

SEPA SUPPLEMENTAL ORCA

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

Purpose of checklist:

This SEPA supplemental Orca checklist is designed to help project proponents and government agencies identify when a project needs further analysis regarding adverse effects on ESA (Endangered Species Act) listed Southern Resident Killer Whales (*Orcinus orca*).

Governmental agencies use this supplemental orca checklist to help determine whether there are vessel traffic impacts to the Southern Resident Killer Whale (*Orcinus orca*) population from vessel traffic in marine waters* of the state. This supplemental information is also helpful to determine if available avoidance, minimization, or compensatory mitigation measures will address the probable significant impacts or if an environmental impact statement will be prepared to further analyze the proposal. *Marine areas are waters within the boundaries of Washington, including Puget Sound, Hood Canal, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the San Juan Islands, the Strait of Georgia, and the Pacific Ocean.

Questions – Vessel (general): ([help](#))

1. What is (are) the primary type(s) of vessels that will be used as a result of this project (e.g., cargo, ferry, tug, tanker, etc.)?

Barge for cable delivery and installation.

2. What frequency of vessel traffic is expected as a result of this project (e.g., the anticipated number of transits per year, etc.)?

The installation barge will only be used during cable installation. No vessel traffic is anticipated after project installation.

3. What is the expected operating speed of the vessels while transiting in the marine waters of the state?

The cable installation barge will depart Port Gardner Bay at very low speeds and will be stopped much of the time.

Questions – Vessel (timing) ([help](#)):

1. Are vessel transits expected to be relatively uniform across the year, or are seasonal increases/decreases expected? If so, during what times of the year?

Vessel use is only during cable installation and is expected to take place during winter.

2. What are the expected range of hours of transits for the vessels as a result of the project in Puget Sound and/or entry into the Columbia River (daytime, nighttime, both, etc.)?

Daytime construction hours only.

Questions – Vessel (travel routes and anchorage/queuing): ([help](#))

1. What are the primary waterways of vessel transit in the marine waters of the state?
 Strait of Juan de Fuca
 Haro Strait
 Rosario Strait
 Puget Sound
 Columbia River
 Outer Coast
 Other - please describe: Possession Sound
2. What are the designated anchorage areas this project expects to utilize and how distant are they from the project?

Port of Everett and Everett Marina, less than one mile from the project.

3. Will any unusual queuing dynamics be needed to support operations (e.g., reliance on just-in-time arrivals, multiple berthing's per "vessel call" to load/unload cargo, etc.)?

No.

Questions – Vessel (Noise): ([help](#))

1. Will the vessels be using something other than conventional propellers for propulsion?

No.

2. Do the vessels or facilities participate in Green Marine? If so, at what level do they report on underwater noise?

Unknown but this can be requested if required.

3. Will the vessels voluntarily participate in the Enhancing Cetacean Habitat and Observation (ECHO) Program and/or Quiet Sound's voluntary slow-down if they pass through those areas?

Vessels will comply with slowdown requirements if marine life is present.

4. Will the vessels' transducers (for chart plotting) use low power and/or broadband technology (like chirp systems) or be able to switch to frequencies above 150 kHz?

Any required vessel noise reduction can be specified to the barge operators.

5. Do the vessels or their pilots plan to use near real-time whale alerts (e.g., Whale Report Alert System) around the clock to raise situational awareness and modify their course or speed around orcas when safe to do so?

If required, vessel operators will monitor the area in real time for marine mammals and modify operations accordingly.

6. What operational measures will the vessels take to reduce underwater noise?

No underwater noise outside normal barge operations will be utilized.

7. How else will potential increases in underwater noise be mitigated?

No increases in underwater noise are anticipated due to the project. If conditions require, vessel operators will take additional measures such as turning off vessel engines in the presence of whales or other marine mammals.

Questions – Vessel (maintenance, support needs): ([help](#))

1. Does the project have a plan or requirement for vessels to perform annual (or more frequent) propeller and hull cleaning maintenance?

Since vessels will only be used for project installation, no plans outside normal vessel maintenance for necessary operation will be specified.

2. Will the vessels avoid the use of acoustic anti-fouling systems, such as ultra-sonic devices, which emit high frequency sound?

Yes.

3. What type(s) and number of support vessels (such as tugs for escorts or barges for fuel) will be used to support operations; where will they come from and at what time (daytime, nighttime, both, etc.)?

No escort tugs or barges are planned, but may be utilized if needed. Support vessels will be operated in accordance with all marine laws and permit conditions.

4. Will your oil spill contingency plan meet the requirements of WAC 173-182-540 to ensure oil spill response resources for Southern Resident Killer Whale deterrence requirements are being met?

Yes.