Pacific Pilotage AUTHORITY

1000-1130 PENDER ST. W
VANCOUVER, BC V6E 4A4
CANADA

NOTICE TO INDUSTRY

Date Issued: 22 October 2026 **Notice Number:** 03 | 2026

Subject: Guidelines for Container Vessels and Terminals

Geographic Area: Compulsory pilotage waters, BC

Application: These rules apply to container ships calling Centerm, Vanterm, Deltaport, and Fairview.

Definitions:

Safe Working Load (SWL): is the load limit, measured in tonnes (t), of a ship's mooring and towing fittings such as bitts, bollards, and fairleads.

Minimum Breaking Load (MBL): is the absolute minimum force or load, measured in tonnes (t), a rope, mooring or towing fitting is required to withstand before it fails or breaks.

Bollard Pull (BP): is the conventional maritime measure of a tugboat's towing or pushing power. It is measured in tonnes (t) and stated on a tug's Bollard Pull certificate. For docking / undocking operations, the ***sustained*** Bollard Pull is used, not the maximum Bollard Pull.

Effective Line Force (ELF): is the minimum force that a tug must be capable of inducing on a ship via the towline tethered to that ship. The SWL of ships' towing fittings must be the same or higher than the required ELF for the operation being conducted.

Minimum ELF: is the combined total Effective Line Force (ELF) required, generated by multiple tugs operating together. Note that tugs operating together to generate a Minimum ELF should have Bollard Pull (BP) ratings as close to equal as possible.

Guidelines:

1. **Ship Fittings (Bitts, Bollards, Fairleads)**

   All ship's fittings, such as bitts, bollards, and fairleads, must be adequate for use by the tugs, and the strength of the decks on which these fittings are installed must also be adequately designed to withstand the required loads exerted by tugs during berthing, unberthing, and escorting operations. To ensure suitable tugs are ordered and the operation can be completed safely, the following must occur:

   1. All container vessel operators must provide the PPA with a 'Mooring & Towing Arrangement Plan' showing the SWL of all relevant ship fittings (bitts, bollards, fairleads) that could be used for tug operations.
   2. PPA Dispatch will ensure that all orders for containerships have an associated 'Mooring & Towing Arrangement Plan', which will be shared with the pilot at time of dispatch.
   3. The pilot(s) dispatched to a ship will review the 'Mooring and Towing Arrangement Plan' provided and compare it with the tug requirements in section 3 to ensure suitable tugs are ordered for the job.

4. During the Master-Pilot Exchange (MPX), the pilot will inform the master of the expected loads that tugs may exert on ship fittings (bitts, bollards, and fairleads) during berthing, unberthing, or tethered escort operations.
5. The master and pilot will verify the SWL, location, and condition of the ship fittings to be used for tug operations.
6. The master shall ensure that the ship's crewmembers use ship fittings of adequate SWL when making fast the tug lines.
7. The pilot will inform the tug operators as to which bitts, bollards, and fairleads to use, and the method of securing the tug lines.
8. The pilot will inform the tug operator of any operational restrictions with the ship fittings used for the tug operations.
9. If the ship's fittings are of inadequate SWL, the pilot will request additional tugs to be used so that:
    a. the individual forces exerted by any tug remain within the SWL limits of the bitts, bollards, and fairleads used; and
    b. the total ELFs provided by all tugs is adequate for the intended operation, and meets the Minimum ELF described in Section 3 below.

2. Shore Crane Positioning

Container vessels have previously made contact with container cranes during berthing and unberthing. The flare of the ship’s bow, the crane set-back distance from the berth face, and the angle of approach can all play a factor in the risk of contact between ship and crane. To reduce the risk of contact, the following requirements apply to all ship arrivals and departures at container terminals:

1. Cranes must be stowed at the mid-ship point at the arrival / departure berth and boomed up, i.e. away from the bow/stern of the vessel.
2. If crane booms are lowered because of breakdown, maintenance, or any other reason, the PPA and BCCP must be notified well in advance and provided with the crane boom height above CHS vertical chart datum. The PPA, BCCP, terminal, and, if applicable, the Port will jointly determine whether additional safety mitigation measures are required. An overhead berthing plan showing the ship’s location and the position of all cranes is the clearest way to identify ship and crane positions.
3. Cranes in operation at adjacent berths should be as far away as is practical from the arriving / departing vessel. If the adjacent berth is vacant, cranes at that berth should be stowed at the mid-ship position and boomed up.
4. For added safety, pilots are requested to do the following:
    a. Berth the vessel so cranes are as near to the mid-ship point of the vessel as is practical, even if the entire berth face is vacant i.e., do not dock the vessel with the cranes at the bow or stern and then shift into position.
    b. If cranes are stowed improperly or boomed-down and no prior notification was provided, contact PPA Dispatch and endeavour to contact the terminal operators.
    c. Exercise caution with regards to cranes in operation at the bow/stern of vessel(s) at the adjacent berth(s) upon arrival / departure.

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3. Tug Requirements

Based on multiple simulations and live trials conducted at various container terminals over the past five years, the BCCP, PPA, and terminal operators have jointly developed the berthing and unberthing tug packages outlined below. These recommended minimums do not supersede any rules or directions provided by the Port Authority or Transport Canada.

Centerm / Vanterm Tug Packages:

Ship Size (LOA)	# ASD Tugs required, and Minimum ELF*	
	(arrivals)	(departures)
< 280 m	2 tugs, 130t ELF	2 tugs, 130t ELF
280.0 m to 350.0 m	2 tugs, 130t ELF or 3 tugs, 195t ELF	2 tugs, 130t ELF
> 350 m	3 tugs, 210 ELF	2 tugs, 130t ELF

Deltaport (starboard-to) Tug Packages:

Ship Size (LOA)	# ASD Tugs required, and Minimum ELF*	
	(arrivals)	(departures)
< 305 m	2 tugs, 130t ELF	2 tugs, 130t ELF
305.0 m to 340.0 m	3 tugs, 195t ELF	2 tugs, 130t ELF
> 340 m	4 tugs, 260t ELF	2 tugs, 130t ELF

**Pilot discretion applies – weather, environment, displacement, traffic, etc. are factors that may be considered*

Fairview Tug Packages:

Refer to PPA Notice to Industry 04/2023

Please contact PPA at marineops@ppa.gc.ca for any queries and/or clarifications.