

NAVAL VESSEL OPERATIONS -- NAVAL VESSEL PROTECTION ZONES (NVPZ)

Puget Sound is home to numerous U.S. Navy vessels, including submarines and aircraft carriers. Mariners should be aware that they may come upon such vessels when transiting the waters of Puget Sound and know that certain security zones apply.

A **Naval vessel protection zone (NVPZ)** is a 500-yard regulated area of water surrounding large U.S. naval vessels (greater than 100 feet in length overall) that is necessary to provide for the safety or security of these U.S. naval vessels. A NVPZ exists around all such U.S. naval vessels at all times in the navigable waters of the United States, whether the large U.S. naval vessel is underway, anchored, moored, or within a floating dry dock, except when the large naval vessel is moored or anchored within a restricted area or within a naval defensive sea area.

When within a NVPZ, **all vessels shall operate at the minimum speed necessary to maintain a safe course**, unless required to maintain speed by the Navigation Rules, and **shall proceed as directed** by the Coast Guard, the senior naval officer present in command, or the official patrol.

When within a NVPZ, **no vessel or person is allowed within 100 yards** of a large U.S. naval vessel unless authorized by the Coast Guard, the senior naval officer present in command, or official patrol.

Nothing shall relieve any vessel, including U.S. naval vessels, from the observance of the Navigation Rules. The rules and regulations concerning NVPZs supplement, but do not replace or supersede, any other regulation pertaining to the safety or security of U.S. naval vessels.

To request authorization to operate within 100 yards of a large U.S. naval vessel, contact the Coast Guard, the senior naval officer present in command, or the official patrol on VHF-FM channel 16.

When conditions permit, the Coast Guard, senior naval officer present in command, or the official patrol generally will:

- ◆ Give advance notice on VHF-FM channel 16 of all large U.S. naval vessel movements;
- ◆ Permit vessels constrained by their navigational draft or restricted in their ability to maneuver to pass within 100 yards of a large U.S. naval vessel in order to ensure a safe passage in accordance with the Navigation Rules;
- ◆ Permit commercial vessels anchored in a designated anchorage area to remain at anchor when within 100 yards of passing large U.S. naval vessels; and
- ◆ Permit vessels that must transit via a navigable channel or waterway to pass within 100 yards of a moored or anchored large U.S. naval vessel with minimal delay consistent with security.