for the scheduling of tugs for standby or assistance.
- b. Prior to each cruise season, cruise ship operators should determine their tug-assist requirements for each port and coordinate their dispatch requests through the agent.

2. VISIBILITY

When visibility is limited, bridge teams are encouraged to comply with appropriate Colregs and safety procedures including reducing the vessel's speed, sounding the fog signal and considering alternate routes.

3. ICE

Mariners are encouraged to report any hazardous ice conditions to the U.S. Coast Guard, particularly in the vicinity of Holkham Bay in Stephens Passage.

VWG EVALUATION AND REVISIONS

This VWG is intended to be a work-in-progress. It is a document that should always be in need of evaluation, revision, and refinement. All interested parties including pilots, bridge teams, cruise ship operators, agents, the USCG, shore-based organizations and individuals are encouraged to offer suggestions and comments directly to the MSTF.