



USCG Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance (CG-CVC)
Mission Management System (MMS) Work Instruction (WI)



Category	Port State Control				
Title	Targeting of Foreign Vessels for Port State Control (PSC) and Certificate of Compliance (COC) Examinations				
Serial	CVC-WI-021(3)	Orig. Date	13JAN20	Rev. Date	14MAY2026
Disclaimer:	This Work Instruction (WI) does not change applicable substantive legal requirements, nor is the WI itself a rule. It is not intended to, nor does it, impose legally-binding requirements on any party. Internet release is authorized.				
References:	(a) Marine Safety: Port State Control, CIM 16000.73 (b) Procedures for Port State Control, IMO Resolution A.1206(34) (c) 46 U.S.C. § 3714 – Inspection of Foreign Tank Vessels (d) Section 7312 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 (e) Marine Safety: Outer Continental Shelf Activities, CIM 16000.76				
Change Summary:	The following is a list of minor changes found in Revision 1. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes the Tank Vessel Performance Driven Certificate of Compliance Examination Schedule 				

- A. Purpose. This Work Instruction (WI) provides guidance regarding the Coast Guard’s Port State Control (PSC) targeting program. In addition, it establishes the Tank Vessel Performance Driven Certificate of Compliance Examination Schedule as authorized by reference (d).

This WI does not address COC examination requirements for foreign passenger vessels operating in U.S. waters, which are governed by 46 U.S.C. § 3505. See Sections D.7 of reference (a) for more information about this program. This PR does not address COC examination requirements for Mobile Offshore Drilling Units (MODUs) operating in U.S. waters, see Section G.3 of reference (e) for more information about this program. Whenever guidance conflicts with previously released documents, this WI shall take precedence.

- B. Action. This WI provides guidance for Coast Guard Sector Commanders, Captains of the Port (COTPs), Officers in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMIs), and Port State Control Officers (PSCOs) for screening foreign flagged vessels for PSC and tank vessel COC examinations.
- C. Background. The Coast Guard’s Port State Control (PSC) program was established in 1994 to reduce the number of substandard vessels operating in U.S. waters through a risk-based targeting model. In recent years, detention ratios have remained below 1.5 percent despite a steady increase in exam volume, reflecting continued improvement in global compliance. The Certificate of Compliance (COC) program for foreign tankships remains an integral element of PSC oversight, ensuring that vessels carrying bulk liquid cargoes meet U.S. safety standards. Consistent with new statutory authority in references (c) as authorized by reference (d), the Coast Guard may now apply a performance-based COC examination schedule framework that adjusts exam frequency and scope based on a vessel’s demonstrated compliance history and safety performance.

- D. **Discussion:** The PSC targeting program results in a designation of PSC A, PSC B, or PSC C. The first two designations correspond to an exam type (PSC A, PSC B) which prescribe the scope of the exam. The third designation, PSC C, does not correspond to any exam type. Vessels that receive the PSC C designation based on the targeting program may still be subject to an exam as part of a random exam program, following a marine casualty, or for other causes. In this case, the exam type will be PSC A or PSC B based on the circumstances. PSC exam location, frequency, and scope is subject to the discretion of the COTP or OCMI.
1. **PSC A** exam is a “more detailed” exam, in accordance with reference (b), with increased scope beyond a standard exam, to include operational tests of equipment and witnessing crew performance of drills.
 2. **PSC B** exam is the standard exam, conducted in accordance with reference (b). It includes a document check with a deck and engine room walk to verify validity of the ship’s certificates. Limited operational tests of equipment and system may also be conducted. However, the PSCO may expand the scope of the exam, to include additional equipment tests and/or witness drills.
 3. **PSC C designation** is for vessels that are not targeted for an exam and is not an exam type. These vessels are still eligible for a random exam, or an exam based upon reports of credible information regarding potential non-compliance. If upgraded or selected for a random exam, the Coast Guard unit must conduct either a PSC A or PSC B exam type.
- E. The targeting matrix is a screening tool that promotes systematic evaluation of several risk factors related to a vessel’s compliance or noncompliance with domestic or international maritime safety, environmental, and security standards. In addition to focusing Coast Guard resources and promoting nationwide consistency, the PSC targeting matrix serves to place the responsibility for maintaining vessels to accepted standards on those entities most responsible, including ship management, classification societies, and flag states. Linking targeting decisions to the performance records of the ship, the ship’s management, classification society, and flag state helps ensure accountability. The following criteria serve to inform the targeting matrix:
1. **U.S. Exam History.** Exam history (when the vessel was last examined) in U.S. ports is considered when determining whether a vessel is due for an exam.
 2. **Flag State.** Flag states (flag administrations) associated with U.S. detentions may affect the vessel’s exam type and frequency. The Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance, Port State Control Division (CG-CVC-2) calculates detention ratios by dividing the number of vessels detained in the U.S. by the number of vessels examined. Detention ratios are averaged over a three-year period to reduce the effects of single year anomalies. Flag states exceeding the average detention ratio are added to the *Targeted Flag Administration List*, located in the previous year’s PSC Annual Report, and available on the public CG-CVC-2 website. CG-CVC-2 removes a targeted flag state from the list when its annual detention ratio drops below the average detention ratio for all flag states, or when it is associated with less than two U.S. detentions within the past 36 months.
 3. **Ship Management** (any owner, operator, or managing operator) of vessels detained in the U.S. more than once during the previous 12 months is added to the *Targeted Ship Management List*, also available on the public CG-CVC-2 website. CG-CVC-2 removes targeted ship management from the list when they become associated with less than two U.S. detentions within the previous 12 months. Association may affect the vessel’s exam type and frequency. An exception is made for vessels enrolled in the Large Fleet Designation Program, where registered ship management

of at least 25 vessels visiting U.S. ports annually is not listed unless it accumulates three or more detentions within a 12-month period.

4. **Recognized Organization.** CG-CVC-2 evaluates Recognized Organization (RO) and Recognized Security Organization (RSO) performance over a three-year period. ROs and RSOs with three-year detention ratios that exceed the fixed three-year detention ratio are targeted and listed on the public CG-CVC-2 website.
5. **History of Compliance.** A vessel's record of control actions, detentions, deficiencies, marine casualties, and violations may subject it to additional PSC exams, or exams of increased scope.
 - a. **Major control actions in the U.S.** Vessel was subject to a major Coast Guard control action, including detention, denial of entry, or expulsion from U.S. waters.
 - b. **Foreign detentions.** A party to the Paris or Tokyo PSC Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) detained the vessel.
 - c. **U.S. deficiency history.** Major deficiencies recorded in the U.S.
 - d. **COTP orders.** Vessel was subject to any other form of operational control, including a COTP Order or Letter of Deviation.
 - e. **Reportable marine casualties and marine violations.** Vessel was involved in a reportable marine casualty or issued a marine violation.

6. **Ship Particulars.** Vessel class (type of service) and age.

F. Additional Information. The targeting procedures allow the COTP or OCMI to prioritize resources to ensure coverage of vessels representing the highest perceived safety or security risk to the port while rewarding those with sustained high performance. Because conditions may vary considerably among ports, piers, and even individual vessels, the COTP or OCMI has the discretion to determine whether to examine a vessel offshore, at anchorage, or after dark.

1. Exams following marine casualties. Post casualty exams and damage surveys may be conducted in conjunction with a marine investigation when the Coast Guard becomes aware of a reportable marine casualty. Generally, the purpose of these exams is to determine the cause of the casualty, the extent of the damage, and to mitigate the risk to the vessel, port, and U.S. waters. The Coast Guard will not credit a vessel for a PSC or COC exam in this situation, unless a PSCO completes a PSC A, PSC B, or COC exam. PSCOs are not limited from expanding a post-casualty exam when they become aware of noncompliance with applicable conventions (e.g., MARPOL Annex I) or regulations. Post-casualty exams may occur at sea or in port based on a risk assessment including the vessel condition, operational controls in place, complexity of the waterway, transit time to anchorage or berth, and other local factors.

G. Tank Vessel Performance-Driven Certificate of Compliance (COC) Examination Schedule. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2026 amended 46 U.S.C. § 3714, granting the Coast Guard the authority to shift from a mandatory annual examination schedule to a performance-driven one. This program modernizes the Certificate of Compliance (COC) examination cycle by transitioning from a rigid, time-based annual schedule to a flexible, data-driven model. While the comprehensive two-year renewal examination remains mandatory for all tank vessels, this framework allows the annual mid-period examination to be credited through a comprehensive performance review for high-performing vessels, in lieu of a physical inspection.

1. Eligibility and Performance Evaluation. The requirement for all tank vessels to undergo an annual examination remains in effect, however under the Performance-Driven Examination Schedule, the method of fulfilling this requirement is determined by the vessel's performance profile.

Upon receipt of an application for the annual Certificate of Compliance (COC) examination, the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI) will conduct a comprehensive review of the vessel's historical safety and compliance record using the performance factors outlined in this instruction below. Based on the results of this performance review, the OCMI will take one of the following actions:

- a. **Schedule Physical Examination:** If the vessel's performance profile does not meet the criteria for a high-performing vessel, or as otherwise deemed necessary by the OCMI, a physical (on-board) examination will be scheduled to fulfill the annual requirement.
 - b. **Credit the Annual Examination:** For eligible, high-performing vessels, the OCMI may credit the annual examination requirement based on the comprehensive performance review, in lieu of conducting a physical inspection. In this case, the OCMI will issue a formal letter to the owner or operator documenting that the vessel has met its obligation for the annual examination. This letter shall be maintained on board with the vessel's Certificate of Compliance.
2. Mandatory Performance Review Factors. To determine a vessel's examination type, the Coast Guard will conduct a thorough review of the following data sources:
 - a. **Examination & Compliance History:** certificate of compliance and examination history, to include those conducted by foreign countries;
 - b. **Violation & Incident History:** history of violations, vessel detentions, incidents, and casualties;
 - c. **Notices of Violation:** history of notices of violation issued by the Coast Guard;
 - d. **Flag State Information:** safety related information provided by the flag state of the vessel;
 - e. **Ownership & Operator History:** The compliance and safety performance record of the vessel's owner, operator, and associated management companies;
 - f. **Classification Society Data:** historical classification society data, which may include relevant surveys;
 - g. **Cargo Records:** Review of cargo-specific documentation;
 - h. **Port State Control history:** data from port state control safety exams; and
 - i. **Repair & Maintenance History:** A review of the vessel's relevant repair and maintenance records.
 3. Discretionary Performance Review Factors. The Coast Guard may also consider the following additional sources to further assess a vessel's performance.

- a. **Quality Assurance Programs:** Data from relevant vessel quality assurance and risk assessment programs including Quality Shipping for the 21st Century (QUALSHIP 21);
 - b. **Industry Inspection Programs:** Data from industry inspection regimes;
 - c. **Self Assessments:** data from vessel self assessments submitted to the International Maritime Organization or other maritime organizations; and
 - d. **Other Relevant Data:** Any other safety relevant data or information as determined by the Secretary.
4. **Factors for Program Ineligibility.** In accordance with 46 U.S.C. § 3714(c)(3), a vessel will not be eligible to take part in the performance-driven examination schedule if, **within the last 36 months**, the vessel has:
- a. **Vessel Detention.** Been detained by the U.S. Coast Guard;
 - b. **Proved Violations.** A record of a violation issued by the Coast Guard against its owners or operators with a finding of proved; or
 - c. **Marine Casualties.** Suffered a marine casualty that, as determined by the Coast Guard, involves the safe operation of the vessel and overall performance of the vessel.
- H. Statistics and other information related to the Coast Guard's PSC program are available to the public under the "Port State Control" tab of the CG-CVC website at <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Prevention-Policy-CG-5P/Inspections-Compliance-CG-5PC-/Commercial-Vessel-Compliance/>.

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By direction