

# **PORT HUENEME HARBOR SAFETY PLAN**

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Mandated by  
California Oil Spill Prevention and  
Response Act of 1990

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## INTRODUCTION

Located approximately 60 miles north of the City of Los Angeles, the Port of Hueneme is the only commercial deep-water harbor between Los Angeles and San Francisco Bay. Port Hueneme is a Military Port under the control of the Commanding Officer, Naval Base Ventura County, Port Hueneme. The Port Hueneme Harbor is unique in that it is a twenty-four hour a day vessel traffic controlled harbor. All vessels must obtain permission prior to entering, departing and intro-harbor shifting by calling Navy "Control One" on VHF radio channel 06.

Specializing in general cargo, the primary commodities handled through the port in FY 2007-2008, measured in terms of revenue tons, include bananas and other fresh fruit (56%), automobiles (18%), offshore drilling supplies and materials (1%), other miscellaneous cargoes (25%), and refined petroleum products; less than one (1) percent. The occasional deliveries of refined petroleum products to the port consist of tank vessel delivery of residual low sulfur fuel oil or tank barge delivery of diesel fuel to vessels at either the Navy or commercial port. The harbor is also home to commercial and sport fishing, tug services, and the Marine Spill Response Corporation Recovery Barge 320.

### Port Hueneme Harbor Safety Committee and Plan:

The Port Hueneme Harbor Safety Committee is mandated by the California Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act of 1990 (ACT). On October 8, 1991, the California Department of Fish and Game's Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) officially appointed the committee and the committee's first meeting was held November 18, 1991.

The following is the present membership of the committee:

Captain Andrew Harvey (Chairperson)  
Chairperson  
Representing the Pilot Organization  
Alternate: Captain Eric Ireland

Mr. Pete Wallace  
(Executive Secretary)  
Representing the Port of Hueneme  
Alternate: Chris Birkelo (in process)

Capt. Michael Fullilove  
Representing Tug/Barge Operators  
Alternate: Capt. Jim Kleeburg

Mr. Len Mazzella  
Representing Dry Cargo Vessel Operators  
Alternate: Joshua Lindsay

Jeff B. Turkus (in process)  
Representing Organized Labor  
Alternate: Abdulhameed Al Omari (in process)

Mr. Richard Thompson  
Representing Off-shore Platform Supply Vessels  
Alternate: Fred Krueger (in process)

Vacant  
Representing Environmental Protection  
Organizations

Mr. Mike Miller  
(Non-Voting Member)  
Representing the U.S. Navy

Lt. Ron Fien  
(Non-Voting Member)  
Representing the U. S. Coast Guard

Ms. Robin Blanchfield  
Representing the California Coastal Commission  
Alternate: Vacant

Mr. Jeffrey Cole  
(Non-Voting Member)  
Representing U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Mr. Charles Caulkins  
Representing Fresh Produce Cargo Vessel Operators  
Alternate: Ms. Heidi Magel

Mr. Lance Laffoon  
Representing Refrigerated Cargo Vessel  
Operators  
Alternate: Mr. Mike Karmelich

Mr. John W. Gingerich  
Representing Commercial Fishing  
Alternate: Vacant

Mike Brodey  
Representing Recreational Boaters  
Alternate: Gabriel V. Pesce

Mr. Eric Vang  
Representing Offshore Oil  
Alternate: Mr. John Barker

Mr. Gerald Wheaton  
(Non-Voting Member)  
Representing NOAA

Mr. Carlton Moore  
Representing LNG Industry

Capt. Jon Belchere  
Representing Marine Fuel Terminal  
Alternate: Ms. Jami Mangham

The California Code of Regulations Title 14, Division 1, Subdivision 4, Chapter 2, Subchapter 1 addresses establishment of Harbor Safety Committees and requirements for Harbor Safety Plans as mandated by the ACT. Specifically, Section 800 includes definitions for terms found within the ACT. Regulations and Section 802 (plan Content Requirements) require the committee to review and evaluate the following:

- Tug Escorts
- Geographical Boundaries
- Harbor Conditions
- Vessel Traffic Patterns
- Aids to Navigations
- Communications
- Bridge Management
- Enforcement
- Vessel Traffic Service (VTS)
- Project Funding for VTS
- Competitive Aspects
- Miscellaneous

On or before July 1 of each year, the ACT also requires that the Harbor Safety Committee report its findings and recommendations to the OSPR Administrator concerning the safety of its harbor and any recommendations for improving tanker and barge safety in the harbor and region of responsibility by amending the provisions of the Harbor Safety Plan, or through other means.

In developing the Harbor Safety Plan the committee reviewed all aspects of vessel operations and safety procedures in the Port of Hueneme. This plan reflects changes resulting from OSPR's initial regulatory compliance review comments dated 27 January 1993, and the subsequent reviews of the Plan. The primary emphasis was to improve both harbor safety and the protection of the environment.

The 2009 update of the Port Hueneme Harbor Safety Plan was respectfully submitted by the committee to the Administrator, Office of Spill Prevention and Response, California Department of Fish and Game for review as required by the ACT.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Harbor Safety Committee expanded the initial areas targeted for study or comment to include two additional study areas (Anchorage and Anchorage Management, and Assessment of Small Vessel Safety Concerns). Ten of the subject areas mandated by the Act include findings. Eight of the subject areas studied warranted recommendations for improvement. Two of the subject areas (Bridge Management and Project Funding for VTS) are not addressed. These two topics are not applicable in Port Hueneme as there are no bridges in the area of concern and Port Hueneme does not currently have, nor is anticipated to have, a formal Vessel Traffic Service.

- I. **GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES**  
Specifically delineates the area of concern and defines the various areas referenced in the plan.
- II. **GENERAL WEATHER AND TIDAL CONDITIONS**  
Provides a specific description of these conditions in the area of concern.
- III. **AIDS TO NAVIGATION AND NAUTICAL CHARTING**  
Provides a listing of all aids to navigation in the area of concern.  
Recommendations (page 3)
- IV. **HARBOR DESCRIPTION AND CONDITIONS**  
Provides a detailed physical description of the harbor including water depths and vessel routing during port construction or dredging.  
Recommendations (page 4)
- V. **ANCHORAGES AND ANCHORAGE ADMINISTRATION**  
Provides a discussion of current procedures for vessels anchoring in the vicinity of Port Hueneme and addresses the absence of a designated offshore anchorage. Recommendations (page 5)
- VI. **COMMUNICATIONS**  
Provides a complete description of the communications procedures and frequencies currently used in the harbor.
- VII. **ASSESSMENT OF SMALL VESSEL SAFETY CONCERNS**  
Discusses the safety concerns caused by recreational boaters in the approaches to Port Hueneme.  
Recommendations (page 7)
- VIII. **VESSEL TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT**  
Provides a detailed description of current vessel traffic management procedures.  
Recommendations (page 8)
- IX. **BEST MARINE PRACTICES**  
Provides a detailed discussion of the current procedures for tug escorts and tug assistance.  
Recommendations (page 10)
- X. **TUG ASSISTANTS/ESCORTS FOR TANK VESSELS**  
The economic impact of the plan is explored.  
Recommendation (page 12)
- XI. **ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE PLAN**  
Discusses suggested mechanisms to ensure that the provisions of the plan are fully and regularly enforced. Recommendations (page 13)
- XII. **PLAN ENFORCEMENT**

**SIGNATURE PAGE**

Formal committee adoption of this plan was accomplished by a simple majority vote and signatures by Chairperson and Secretary. The plan is submitted with no minority reports.

- Appendix I    **AREA CHARTLET AND AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS**  
 Chartlet and aerial photographs of Port Hueneme and vicinity showing area of concern for this plan.
- Appendix II    **SMALL BOAT SAFETY INFORMATION**  
 Safety information prepared by the committee for distribution to all vessels operating from local marinas emphasizing the danger of operating in close quarters to large vessels.
- Appendix III    **SUMMARY OF COAST GUARD CASUALTY REPORTS**  
 Summary of marine casualties reported to the Coast Guard for the period 1 January 2008 through 31 December 2008, and having occurred within the area of concern for this plan.
- Appendix IV    **SUMMARY OF BULK LIQUID CARRIER CALLS**  
 Summary of bulk liquid carrier calls at Port Hueneme for the period CY 1978 through CY 2008.
- Appendix V    **SUMMARY OF COMMERCIAL VESSEL TRAFFIC**  
 Summary of commercial vessel calls at the Port of Hueneme for the period FY 2001 through FY 2008.
- Appendix VI    **LNG TERMINALS**  
 Proposed recognition of LNG Terminals.
- Appendix VII    **NAVAL BASE VENTURA COUNTY (NBVC) INSTRUCTION**  
 Copy of the current Naval Base Ventura County Instruction 3170.2 (series).
- Appendix VIII    **OXNARD HARBOR DISTRICT TARIFF**  
 Copy of the current Oxnard Harbor District Port Terminal Tariff Number 7
- Appendix IX    **ANNUAL PLAN REVIEWS**  
 Copies of the Annual Plan Reviews required on or before July 1 of each year, submitted in accordance with the ACT requiring that the Harbor Safety Committee report its findings and recommendations to the Administrator concerning the safety of its harbor. In addition, the review shall include any recommendations for improving tanker and barge safety in the harbor and region of responsibility by amending the provisions of the Harbor Safety Plan, or through other means.

## I. GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES

- A. Advisory Area: The geographic areas of concern for the Port Hueneme Harbor Safety Plan are the waters of Port Hueneme Harbor, and the area included within an area bounded by a line drawn from the West Jetty Light to; 34-09N, 119-15W; 34-08N, 119-16W; 34-07N, 119-16W; 34-06N, 119-14W; 34-06N, 119-11W; 34-07N, 119-11W; to the East Jetty Light.
- B. Statutory Zone: California three mile limit.
- C. Approaches: Those waters of the Santa Barbara Channel outside the breakwater and within the Port Hueneme Safety Fairway as described in Title 33 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 166.300 (33 CFR 166.300). The Port Hueneme Safety Fairway is defined as follows:

“An area one nautical mile in width centered on the alignment of Port Hueneme Entrance Channel and extending seaward from the 30-foot-depth curve for a distance of 1.5 nautical miles, thence turning southerly and widening to 1.5 nautical miles at the three mile limit, all between lines joining the following points 34-06-30N and 119-15-OOW, 34-07-37N and 119-14-25W, and 34-08-49N and 119-13-21W thence generally along the 30-foot-depth curve to the seaward end of the west entrance jetty; seaward end of the east entrance jetty, thence generally along the 30-foot-depth curve to 34-08-21N and 119-12-15W, 34-07-10N and 119-13-20W, and 34-05-48N and 119-13-23W.”

## II. GENERAL WEATHER AND TIDAL CONDITIONS

- A. Weather: On the coastal waters from Point Hueneme to Santa Barbara, fog hampers navigation most often from July through October. Sea fog drops visibility below 0.5 miles on about 5 to 10 days per month during this period and is generally more widespread and often more persistent than land (radiation) fog with August and September usually being the worst months. North (N) through Northeast (NE) winds are common from October through March, while West (W) winds prevail from April through September. While gales are infrequent, wind gusts can reach 50 to 60 knots from fall through spring and often blowout of the East Northeast (ENE). Calm conditions are frequent all year around, but particularly from May through October.
- B. Tides: The mean range of tide at Port Hueneme is 3.7 feet. The diurnal range of tide is about 5.4 feet and a range of about 7.2 feet may occur at times of maximum tide. The lowest water is about 1.6 feet below Mean Lower Low Water.
- C. Currents: The Port Hueneme inner harbor is not noticeably affected by tidal streams or currents. However, the shoreline current that normally sets down the coast, but occasionally sets the opposite direction, is most noticeable just outside the entrance jetties. This shoreline current varies with several influences including wind direction and force, state of the tide, and freshwater runoff during storm conditions. In addition, a counter current may also be encountered within the jetties. The shoreline current can pose problems for vessels as they enter the harbor.
- D. Fog: When coastal fog restricts visibility in and around the port and its approaches, a case-by-case analysis by the Port Hueneme Pilots will ascertain whether a vessel can be safely moved during that period. The pilot takes into account the distance of visibility at the time, the status of the entrance current, the size of the vessel, the quality of navigational and radar equipment aboard the vessel, the availability of updated information regarding changing visibility in the channel and basin (provided by radio from the Wharfingers), and any other pertinent information that can be obtained at the time of the anticipated move. When vessels are moved during periods of reduced visibility, all other vessel movements are prohibited by either the Oxnard Harbor District or the U.S. Navy upon request of the pilot. The small size of Port Hueneme Harbor and the strict traffic control within the harbor allows movement of some vessels that would not be permitted in other ports. The ability to see 1,500 feet in Port Hueneme allows you to see completely across the harbor and the ability to see 350 feet allows you to see both sides of the channel. Tug escort from the breakwater to berth during times of restricted visibility is standard procedure.
- E. Findings:
1. Periods of high winds can pose problems in berthing high-profile vessels. The Port Hueneme Pilots are aware of this localized condition and do not attempt docking of these vessels until conditions are safe.
  2. The present case-by-case analysis of the advisability of moving vessels during periods of reduced visibility has proven itself to be a prudent practice and the committee makes no further recommendation at this time.
- F. Recommendations: The Harbor Safety Committee supports a statewide uniform system of Physical Oceanographic Realtime System (PORTS). to be established and permanently financed by NOAA and/or the State of California. PORTS is a proven value to the broad public in terms of marine safety, protecting the environment, use by recreational boaters, academia, and preventing oil spills in California waters. Safety of navigation in our harbors is highly dependent upon real time tidal and current information. OSPR, as an agency, should continue its oversight role.

### III. AIDS TO NAVIGATION AND NAUTICAL CHARTING

- A. Current Aids to Navigation: The following Aids to Navigation are currently maintained by the Coast Guard within the geographical boundaries of the Harbor Safety Plan

Point Hueneme Light  
Point Hueneme Light Fog Signal  
Port Hueneme Lighted Whistle Sea Buoy (PH)  
Port Hueneme West Jetty Light 3  
Port Hueneme East Jetty Light 4  
Port Hueneme Channel Lighted Buoy 5  
Port Hueneme Channel Lighted Buoy 6  
Port Hueneme Range Front Light  
Port Hueneme Range Rear Light

**NOTE:** The Corps of Engineers provided a tidal datum point which has been used to establish a local tide gauge near the Wharfingers office that provides accurate tidal readings for the port.

These are depicted on NOAA chart 18724 and NOAA Coast Pilot 7, Edition 41, 2009 which can be found at NOAA, Office of Coast Survey, Charts and Publications, (<http://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/staff/chartspubs.html>) and NOAA, Office of Coast Survey, Online Chart Viewer, (<http://www.nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/mcd/OnLineViewer.html>)

B. Findings:

1. The current navigational aids are minimal, but adequate in their function and performance. The breakwater lights and lighted channel buoys serve their function well and the addition of new aids, if they are proposed, should be carefully considered.
2. The relatively narrow entrance and narrow, short channel may require future upgrading with aids that will enhance the definition of the channel boundaries and the position of a vessel in reference to the channel center line.
3. An acoustical Doppler current measuring device, presently inoperative, is on the sea bed just outside the jetties at the entrance of the harbor to measure these currents on a 24-hour basis. The Port Hueneme Pilots and the U.S. Navy has had access to this information in the past, prior to each ship movement so that they can compensate for the sheering affect that results when the bow of the vessel is in the lee of the jetties and the stern is still being affected by the current.
4. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) have prepared a new chart for Port Hueneme and Approaches. Chart 18724 issued February 2003 which depicts a more appropriate approach area to the Port.
5. An Electronic Chart Display Indication System (ECDIS) has been installed, is operational and is monitored in the Wharfinger office.

C. Recommendations:

1. That the Harbor Safety Committee review the adequacy of the current Aids to Navigation system during the annual 1 July plan review.
2. That the Harbor Safety Committee consults with the Coast Guard and other interested parties prior to the annual review regarding future plans for modifications to the Aids to Navigation system.
3. The Acoustical Doppler Current Measuring Devise at the harbor entrance, identified in Section III B. 3 is presently inoperative and needs to be operational.

#### IV. HARBOR DESCRIPTION AND CONDITIONS

- A. Harbor Description: The entrance channel to the harbor basin is approximately 1,800 feet long with a width of 600 feet at the harbor entrance, narrowing to 310 feet during the last 250 yards to the harbor basin. The Turning Basin measures approximately 1,200 by 1,400 feet and contains the naval operations in the port. The East Basin measures approximately 400 by 1,800 feet, includes Wharves Number 1 and 2, and contains the commercial operations of the port. (Refer to Appendix I)
- B. Harbor Depths: The federal project depth for Port Hueneme is 35 feet. Maintaining authorized depths in the Federal channels for Port Hueneme and its approaches is currently the responsibility of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Soundings are normally taken on an annual basis, with shorter intervals if indicated by special circumstances. The inner harbor area does not have a history of shoaling with dredging usually taking place at approximate six year intervals. However, shoaling does occur at the harbor entrance due to littoral drift resulting from the longshore current and may become of concern to the pilots.
- C. Harbor Speed Restrictions: The current speed limit for all vessels operating inside the breakwater, except those involved in an emergency response, is 5 knots. This restriction is published in the Naval Base Ventura County, Port Hueneme Instruction 3170.3 (series), with the Commanding Officer having delegated responsibility for investigating reports of violation to the Port Operations Officer.
- D. Vessel Traffic Routing During Port Construction or Dredging: The question of traffic routing during port construction or dredging is not a problem because the subject is addressed in conference with the contractor before work begins. Representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Navy, Oxnard Harbor District, Port Hueneme Pilots and the contractor discuss and agree upon the requirements for non-interference with commercial traffic. No special additional measures are required.
- E. Findings:
  - 1. The historic frequency for dredging the harbor is insufficient.
  - 2. The frequency of soundings of the harbor entrance by NOAA and the Army Corps of Engineers is insufficient considering historic shoaling.
  - 3. The relatively small size of the port precludes the need for contingency or secondary routing plans during dredging or port construction since all vessel movements are cleared by either the Port Hueneme Wharfinger or Navy Port Control or both as required. (Section VIII - Vessel Traffic Management)
  - 4. Presently there are no reported plans to alter the physical dimensions of the port. At this time dredging operations are set to be completed in June 2009.
  - 5. As the harbor is primarily manmade and maintained by dredging, there are no fixed navigational hazards within the harbor itself. The entrance breakwater and waterfront facilities comprising the port are easily seen by the mariner, easily visible by radar, and well marked at the present time.
- F. Recommendations:
  - 1. That the State of California, through the Office of Spill Prevention and Response, request NOAA and the Army Corps of Engineers to institute six month intervals for surveying water depths at the harbor entrance.
  - 2. That the Harbor Safety Committee conducts an evaluation of the surveying process and procedure during the annual 1 July plan review.

## V. ANCHORAGES AND ANCHORAGE ADMINISTRATION

### A. Current Status:

1. There are no designated General Anchorages within Port Hueneme Harbor or its approaches.
2. The United States Coast Pilot 7: (Pacific Coast: California, Oregon, Washington, and Hawaii) currently recommends that vessels awaiting berth at Port Hueneme anchor approximately 1.7 miles south of Port Hueneme Light in approximately 13 fathoms of water.
3. Unlike other ports, anchorages off Port Hueneme would be in unprotected waters without the shelter of breakwater or other natural barrier.

### B. Findings:

1. The volume of commercial vessel traffic currently associated with the port may not justify a request for the establishment of a designated anchorage adjacent to Port Hueneme at this time.
2. The Oxnard Harbor District projects increases in cargo tonnage (and associated vessel calls) over the next five years. A designated anchorage near Port Hueneme may be needed in the future to accommodate the associated increase in commercial vessel traffic.

### C. Recommendations:

1. That no designated anchorage area with definite boundaries be established within Port Hueneme or its approaches at this time.
2. That the Harbor Safety Committee notify local commercial fishermen of any actions taken by the committee regarding changes to recommended vessel anchorage locations.
3. That the Harbor Safety Committee continue to conduct an evaluation of the necessity for a designated anchorage, if one has not been previously established, as part of the annual 1 July plan review.

## VI. COMMUNICATIONS

### A. Current Status:

1. VHF communications in Port Hueneme are primarily ship-to-shore via Channels 16 and 14 for the Oxnard Harbor District Wharfinger and Channels 16 and 6 for the U. S. Navy. VHF Channel 65A is the pilot's primary channel for ship-to-ship communications.
2. The U.S. Coast Guard can be reached by contacting Coast Guard Group Los Angeles-Long Beach (Group LA/LB) on VHF Channel 16. If Coast Guard Station Channel Islands Harbor (Oxnard) can be of assistance they will be referred by Group LA/LB and normally work Channel 22A.

### B. Summary of Primary VHF Channels:

USCG:	Channel 16 Channel 22A	Distress and Calling Working
Commercial Port:	Channel 16 Channel 14 Channel 65A	Calling Port Operations Tug Control
USN Port:	Channel 16 Channel 6 Channel 65A	Calling Port Control Tug Control

### C. Findings:

1. That the current frequency allocation system is adequate.
2. There is no need for a second pilot working frequency as only one ship movement can occur at a time. If Channel 65A is not usable, the pilot shifts to another working channel after announcing this shift on Channel 16.
3. There are no known low propagation, or silent, areas within Port Hueneme.

## VII. ASSESSMENT OF SMALL VESSEL SAFETY CONCERNS

- A. The Harbor Safety Committee recognizes the extensive small vessel traffic associated with the adjacent Channel Islands Harbor and the need to avoid unnecessary restrictions to local fishermen and pleasure boaters while at the same time providing for the safe navigation of all vessels in approach areas where options for large vessels to avoid small craft are limited.
- B. Findings:
1. Through education, small boat operators can be made aware of the hazards associated with maneuvering in close proximity to large ships.
  2. Application of Inland Rule 9 is not an issue in Port Hueneme. The demarcation line for application of navigational rules (Inland or International) is a line drawn from Port Hueneme East Jetty Light 4 to Port Hueneme West Jetty Light 3. Port Hueneme is a “closed port” and any waters shoreward of the demarcation line where Inland Rules would apply are under positive control. Circumstances should not develop where small craft or fishing vessels interfere with large commercial vessels. (Section VII - Vessel Traffic Management).
  3. Although an encounter between a large vessel entering or leaving Port Hueneme and a small vessel can occur at any time, the most probable times are;
    - a) during weekends and holidays when the number of pleasure boats crossing the harbor entrance is greatest, and
    - b) when a fishing run occurs off the Port Hueneme entrance.
  4. Most encounters of large and small vessels in the vicinity of the channel occur during daylight hours and usually involve the pilot of the large vessel sighting the small vessel, attempting to call the small vessel on VHF Channel 16, but receiving no response.
  5. Pilots occasionally experience problems when the operator of a commercial fishing vessel becomes preoccupied with preparation of fishing gear while passing the harbor entrance.
  6. The Harbor Safety Committee, in conjunction with the U.S. Coast Guard and the Department of Boating and Waterways, will continue to pursue the education and outreach to notify the recreational boating public about the potential hazards of maneuvering in close proximity to the Port of Hueneme (Appendix II).
- C. Recommendations:
1. That the local commercial fishermen’s organizations be asked to include words of caution to local commercial fishermen in future newsletters, correspondence and appropriate publications. The local fishermen’s organizations should be asked to present proposals for additional possible signage at harbor entrances.

## VIII. VESSEL TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

### A. General:

1. The Port Hueneme Harbor is unique in that it is a twenty-four hour a day vessel traffic controlled harbor. All vessels must obtain permission prior to entering, departing and intra-harbor shifting by calling Navy "Control One" on VHF radio channel 06. Vessels using commercial docks are also required to call the Oxnard Harbor District Wharfinger on VHF channel 14 for arrival, departing, shifting and any berthing instructions for those docks.
2. Clearance for all movements is obtained on a 24-hour basis via VHF radio or telephone. Since all other vessel movements are halted during the transit of deep draft vessels, vessel tracking during these periods is not necessary. Smaller vessels such as offshore work boats and fishing vessels are requested to stand clear of deep draft vessel movements.
3. Vessels approaching Port Hueneme from the Traffic Lanes are now tracked by an Electronic chart Display Indicating System (ECDIS) and constant radio communication is maintained between vessels and the Wharfingers.
4. Small recreational traffic crossing the entrance to the port does at times present potentially dangerous situations for entering and departing deep draft vessels.
5. Summary of Vessel Traffic: A summary of Bulk Liquid Carrier calls at the Port of Hueneme for the period CY 1978 through CY 2008 is provided in Appendix IV and a similar Summary of Commercial Vessel Traffic calling at the port during the period FY 2001 through FY 2008 is provided in Appendix V. Some refined product is occasionally delivered as Bunkers
6. Summary of Casualties: A review of marine casualties reported to the Coast Guard, for the period 1 January 2008 through 31 December 2008, for the area of this plan are summarized in Appendix III.

### B. Findings:

1. The present system for vessel traffic management at Port Hueneme functions well and may in the future require only minor adjustment to make it more effective.
2. The location of the Oxnard Harbor District Wharfingers at the east end of Slip A, adjacent to the small craft moorings, affords a good view of the harbor. Co-location of the Wharfingers and pilots, in the same office building facilitates communications among the two entities directly involved with vessel traffic management.
3. The current system to pass vessel ETAs via VHF radio has successfully prevented close quarters situations with other vessels. The addition of the ECDIS system greatly improves this ability.
4. A review of the U. S. Coast Guard records for the preceding five years indicates that in none of the casualties, was Vessel Traffic Management a factor.
5. The subject of a Vessel Traffic System for the Santa Barbara Channel is unwarranted at this time.
6. It is not anticipated that any user fees or assessments will be necessary for a vessel traffic management system at Port Hueneme.
7. Procedures for the routing of vessels during contingencies which impact navigation (natural disaster or major emergency) are contained in applicable Naval Base Ventura County, Port Hueneme Regulations.

B. Findings (Continued)

8. The Boating Public Awareness Sub-Committee of the Port Hueneme Harbor Safety Committee was charged with developing a comprehensive program for outreach to the yachting public and that this plan was put into effect during the 2005 calendar year. At present, the Recreational Boating position has a Representative and an Alternate. They will provide outreach to the recreational boating community.

C. Recommendations:

1. The present provisions for vessel traffic control be continued.
2. The Oxnard Harbor District continue to review its enforcement tools and investigate if any changes should be made to the Tariff (Appendix VIII) to make compliance with the present system more timely and enforceable, and that any substitutive changes be reported to the Harbor Safety Committee prior to the annual 1 July plan review.

## IX. BEST MARINE PRACTICES

### **Introduction**

Best Marine Practices (BMPs) are accepted and agreed upon methods to conduct vessel transits or operations that are necessary for or enhance the safety of vessels, personnel, dockside facilities and marine resources. These BMP's are not to be considered regulations or laws, but *guidelines* to assist the mariner with *local knowledge* while operating in the vicinity of Port Hueneme.

This BMP section has been designed as a quick pullout reference guide for safe and environmentally sound vessel movements and operations in and around the port area. The BMPs that are covered in this section include:

- General Anchorage
- Under Keel Clearance
- Speed Limits
- Small Craft (Recreational Vessels)
- Communications
- Reduced Visibility
- Heavy Weather

More detailed and extensive information, regulations and recommendations supporting these BMPs can be found in the following documents: Port of Hueneme Tariff #7 [www.portofhueneme.org](http://www.portofhueneme.org), U.S. Coast Pilot [www.uscg.mil](http://www.uscg.mil), USCG Rules of the Road [www.uscg.mil](http://www.uscg.mil) Port Hueneme Harbor Safety Plan [www.portofhueneme.org](http://www.portofhueneme.org) and Port Hueneme Guide to Boater Safety [www.portofhueneme.org](http://www.portofhueneme.org).

It is important to note that these BMPs are not intended to be in conflict with nor do they replace existing federal, state, and local regulations that are already in place. Nothing in these Best Marine Practices precludes a master or pilot from taking necessary steps and prudent actions to avoid or mitigate unsafe conditions.

### **Important General Information**

Port Hueneme is a Military Port under the control of the Commanding Officer, Naval Base Ventura County, Port Hueneme. The U.S. Navy is the Port Authority and shares the entrance channel and turning basin with the commercial port operated by the Oxnard Harbor District. Access to recreational boaters is restricted to the Port. Access given "by permission only, case by case or prior approval".

Port Hueneme is unique in that is a twenty-four hour a day vessel traffic controlled harbor. All vessels must obtain permission prior to entering, departing, and intra-harbor shifting by calling Navy "Control One" on VHF Channel 06. Vessels using commercial docks are also required to call the Oxnard Harbor District Wharfinger on VHF channel 14 for arrival, departing, shifting and any berthing instructions for those docks. Pilots are required for all vessels over 300 gross tons entering the port. (Other pilot requirements can be found in the Port Tariff)

Marine traffic in Port Hueneme is diverse and extensive, consisting of naval vessels of all sizes, dry cargo ships, auto carriers, tankers, commercial and sport fishing vessels, tug services, crew and supply boats servicing the offshore oil platforms, and barges.

### **Heavy Weather**

As with conditions of reduced visibility, Heavy Weather requires an increased awareness and understanding of existing conditions and the characteristics of the particular vessel when entering and/or departing the Port of Hueneme.

Historically, due to the configuration of the Port approaches, with the Hueneme Canyon leading to the Port and the general location along the coastline, rarely, if ever, has the port been closed to traffic due to sea/swell conditions alone. However, it should be noted, that for deep draft vessels, especially those approaching the controlling depth of the Port, due consideration must be given at all times to the possible effect of pitching due to sea conditions, keeping in mind sea conditions, draft, state of tide, and known water depth for various points of the approach and entrance channel.

For deep draft vessels, the normal factor of “heavy weather” which may require a cancellation of an inbound, outbound, or shifting maneuver will be the strength of the wind, its direction, and effect on the particular vessel due to its specific configuration.

At all times, the Master and Pilot must be in agreement regarding the advisability of either an inbound , outbound, or shifting maneuver, regarding existing and forecast wind conditions and give due consideration to all factors, including but not limited to:

1. Wind direction and speed.
2. Moored vessels and proximity of the maneuver to those vessels.
3. Number of tugs (type and horsepower/bollard pull) to be used and their ability to assist during various phases of the maneuver.
4. Vessel power plants.
  - a. number of thrusters (horsepower and effectiveness)
  - b. Main engine type (steam, diesel, etc.) and horsepower
  - c. Propeller (right hand, left hand, fixed or variable pitch, single or twin)
5. Rudder (standard, Schilling, Becker, etc. and it’s effectiveness)
6. Vessel characteristics and effects of winds due to same
  - a. construction
  - b. cargo loading (containers/deck cargo)
7. State of tide.
8. Steady or gusting wind conditions
9. Assigned berth of vessel and effects of wind on required maneuver to approach or depart that berth.
10. Surface area of side of vessel, location of house or other construction details which may have an adverse affect on maneuvering.

Due to the unique configuration and size of Port Hueneme, it should be noted that vessels of all types and LOA and vessels of the same type and LOA must be considered on an individual basis for all maneuvers within the approaches, entrance channel, turning basin, and Slip A due to the unique configuration and size of Port Hueneme.

Vessels of less than 300 Grt and/or with no pilot aboard, should give due consideration to all of the above mentioned criteria for vessel safety, as applicable to their specific requirements, limitations, and configuration regarding inbound, outbound, and shifting maneuvers within Port Hueneme.

### **Reduced Visibility:**

Reduced visibility requires that all mariners employ a greatly increased awareness of all conditions, equipment, and capabilities/drawbacks of same which may make an inbound or outbound passage to or from the port, inadvisable. At all times, ALL vessels will maintain compliance with COLREGS for vessels in restricted visibility, with added attention given to Rule 2.

Vessels below 300GT (no pilot required):

Generally, these vessels will have little problem working in any condition of reduced visibility, as long as all equipment is in good working order and due diligence is applied.

Vessels above 300GT:

The movement of these vessels, whether inbound or outbound, needs to be performed only after careful consideration is given to the characteristic and capabilities of the individual vessel in the prevailing conditions. This would include, but not be limited to, the handling characteristics, LOA, Radar picture, winds, currents, under keel clearance, other vessels at berth, actual visibility at critical points of transit, a clear understanding and agreement between the Master and Pilot to proceed, tug boat assistance and capabilities, and weather forecast. Due to the characteristics of the Port’s physical configuration and the great variance in vessel capabilities utilizing the Port, placing strict guidelines based on LOA and visibility distance is not deemed advisable, as each case must be handled on an individual basis.

## **General Anchorage**

- There is no anchorage area in the harbor basin because of space limitations. The recommended anchorage for deep-draft vessels is about 1.7 miles South of Port Hueneme Light. This location offers no protection in heavy weather.
- It should be standard practice to keep a licensed deck officer on the bridge at all times to monitor conditions, vessel position and the radio.
- Anchorage Weather Conditions:
  - Winds in excess of 25 knots will require heighten awareness of the increased potential for vessels to drag anchor. Vessels shall take all necessary precautions to maintain a safe anchored position or get underway as conditions warrant.

## **Under Keel Clearance**

- Between Port Hueneme Sea Buoy and prior to entering the “turning basin” clearance will be 10% of the vessel’s draft above the controlling depth of the port, which is 35 feet MLLW.
- During final approach to the berth and while at berth vessel should always remain afloat.

## **Safe Speed**

- Speed within the port should be at a minimum safe speed to maneuver and control the vessel, with regards to weather, conditions of draft, and the maneuvering characteristics of the particular vessel.
- On approaches, speed should be at a level to accommodate safe transit (Minimum for existing conditions). It should be noted that the approach to Port Hueneme generally involves cross currents which are mostly unpredictable for direction and strength.

## **Small Craft**

- Recreational vessels approaching Port Hueneme should be aware that many vessels transiting to and from the port will be maneuvering either to embark or disembark a pilot, and that during these times they will be highly limited in their ability to maneuver other than for the pilot boat, or other authorized personnel.
- Also, supply boats and crew boats which use Port Hueneme as a base of operations, should follow prescribed transit (For detail of transit corridors please see the Port of Hueneme’s *A Guide to Boater Safety*).
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## **Communications**

- Communications within the port are through Port Hueneme Control 1, U.S. Navy and the Wharfingers.
- Port Hueneme Control 1 (monitors and effects communications) on channel 6 and 16.
- Wharfingers for commercial side (monitors and effects communications) on channel 16 and 14.
- Port Hueneme Pilots normally work channel 65A and monitor channel 14.

## X. TUG ASSISTANCE/ESCORTS FOR TANK VESSELS

### A. Current Practice:

1. For each inbound vessel using tug assistance into the Port Hueneme Harbor, tug escort from the Pilot Boarding Area to berth is standard procedure.
2. Two tugs assist all petroleum, petrochemical and chemical tanker ships calling at Port Hueneme Harbor. Tug escort from the Pilot Boarding Area to berth is standard practice.
3. As standard practice, petroleum, petrochemical and chemical barges operating in Port Hueneme Harbor in a loaded or partially loaded condition whether entering, departing, or shifting, use tug escort/assistance (in addition to the towing vessel) - based on berth length - in accordance with the following criteria:
  - a. Not greater than 150': No escort/assistance tug required unless deemed necessary by the Master or Pilot for existing conditions.
  - b. Greater than 150' but not greater than 250': One escort/assistance tug required, the horsepower of which is to be appropriate for existing conditions as determined by the Master and/or Pilot.
  - c. Greater than 250': At least one escort/assistance tug required, the horsepower of which is to be 1,500 HP or greater and an additional tug as deemed appropriate by the Master and/or Pilot.
  - d. Tank barges operating in Port Hueneme Harbor in an unloaded condition have tug escort/assistance on a case-by-case basis as determined by the Master and/or Pilot.
4. Pilots board inbound vessels via one of the harbor tugs outside the breakwater entrance, as no pilot boat is maintained, and this minimum of one tug is kept as an escort from sea to the vessel's berth. For vessels requiring two tugs for assistance, the second tug also meets the vessel outside the breakwater and also escorts the vessel into port as a matter of standard procedure.
5. Presently there is one deep-draft commercial tug operator and one limited tug (500 hp)/utility boat operator with permits to perform escort and assist functions within the port with their equipment being selected for its maneuverability, size, and operator skill in addition to adequate bollard pull.
6. Tug escorts provide no oil pollution control or response equipment.
7. All vessels requiring tug assistance on departure are escorted past the breakwater entrance by a tug, or tugs, as required by the pilot or master of the vessel. Tug escort and assistance from the berth past the breakwater is standard practice for all tankers departing the Port of Hueneme.
8. Vessels, other than petroleum, petrochemical and chemical tankers, are permitted to enter and depart the Port Hueneme Harbor without the assistance and escort of tugs when in the opinion of the pilot and master such assistance is not required. The pilot makes this decision following consultation with the vessel's master concerning the size and maneuvering characteristics of each vessel and the current weather conditions. The evaluation of the maneuvering characteristics specifically addresses the vessel's propulsion systems (e.g., twin screw, bow thrusters, stern thrusters, etc.).

9. Tugs available for assistance and escort at Port Hueneme are as follows:

M/V LULAPIN

Length: 78'  
Beam: 30'  
Draft: 11'  
Propulsion: Z-Drive  
Engines: Two Catapillar 3512-B  
HP: 4000 BHP  
Special Equipment: Fire Monitor :  
SKUM MK 150, 1200 GPM,

M/V WYNEMA SPIRIT

Length: 78'  
Beam: 30'  
Draft: 11'  
Propulsion: Z-Drive  
Engines: Two MTU 12V4000  
HP: 4000 BHP  
Special Equipment: Fire Monitor  
SKUM MK 150, 1800 GPM,  
400 GAL. FOAM

10. Additional tugs are occasionally available at Port Hueneme for assistance and escort, depending upon business commitments.

B. Findings:

1. The present procedures for tug usage in Port Hueneme are appropriate and need not be altered at this time.
2. The physical limitations of the port control the size of tankers calling at the Port of Hueneme. Considering this limit, the current 1750 to 4000 HP tugs are adequately powered for escort and assist purposes during weather conditions that will allow the maximum size vessels to safely call at the port.
3. A review of U. S. Coast Guard records for the preceding three years indicated that no accidents or near accidents during the period would have been prevented by tug escorts.
4. An evaluation of the procedures addressing tug assistance and tug escorts for tank vessels indicated that the current plan requirements are adequate and require no additional revision. The recent addition of available tug bollard pull from 35 tons to 50 tons has only served to increase the safety margin used in the original plan. Port Hueneme is operating within the safety parameters required by all ports covered under OSPR jurisdiction.

C. Recommendation:

That the Harbor Safety Committee conducts an evaluation of the procedures addressing tug assistance and tug escorts for tank vessels during the annual 1 July plan review. This evaluation would include a review of information relating to tug escort requirements being developed by other Harbor Safety Committees.

## XI. ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE PLAN

The Harbor Safety Committee studied the economic impacts of this Harbor Safety Plan.

### A. Findings:

1. The plan as outlined herein should have minimal additional economic impact upon the maritime industry, the Oxnard Harbor District, tenants and users of the port, or the surrounding community.
2. The current minimum call-out for tug service is two hours. The standard procedure to provide tug escorts for every vessel using tug assistance will create no additional economic impact.
3. Nothing in this plan would put the Oxnard Harbor District at a competitive disadvantage with other ports within the U. S.

### B. Recommendation:

That the Harbor Safety Committee conducts an evaluation of the plan's economic impact during the annual 1 July plan review.

## XII. PLAN ENFORCEMENT

### A. MANDATE:

In accordance with the ACT, suggested mechanisms to ensure that the provisions of the plan are fully and regularly enforced are to be provided. In addition, a history and type of all accidents and near accidents which have occurred within the past three years, and any corrective actions or programs taken to alleviate reoccurrence, are to be included.

### B. EXISTING ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS:

Port Hueneme is unique from other ports in that it is under the jurisdiction of the U. S. Navy and the administrative authority of the Commanding Officer, Naval Base Ventura County. The port consists of two separate, distinct parts: commercial facilities (Wharves 1 and 2) and military facilities (all others). Most of the areas owned by the Oxnard Harbor District were acquired by the District from the Federal Government with the condition that the operation and use of the premises are subject to NAVBASE Ventura County Instruction 3170.1 (Port Information and Regulations) with respect to the following matters:

- a) The right of vessels to enter or depart the harbor.
- b) Berthing of vessels to the extent necessary to preclude interference with either military or commercial vessel traffic.
- c) Issuance and enforcement of port safety rules.
- d) Handling and shipment of dangerous cargoes.
- e) Issuance and enforcement of sanitation regulations.
- f) Regulation of pilotage.
- g) Coordination authority over other matters which jointly affect commercial and military interests.

The Oxnard Harbor District has enforcement authority to assure compliance with the District Port Tariff or other port related rules and regulations, as they relate to the seven matters listed above, the rules and regulations contained in the District Port Tariff are published pursuant to the authority granted to the District by the Commanding Officer of the Naval Base Ventura County.

#### 1. U. S. COAST GUARD ENFORCEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

- a) Summary of Regulations: The Coast Guard enforcement authority is derived from both federal statute and regulation.
  - 1) Pursuant to 33 CFR 6, titled Protection and Security of Vessels, Harbors, and Waterfront Facilities (Espionage Act), the rules and regulations of the relevant legislative authorities shall be enforced by the Captain of the Port (COTP) under the supervision and general direction of the District Commander and the Commandant. The COTP may supervise and control the movement of any vessel. The Espionage Act has power based on security, not safety, and has only criminal penalties.
  - 2) The Ports and Waterways Safety Act (PWSA) of 1972, as amended by the Port and Tanker Safety Act of 1978 (33 USC 1221 et seq.) provides the strongest authority for the Coast Guard's port safety program, and is intended to increase vessel safety and protect the marine environment in ports, harbors, waterfront areas, and the navigable waters. It also allows the establishment of requirements for vessel operation, and other related port safety controls. The PWSA provides for both civil and criminal penalties for violations.

- 3) Under the authority of 33 CFR 160.111, Captain of the Port (COTP) Orders are available to address vessel-specific short-term hazards. Any long-term directive would require that federal rulemaking procedures be followed. COTP Orders may involve establishing a vessel traffic routing scheme or vessel size, speed, and draft limitations; restricting vessel traffic movements to one direction and to certain times; or requiring vessels to be assisted by tug boats.
  - 4) The “Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA) of 2002” when implemented by regulations, will require security measures for ports, facilities and vessels. Currently, security guidelines for ports, facilities and vessels can be found in CFR33-100-05 Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, Subchapter H-Maritime Security available on the World Wide Web at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>.
- b) Summary of Field Presence: The Coast Guard carries out its mission through aerial surveillance and multi-mission vehicle or boat patrols. The Coast Guard has, on a routine daily basis, approximately four people involved in field inspection or investigation activities in the local region. The Coast Guard multi-mission vessels are used for search and rescue and maritime law enforcement, as well as port safety and marine environmental protection investigation and enforcement.

## 2. U. S. NAVY ENFORCEMENT RESPONSIBILITY:

- a) Summary of Regulations: NBVC Instruction 3170.1 contains port information and regulations applicable to all military and commercial vessels using Port Hueneme and includes anchorage restrictions and speed limits. Pilotage is required for all commercial ships greater than 300 gross registered tons entering or departing the port. The Port Operations Officer may direct any ship to take a pilot and use tugs at any time it believes conditions warrant such actions. The commanding officer or master of the vessel remains at all time the party responsible for the safety of the ship, and may relieve the pilot at any time and for any reason (Appendix VI).
- b) Summary of Field Presence: The Port Operations Officer carries out daily operations under the authority of the Commanding Officer, NBVC. The NBVC Port Operations Division maintains a 24-hour harbor watch, conducts inspections of floating equipment and vessels, and assists in movement of ships and barges in and out of the harbor on the military side. Navy utility boats perform a wide variety of duties, including removing navigational hazards from the inner harbor and entrance channel. Oil spill response teams are on call 24 hours-a-day, and port operations maintains approximately 3,000 feet of oil spill containment boom on Navy wharves.

## 3. STATE ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- a) The California Department of Fish and Game – Office of Spill Prevention and Response, the California State Lands Commission, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board enforce laws and regulations for pollution prevention and response in the harbors of California.
- b) Summary of Regulations: In addition to the provisions contained in the Lempert-Keene-Seastrand Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act, the California Fish and Game Code provides at Sections 5650 et seq. general law regarding water pollution prohibitions and both criminal and civil penalties on discharges of petroleum and other hazardous materials entering California waters. State Fish and Game wardens enforce these sections. Further, California Water Code Section 13272 requires any person who knows of any oil or petroleum product discharge into California waters notify the Office of Emergency Services. Failure to comply is a misdemeanor. All OSPR regulations are found in Title 14, California Code of Regulations. Regulations promulgated by the State Lands Commission are found in Title 2, California Code of Regulations.

#### 4. OXNARD HARBOR DISTRICT ENFORCEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

- a) Summary of Regulations: Oxnard Harbor District regulations are contained in the Oxnard Harbor District, Port of Hueneme, and Port Terminal Tariff No.7. The Harbor District has navigation regulations for the port which include requirements for mooring, lightering, and pilotage. Except in those cases where the duty is specifically imposed upon some other officer or employee of the District, it is the duty of the Executive Director to enforce Tariff No. 7 rules and regulations. It is also the duty of the Executive Director to report to the proper federal, state, or county officer the violation of any law, rule, or regulation with respect to the operation or control of the areas of the Harbor District in cases where he is not himself empowered to act. Anyone violating any of the provisions of the rules and regulations of the Tariff is guilty of a misdemeanor (Appendix VIII).
- b) Summary of Field Presence: The Oxnard Harbor District carries out its compliance functions through duty Wharfingers stationed on the docks. A Wharfinger maintains a watch on a 24-hour basis with one or two Wharfingers on duty at all times. The Wharfingers are equipped with a District vehicle and marine radios for rapid communications.

#### C. History of Accidents and Near-Accidents within the Scope of the Plan during the Past Three Years:

If "accidents" are defined as vessel collisions (between two moving vessels), allisions (between a moving vessel and a stationary object, including another vessel), vessel groundings, or oil spills (or potential oil spills), then the following statistics are available:

1. See Appendix III.
2. Statistics on "near accidents" within the area of concern during the past three years are unavailable as no such statistics are maintained.

#### D. Provisions Requiring Enforcement and Enforcement Mechanisms:

This section lists by section number the provisions of the plan that require enforcement and how that enforcement will be achieved. Plan implementation is a separate issue, not to be confused with enforcement, and is not addressed in this section. Only sections of the plan with provisions requiring enforcement are discussed.

1. Harbor Description and Conditions (Section IV):  
The plan cites a speed limit of 5 knots inside the breakwater. Anyone observing violations should report them directly to the Oxnard Harbor District Wharfinger or the U.S. Navy Port Operations.
2. Vessel Traffic Management (Section VIII):  
The Oxnard Harbor District Wharfinger and the U.S. Navy Port Operations control all vessel movements that are routine; during times of port construction or dredging movements; and any disaster, disorder, or enemy attack. Any deviation by a vessel from the vessel's movement orders will be reported by one or both of these two authorities directly to their own enforcement branches or to the U.S. Coast Guard for enforcement.
3. Tug Assistance/Escorts for Petroleum, Petrochemical and Chemical Tank Vessels (Section IX):  
The provisions in this section requiring enforcement are promulgated as state regulations. Noncompliance with any tug assist/escort regulations would first be noticed by the pilot and/or tug operator who would report infractions to OSPR. An OSPR representative could then be dispatched for enforcement purposes.

E. Finding:

Sufficient mechanisms are in place and available for use by either the Oxnard Harbor District, through the Port Tariff (Appendix VIII), or the U. S. Navy, through Naval Base Ventura County Instructions (Appendix VI), to promulgate any rules or regulations that are needed to address identified safety related concerns and back them up with adequate enforcement.

F. Recommendations:

1. That the Harbor Safety Committee request enforcement bodies and other appropriate organizations collect and forward to the committee any comments or suggestions from harbor users concerning their experiences with existing safety and enforcement mechanisms.
2. That the Harbor Safety Committee recommends any additional enforcement capabilities during the annual 1 July plan review.
3. That the U.S. Coast Guard and the Office of Spill Prevention and Response review all appropriate regulations and previous enforcement actions and that this information is provided to the Committee for use during the annual 1 July plan review.

## SIGNATURE PAGE

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Captain Andrew Harvey  
Chairperson

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Mr. Pete Wallace (Executive Secretary)  
Representing Port of Hueneme