

## Executive Summary 2025-2026

The State of California regulates Harbor Safety Committees (HSCs) in state harbors. Regional HSCs are responsible for planning safe maritime navigation and developing best practices as part of their Harbor Safety Plans. Critical maneuvering areas, ferry routing protocol, anchorage designations, emergency planning, and bridge management are considered. The Harbor Safety Committee of the San Francisco Bay Region (SF HSC) continues its collaborative process to engage the maritime community in supporting navigation safety in the San Francisco Bay. The SF Harbor Safety Plan is updated annually in June to include all changes approved by the committee since the previous update.

These are some notes and highlights showcasing the work of the SF HSC from June 2025 to May 2026:

- SF HSC has continued to hold monthly hybrid meetings, with options available online, as well as rotating physical locations around the bay including sites in San Francisco, Oakland, Richmond, and Sausalito. Meetings are always open to the public.
- New SF HSC members appointed by OSPR include: Joseph Vezzali, Levin Richmond Terminal, as the primary member representing Dry Cargo Vessel Operators II; Tammie Lasiter, SSA Terminals, as the primary member representing Dry Cargo Vessel Operators; Eric Napralla and Gerard Olson as the new primary and alternate members representing the Port of Oakland; Lucas Juon, Marathon, as the primary member representing Tanker or Marine Oil Terminal Operators; Captain Maggie Hallahan as the alternate member representing Pleasure Boat Operators; Robert Barley, Golden Gate Highway and Transportation District, as the alternate member representing Ferry Operators.
- SF Marine Exchange acquired a new camera system for SF HSC meetings to improve online accessibility. A new associate management system and website have been developed to better communicate HSC, subcommittee, and work group information. Efforts are being made to fully comply with HSC meeting regulations and procedures in compliance with the Brown Act. Changes to subcommittees and work groups were made to accurately reflect the purpose of each group.
- SF HSC was impacted by recent federal government shutdowns. The October 2025 HSC meeting was canceled due to lack of attendance related to the 2025 shutdown. Other HSC meetings were held with limited federal participation. USCG SF VTS operations were impacted by the government shutdown requiring temporary activation of the Vessel Continuity Reporting Protocol (VCRP). SF HSC supported VTS reinstatement and increased attention to the issue. SF VTS is essential for safe maritime navigation in the bay.
- SF HSC voted at the November 2025 HSC meeting to approve sending a letter to CARB detailing safety issues related to clean air regulations. Concerns were raised after an incident in Long Beach involving a STAX emissions capture barge. The letter was intended to balance environmental protection with maritime safety considerations. The Clean Air Safety Letter was drafted and sent to the appropriate CARB representative. Follow-up is ongoing.
- SF HSC was well represented at the National HSC Conference held in Seattle on March 24-25, 2026. Patrick Gallagher, Marine Exchange of Puget Sound, reported at the April 2026 HSC meeting that the conference was held successfully with presentations given on whale protection, lithium-ion battery firefighting, and other priority issues.

- The Tug Subcommittee held meetings and participated in the OSPR Tanker Escort Program regulations review process.
- The HSC Navigation Subcommittee continued to engage on Vessel Speed Reduction (VSR) and Rule 9 violation issues. Participation in updating OSPR escort regulations was a primary focus. Continued funding for the San Francisco PORTS program is a priority for safe navigation.
- The Ferry Operations Subcommittee held regular meetings to consider issues including lithium battery firefighting and conflict with recreational boaters near ferry terminals. Public outreach is a priority. Ferries participated in a full-scale multi-agency VMAP exercise hosted by SFO on September 17, 2025. The Ferry Operations Subcommittee continued collaboration with The Marine Mammals Subcommittee on whale protection measures. The Whale Smart training program is being implemented. Updated ferry routing protocol traffic lanes were previously approved by the SF HSC in September 2024. A new downbound traffic lane was established and added to navigational charts. Updated Ferry Routing Protocol Guidelines and Ferry Route Caution Areas were approved at the January 2026 HSC meeting.
- The Dredge Issues Subcommittee focused on regional dredging priorities and funding considerations. Pinole Shoal Channel and Richmond Outer Harbor will now be dredged on a yearly basis, reducing the potential need for emergency dredging. Expanding the number of shipping channels with CATZOC A1 ratings is a priority. There is reduced federal funding for some regional dredging projects.
- The PORTS Subcommittee is considering future funding options for SF PORTS maintenance managed by the SF Marine Exchange. SF PORTS provides real-time meteorological and oceanographic data that is essential for safe navigation in the bay. SF PORTS is relied on by ship pilots and boat captains for the most accurate and up to date data available. Maintenance of the system is currently funded via OSPR grant but alternate funding will be needed for required upgrades, continued regular maintenance due to increased costs, and potential expansion of the system with the addition of new stations. Relocation of the Oakland Berth 67 Weather Station was postponed.
- The Prevention Through People Subcommittee focused on recreational boating issues. The Bay Area Marina Operators (BAMO) group met quarterly. California Boater Cards are required for all recreational boaters. Public outreach and updating Rule 9 pamphlets are priorities. The subcommittee considered plans by the City of San Francisco to remove the Gashouse Cove fuel dock and there is substantial opposition to the proposal. Stakeholders support keeping the fuel dock in place despite planned PG&E environmental remediation in the vicinity. A letter detailing maritime safety and public access concerns is being drafted and will be submitted for full SF HSC approval before sending.
- The Marine Mammals Subcommittee held regular meetings to consider proposals for marine mammal protection. The Vessel Speed Reduction (VSR) program was expanded statewide and runs from April 22<sup>nd</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026. Ships are asked to reduce speed offshore for whale safety. Whales have been active in the bay, and deceased whales were towed to shoreline sites for study. The Whale Smart training program was developed and is being implemented for local ferry and small commercial vessel operators. Outreach to recreational boaters is a priority. The June 2025 SF HSC Meeting was held at The Marine Mammal Center in Sausalito.
- The Tsunami Ready Maritime Work Group is developing guidelines and best practices for tsunami response in the bay. Draft proposals are being reviewed by the USCG and feedback will be incorporated. The guidelines will be submitted to the full HSC for approval when complete.
- The Tanker Tug Escort Work Group was established to review and propose updates to OSPR Tanker Escort Program regulations. The process is ongoing with work group meetings held

biweekly in collaboration with the Tug Subcommittee, Navigation Subcommittee, and OSPR. When the process is complete, proposed updates will be submitted for full SF HSC approval before being sent to OSPR for consideration.

- The Maritime Evaluation for Risk, Insights and Trends (MERIT) Work Group was established after being approved by the HSC in November 2025. The work group was proposed by BCDC to review the Ports and Waterways Safety Assessment (PAWSA) 2025 report and identify key safety concerns. Hazard mitigation is a primary focus. The PAWSA was conducted by the Marine Exchange, with MTC funding, to identify regional risk and propose recommended mitigation measures. The PAWSA 2025 Report was released in June 2025, and a review webinar was held in August 2025. The MERIT Work Group first met in March 2026 and again in May 2026.
- USCG reported at the September 2025 HSC meeting that removal of abandoned and derelict vessels in Little Potato Slough was completed. Abandoned and derelict vessels are an ongoing concern in the delta, Oakland Estuary, and around the bay. New USCG cybersecurity regulations went into effect on July 16, 2025. SEAR maritime events reported on by the USCG included San Francisco Fleet Week held on October 5-13, 2025, the 2026 NFL Super Bowl, Fourth of July fireworks, and New Year's Eve. USCG presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Capt. Larwood, SF Bar Pilots, for his actions related to a January 31, 2026, incident involving a ship losing propulsion near the Rio Vista Bridge.
- USACE reported that the hopper dredge Essayons performed Emergency Dredging at the Richmond Long Wharf and Oakland Harbor Entrance Channel. FY26 dredge planning is underway. Debris removal is ongoing, but the Dillard has been out of service for repairs.
- The Marine Exchange reported on SF PORTS maintenance at the November 2025 HSC meeting. Major station upgrades were conducted in August 2025, and buoy-mounted current meters were serviced. The Marinez-Amorco tide house, current meter, and visibility sensor were moved several feet due to dock construction work. Most SF PORTS stations were originally installed over fifteen years ago and require upgrades to maintain continuing operation.
- NOAA reported on Electronic Nautical Chart (ENC) updates at the July 2025 HSC meeting. Changes to the Stockton shoreline were added. ENC re-gridding is ongoing in accordance with S100 standards required by January 2029. Updates are being made to deconflict channel frameworks. CATZOC channel ratings are posted to ENCs. The VSR program is being implemented statewide for whale safety.
- California State Lands Commission reported on regional oil refinery products and imports affected by suspension of the Jones Act.

The HSC also received a number of presentations related to diverse topics including:

- Zachery Garland, Seaspan Energy, gave a presentation at the June 2025 HSC meeting on proposed ship-to-ship Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) bunkering operations in the bay. A follow-up presentation was given at the September 2025 HSC meeting. A proposal for LNG bunkering operations in Anchorage 9 was submitted to the USCG. USCG issued a policy letter regarding LNG bunkering procedures.
- Jonathan Thompson, State Lands Commission (SLC), gave a presentation at the November 2025 HSC meeting on invasive golden mussels. Invasive marine species are often spread by ship ballast water transfers from one region to another. Managing ballast water is an SLC priority and includes treatment to reduce spread, ballast water discharge performance standards which limit discharge in certain regions, and MISP inspections. Sampling and testing of ballast water is

performed. Invasive golden mussels, originally from Southeast Asia, were first detected in Stockton in October 2024 and have spread in freshwater environments where they can foul water systems. Introduction was likely due to ship ballast water transfer. Emergency regulations that limit ballast water discharge east of Rodeo went into effect on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

- Tony Maffei gave a presentation at the November 2025 HSC meeting on the VetsBoats organization which is dedicated to helping veterans through sailing. The organization, founded by Terry Moran, seeks to restore veterans' health and assist them with transitioning back to civilian life through the therapeutic power of sailing and boat restoration. Suicide prevention is a primary focus.
- Wim Smets, Flemish Government, gave a report at the February 2026 HSC meeting on the history of vessel traffic management in Belgium and western Netherlands. A vessel traffic system was initiated via a 1978 treaty and further implemented in 1991. The system provides nautical management in both countries, similar to USCG VTS and Marine Exchange operations, along a 150-kilometer coastline including Antwerp. Under keel clearance is a major concern due to shallow river and tidal areas and is actively managed. Narrow channels require coordination to maintain navigation safety. Environmental protection is a primary consideration.
- Capt. Matt Fine, USCG, gave a presentation at the February 2026 HSC meeting on proposed Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) public-private partnerships and the next generation VTS. The public-private partnership model is being considered for future San Francisco VTS operations. Public-private partnerships are currently in place for VTS operations in Los Angeles and Tampa. Significant technological upgrades are needed to maintain the aging San Francisco VTS system. The USCG issued a Request for Information (RFI) for potential VTS vendors and has received four responses. A committee will be established to review vendor proposals. VTS will continue to be under USCG jurisdiction and be staffed by USCG personnel. SF HSC discussion focused on authorities, liability, and funding under the future system.
- Ben Davis, Illuminate, gave a presentation at the April 2026 HSC meeting on the planned Lights for America event in San Francisco for Fourth of July. Leading up to the event, the Running Lights project plans to feature light beams projected over the bay by laser cannons from several locations including Pier 13, Fort Point, and Pier 7. The light beams have the potential to impact mariners when they cross the water and safety is the priority. The light beams can be shut off if necessary for safe navigation. Guidance from the maritime community was requested and maritime safety issues discussed. Additional comments from SF HSC stakeholders were forwarded to the USCG for consideration.
- Sam Levens, International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), gave a presentation at the May 2026 HSC meeting. ITF is a global federation of trade unions. Regional ITF inspectors assist foreign seafarers with labor rights issues including wage theft, abandonment, repatriation, substandard conditions, forced labor, and abuse. Seafarers in the Strait of Hormuz have reported food shortages and other labor issues. CBP is restricting foreign crew from leaving their ships when in US ports and the Jones Act waiver has increased the problem. Report suspected labor rights violations to ITF.

See Appendix C, Annual Subcommittee and Work Group Reports, for more detailed and specific activities conducted over the previous year.