



Fleet Safety Manual

7.C.4 - TOWING OPERATIONS

1 PURPOSE

- a) To ensure the safety at sea, prevention of human injury or loss of life, and avoidance of damage to the environment, in particular to the marine environment and to property while engaged in towing operations whether that is when towing other vessels or when Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) vessels themselves are being towed.
- b) This procedure includes the requirement for vessels over 500 GRT to have a written Site Specific Emergency Towing Booklet which covers procedures and equipment for a CCG vessel to be towed in emergency situations.

2 RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 COMMANDING OFFICER

- a) The Commanding Officer is to ensure that when commercial towing services are contracted, that such operations are conducted in compliance with the principles and guidelines contained in this procedure and recognised seamanship practices.
- b) The Commanding Officer is to ensure that towing operations are conducted in compliance with towing policies and procedures outlined within the CCG.

2.2 ALL PERSONNEL

- a) All personnel aboard a CCG vessel involved in towing operations shall ensure that their actions promote the safety of the vessel and crew as the primary objective.

2.3 TUG OPERATOR

- a) The Tug Operator is responsible to provide the tug(s), services, towing equipment and crew in order to safely tow the CCG vessel from a preset site to another preset site.

3 INSTRUCTION

3.1 GENERAL

- a) Towing a disabled vessel can be one of the most demanding and risk-intensive missions undertaken. Following established pre-tow and towing procedures will contribute greatly towards ensuring a safe and successful towing operation. Each situation will also present its own unique challenges that will require the ability to adapt procedures to the circumstances.
- b) Vessels shall develop a Ship-Specific Procedure for Towing Other Vessels that takes into account the capabilities and limitations of the vessel and crew. The *CCG Towing Guide* and the [Policy on Assistance to Disabled Vessels](#) shall be referenced to develop the Ship-Specific Procedure for Towing Other Vessels.
- c) There are times when a CCG vessel requires to be towed either to or from a shipyard or in emergency cases where the vessel has become disabled. Advanced planning is necessary to ensure a well thought out plan allowing for a prepared operation. CCG vessels shall develop a Ship-Specific Procedure for Being Towed that also takes into account the capabilities and limitations of the vessel and crew.

3.2 PLANNING

- a) The competencies and capabilities of the crew to carry out a towing operation safely and effectively including crew complement, level of training, experience and familiarity with the applicable circumstances and any limiting factors shall be taken into consideration when planning any towing operation.
- b) When towing another vessel a communications plan shall be developed. All necessary information for the safety of the tow including rigging, getting underway and the tow shall be communicated. The [Policy on Assistance to Disabled Vessels](#) shall be referenced prior to engaging in any towing operation for a disabled vessel.
- c) When a CCG vessel is being towed, proper planning and assessment of departure/arrival activities from/into facilities should be considered. A meeting shall be organized with this sole purpose. All parties related to work /operation of the vessel shall be present at this meeting.
- d) The use of a Pilot when available should be considered based on their knowledge and experience with commercial tugs in this type of operation.
- e) When CCG vessels are crewed while under tow, watches shall be kept on the bridge and in the engine room for the duration of the operation.

3.3 SHIP-SPECIFIC PROCEDURES

- a) A Ship-Specific Procedure for Towing Other Vessels or for Being Towed shall include, but not be limited to, the following elements:
 - The vessel's configuration and suitability to rig for towing
 - The vessel's size, power and manoeuvrability
 - The equipment available on board (both fixed and portable)

- b) As prescribed by SOLAS MSC.256 (84), vessels over 500 GRT shall establish a Ship Specific Emergency Towing Booklet which describes the process for the vessel to be towed. This booklet shall include the following;
- description of procedures to be followed before and during the towing operations,
 - drawings of the fore and aft deck showing possible towing arrangements,
 - inventory of equipment on board that can be used for emergency towing,
 - means and methods of communication.

3.4 PRIOR TO ALL TOWING OPERATIONS

- a) A Towing Operational Plan shall be defined and made available to all personnel involved in the towing operation. This plan may include the booklet describe in 3.3 (b) but should also include, but not be limited to, the following additional requirements:
- Adequacy of the tug (Capacity, size, power, etc.);
 - Roles and responsibilities of all parties involved shall be clearly defined/ identified: CCG Commanding Officer and crew, ITS, PWGSC, Shipyard representative, Pilot (if applicable) and tug personnel;
 - Date and time of departure to be selected by considering the weather forecast (wind, visibility etc) and forecasted density of traffic;
 - Currents and tides to be considered and time of departure/arrival to be determined accordingly;
 - Briefing on risks and hazards of the route (waters to be transited; currents, tides, shoals etc.);
 - Vessel design and specification (vessel's manoeuvring data);
 - Status of vessel's equipment and machinery to be considered;
 - Structural condition and stability;
 - Adequacy of towing gear;
 - Adequacy of connections to the CCG Vessel;
 - Chafing gear;
 - Emergency towing gear;
 - Establish communication with the tug (VHF work channel, back up communication, etc.);
 - Weather conditions at time of the operation (wind speed and direction, sea state);
 - A contingency plan must be established and follow accepted seamanship practices (emergency wharfs and/or anchorages);
 - Possibility of assisting the tug if partial or full propulsion is available

4 DOCUMENTATION

- CCG Towing Guide
- Ship-Specific Procedures for Towing Other Vessels
- Ship-Specific Procedures for Being Towed
- Ship-Specific Emergency Towing Booklet (Vessels over 500 GRT)
- Towing Operational Plan
- Inventory of Towing Equipment
- Policy on Assistance to Disabled Vessels
- National SAR Manual

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