

# **Marine Services Transition**

## ***FAQ: Vessel demonstrations, approval and training***

In 2018, a fleet of new tugs and barges will arrive in Prince William Sound for SERVS marine operations. Before they're approved for duty, they'll have to undergo a series of testing, evaluations and capability demonstrations.

### **Question: How is a new vessel deemed sea-worthy before it leaves the shipyard?**

After a large commercial vessel is built, it must go through a series of tests to prove it's sea-worthy and ready for its mission. In the case of the new escort and general purpose tugs, they will go through extensive sea trials to demonstrate they meet the design and operating criteria. This includes testing propulsion, throttle, alarms and bollard pull.

Sea trials occur in close proximity to the shipyard in order to fix any deficiencies found during these tests. Trials will be observed by the United States Coast Guard, the American Bureau of Shipping, and ECO representatives.

Upon successful completion of sea trials, the USCG issues a certification of inspection (COI) and the American Bureau of Shipping provides notations for its classification. Following this, ECO will demonstrate the vessels meet the design requirements of their contract with Alyeska.

If the vessels do not meet the requirements of ABS, USCG or Alyeska, Alyeska will not accept them. Modifications would need to be made to vessels until they comply.

### **Question: Do the new tugs need additional approval in order to operate in Prince William Sound?**

Yes. Once ECO has demonstrated to Alyeska, the USCG and ABS the vessels are sea worthy and meet contract design requirements, we must then demonstrate that they meet the requirements of the tanker and Valdez Marine Terminal contingency plans. This should follow smoothly, as the contract requirements are designed to ensure the ability to meet contingency plan performance requirements.

For this approval, each class of tug must demonstrate (in Prince William Sound) that it is able to carry out its specific capabilities and tactics as outlined in the contingency plans. For the escort tugs, these capabilities include arresting and controlling a tanker within a certain distance, taking a tanker under tow, and other operations under varying operational conditions. The general purpose tugs will also need to demonstrate their capabilities to fulfill their mission as defined in the contingency plans.

In order to carry out demonstrations in time for contingency plan approval before the July 1 transition date, one of each class of new vessels will arrive in Prince William Sound in early 2018. In addition to vessel demonstrations, this will allow ECO to rotate crews through Valdez and Prince William Sound operations before ECO takes over operations in July.

**Question: How will Alyeska make sure ECO mariners are trained and ready for their mission in Prince William Sound?**

ECO mariners will have several types of training to operate the new tugs and barges:

1. As they already do worldwide, ECO will continue to make sure that their mariners have the proper experience, qualifications and certificates required by the USCG and others to operate vessels in their fleet.
2. SERVS will deliver classroom and hands-on curriculum to experienced ECO mariners headed to SERVS operations. These classes are familiarizations of SERVS' mission, Prince William Sound, and Alyeska's equipment, vessels and operations. In addition to familiarization, crews will be trained on specific operations of the oil spill equipment and tactics. ECO started this mission-specific training in October of 2017.
3. ECO captains of both escort and general purpose tugs will observe escort operations aboard a Crowley tug during the winter of 2017/2018. This will include tanker docking at the terminal, and escort operations through the sound and the Gulf of Alaska, during the time of year we typically experience our harshest weather conditions.
4. While the ECO vessels cannot conduct tanker escort duties, or fulfill contingency plan response commitments until approved, they can and will conduct drills and exercises in Prince William Sound with TAPS trade tankers and local vessels of opportunity and integrate into day-to-day SERVS operations. This will also allow ECO crews to go through normal crew rotations before the transition date.
5. Once on scene, crews will receive additional hands-on familiarization with Alyeska equipment in the PWS environment and operation.

After ECO has taken over the marine service duties, they will be part of Alyeska's regular drill and exercise program. Like Crowley currently does, they will regularly practice spill response, tether and towing capabilities. These exercises and deployments will occur at an increased tempo for several months after the transition.

**Question: Will Alyeska test the new tugs in bad weather?**

There's no shortage of weather in Prince William Sound and Alyeska and ECO will be ready to demonstrate tanker escorts in a variety of weather and sea conditions before July 1, 2018.

**Question: What about testing them in closure or near closure conditions?**

Undertaking an exercise in closure/near closure conditions (weather conditions that halt tanker transit through Prince William Sound) poses an unacceptable risk to the people who work on TAPS. To conduct such an exercise would put people in harm's way and is entirely inconsistent with our safety culture and best practices within our industry and with other emergency response organizations. We will not conduct testing in near closure conditions.

**Question: Shouldn't you test their response in the worst conditions in order to make sure they're ready to perform?**

No. Oil spill prevention and response workers are trained for emergency operations in unpredictable conditions. It is not prudent to demonstrate operations in uncontrolled, unsafe conditions. This is a best practice in our industry and is the standard for emergency response training. For example, firefighters train, drill and exercise in scenarios where the hazards are controllable (fuel sources can be stopped, and building structure is understood). Some years ago, fire departments acquired derelict, uncontrollable structures and conducted live fire exercises in them; firefighters died in those scenarios. Those fatalities led to standards and regulations that ensure live fire training is conducted in safe facilities, in controlled conditions, and in a safe manner for participants while the hazards are controlled.