

USCG Waterways Assessments

Possible Marine Board Study: The USCG assesses waterways using three different methods. Examine the feasibility, and if feasible, develop a single methodology that would serve all USCG needs and leverage advances in technology such as the USCG's enterprise AIS and GIS systems.

Existing Assessment Methodologies and Objectives:

Port Access Route Study (PARS)

Objective: (1) determine present and potential traffic densities and distribution; (2) evaluate if existing vessel routing measures are adequate (3) support the justification for new vessel routing measures and their type; and (4) if usage of the vessel routing measures must be made mandatory for specific classes of vessels. Focus is on off-shore approaches/coastal waters. Legislatively mandated if considering a Traffic Separation Schemes or Shipping Safety Fairways.

Process: Conducted at the District level. Notice of Study (NOS) is published in the Federal Register. Notice will identify the study area, provides the reasons for the PARS, and invites public comments and additional information. PARS can take from 1-2 years to complete.

Outcome: Results are used to help program managers establish traffic routing measures, fairways, TSS, limited access areas, recommended routes and regulated navigation areas. Provides justification for further regulatory projects or IMO submissions.

Port and Waterway Safety Assessment (PAWSA)

Objective: (1) provide input when planning for projects to improve the safety of navigation, (2) further the Marine Transportation System goals of improved coordination and cooperation between government and the private sector, (3) foster development and/or strengthen the roles of Harbor Safety Committees within each port, and (4) support and reinforce the role of Coast Guard Sector Commanders/Captains of the Port in promoting waterway and vessel traffic management activities. Focus is on ports and restricted waterways.

Process: Conducted at the Sector Commander level. Highly structured two-day workshops that use a series of workbooks to evaluate specific variables dealing with both the causes of marine accidents and their consequences. Facilitated discussions and risk scoring centers on six specific areas: conditions of vessels, amounts/types of vessel traffic, weather, waterway attributes (ATON included), and immediate and long term consequences as a result of a marine casualty. Workshops take 4- 6 months to plan and execute.

Outcome: Workshop reports provide quantitative results from participant discussion and workbook scoring, comments made during the workshop, and specific recommendations as to what mitigation strategies should be implemented. Workshop report provides the local Sector Commander with expert opinions/recommendations on what vessel traffic management measures would likely offer the most risk mitigation.

Waterway Analysis and Management System (WAMS)

Objective: Used to plan, evaluate and implement the aids to navigation program. Conducted every five years on waterways that are consider navigational, militarily or environmentally critical.

Process: Conducted at the Sector, Cutter or ANT level. Studies are announced in the Weekly Notice to Mariners. Survey / questionnaire based. Includes a review of existing navigational literature (Charts, Coast Pilots, Light Lists, Sailing Directions). WAMS can take from six months to a year to complete.

Outcome: Report is produced from the surveys/questionnaires and review of waterway design parameters, serves to determine what ATON changes can be done to enhance safety of navigation, and anticipate and plan for ATON budgeting process.