



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) Examination			
Serial	CVC-WI-021(1)	Orig. Date	13JAN20	Rev. Date N/A
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) <a href="#">Marine Safety Manual (MSM) Volume II, COMDTINST M16000.7B</a> (b) <a href="#">United States Coast Guard Maritime Commerce Strategic Outlook</a> (c) Procedures for Port State Control, IMO Resolution A.1119(30)			

- A. Purpose. This WI provides guidance regarding the Coast Guard’s PSC targeting program. It does not address Certificate of Compliance (COC) exam requirements for foreign tank or passenger vessels operating in U.S. waters per 46 U.S.C. § 3714 and 46 U.S.C. § 3505. See Sections D.6 and D.7 of reference (a) for more information about these programs. Wherever conflict of guidance exists related to previously released guidance, this WI shall be given 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 examinations.
- C. Background. The PSC targeting program, established in 1994, has markedly reduced substandard foreign vessels operating in U.S. waters. During the 25-year history of the program, detention ratios decreased from a high of nearly 8% to approximately 1% since 2006. In recent years, two-thirds of PSC exams conducted by the Coast Guard resulted in no deficiencies issued to the vessels.

The PSC examination targeting procedures use certain criteria to evaluate a vessel’s relative risk of noncompliance with regulations, and assign commensurate exam frequency and scope. The algorithm provides operational decision-making flexibility to the COTP or OCMI, and does not limit expanded exams when clear grounds exist, or for other lawful reasons. The Coast Guard is updating the PSC examination targeting procedures to facilitate “lawful trade and travel on secure waterways,” as outlined in reference (b). The updated PSC targeting process prioritizes Coast Guard resources to conduct exams on vessels that pose the greatest risk, while systematically reducing the frequency and scope of PSC exams on vessels with low identified risk.

- D. Discussion.
  - 1. Exam types. The updated PSC targeting program has three PSC exam types (PSC A, PSC B and PSC C) which prescribe the scope of the exam. The previous exam types, (e.g. PI, ISPS I) which also mandated exam location are now obsolete, and no longer apply. PSC exam location, frequency, and scope is subject to the discretion of the COTP or OCMI.
    - a. **PSC A** is a “more detailed” exam, in accordance with reference (c), with increased scope beyond a standard exam, to include operational tests of equipment and witnessing crew performance of drills.
    - b. **PSC B** is the standard exam, conducted in accordance with reference (c). 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 systems may also be conducted. However, the PSCO may expand the scope of the exam, to include additional equipment tests and/or witness drills.

- c. **PSC C:** Vessels scoring PSC C are not targeted for a standard exam, but are still eligible for a random exam, or an exam based upon reports or credible information regarding potential non-compliance. If selected for a random exam, the Coast Guard unit may conduct either a PSC A or PSC B exam.
2. **PSC Targeting.** 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<sup>1</sup>. 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:
- a. **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.
- b. **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.
- c. **Ship Management** (any owner, operator, charterer, 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.
- d. **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.
- e. **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.
- 1) **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.
- 2) **Foreign detentions<sup>2</sup>.** A party to the Paris or Tokyo PSC Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) detained the vessel.

---

<sup>1</sup> The ISPS/MTSA Security Compliance Targeting Matrix and PSC Safety and Environmental Protection Compliance Matrix from reference (a) were combined to evaluate safety, environmental and security risks within a single matrix.

<sup>2</sup> Foreign detention history was added to the risk criteria in this update.

- 3) **U.S. deficiency history<sup>3</sup>.** Major deficiencies recorded in the U.S.
- 4) **COTP orders.** Vessel was subject to any other form of operational control, including a COTP Order or Letter of Deviation.
- 5) **Reportable marine casualties and marine violations.** Vessel was involved in a reportable marine casualty or issued a marine violation.

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

E. Additional Information.

1. Exam location and time. The updated 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. Because conditions may vary considerably among ports, piers, and even individual vessels, the COTP or OCMI has the discretion to determine whether or not to examine a vessel offshore, at anchorage, or after dark.
2. 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 exam in this situation, unless a PSCO completes a PSC A or PSC B 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.
3. Additional information. 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/>.

M. Edwards  
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard  
Chief, Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance  
By direction

---

<sup>3</sup> U.S. deficiency history was added to the risk criteria in this update.