



## Vessel Traffic Service Puget Sound

**Active Duty Personnel:** 31  
**Reserve Personnel:** 1  
**Civilian Personnel:** 20

**Mailing Address:**  
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For more information on the Coast Guard, visit the Internet at <http://www.uscg.mil>. For recruiting information call 1-877-NOW-USCG.

**Established:** Founded in 1972, Puget Sound Vessel Traffic Service has evolved into an effective, high-tech radar and communications center. The original vessel traffic center, which operated at Pier 91, had no radar coverage and relied on radio reports to monitor vessel traffic. All vessels were plotted manually on a massive chart. In 1974 participation became mandatory east of New Dungeness Light. In 1975 the center moved to Pier 36 and inherited four shipboard radars that established limited coverage of Elliott Bay and northern Puget Sound. Radio reporting points were reduced but still required. The radar suite was replaced in 1981 with a state-of-the-art, high accuracy system specifically designed for VTS applications. The present ten sites cover 2,500 square miles of Puget Sound, Rosario Strait, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. In 1984, the original VHF-FM transceivers were replaced with a computerized, low-powered sector system that offers more flexibility and quicker response to our participants.

**What we do:** The purpose of Vessel Traffic Service Puget Sound is to function as an integral part of the Thirteenth Coast Guard District's waterways management efforts by facilitating the safe and efficient transit of vessel traffic to assist in the prevention of collisions, groundings, maritime casualties and ensuing environmental damage. Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, carefully trained military and civilian watch standers monitor and communicate with vessels in the Strait of Juan de Fuca,

San Juan Islands, and Puget Sound. VTS Puget Sound is unique among the nine vessel traffic services operated by the Coast Guard. It is the only United States VTS that operates with two foreign services, namely Canada's Vancouver and Tofino Traffic. The three services coordinate shipping traffic between Puget Sound, the straits of Georgia, Juan de Fuca, Rosario, Haro, and the west coast of Vancouver Island out to 60 miles off shore.

**Accomplished Operations:** Vessel Traffic Service Puget Sound monitors approximately 250,000 vessel movements a year, comprised of tankers, cargo ships, ferries, and tug boats with tows. In addition, VTS Puget Sound assists with search and rescue cases and supports other Coast Guard missions. Members of the professional maritime community and government agencies tour VTS Puget Sound each year, demonstrating another aspect of the Coast Guard's service and community involvement.



USCG file photo. High resolution copy can be found at <http://www.uscg.mil/images.html>