# PUGET SOUND MARINE FIREFIGHTING COMMISSION

Fire Departments

Anacortes
Bainbridge Island
Bellingham
Bremerton π
Edmonds
Everett π
Olympia
Port Angeles
Seattle π
Tacoma π

Foss Maritime

Inlandboatmen's Union

Marine Response Alliance

NPFVOA
Vessel Safety Program π

Olympic College

Pacific Merchant
Shipping Association π

Washington State Ferries

Washington State
Department of Ecology

Washington State
Maritime Cooperative

Western States
Petroleum Association π

ADVISORY PANEL

DHS FEMA OSHA

Public Member at Large

Recreational Boaters Association

State Fire Marshals Office

U.S. Coast Guard

Washington Public Ports
Association

**Present:**

Andy Collins
Chris Andersen
Ben Frankenbery
Bob Simcox
Brett Collett
Mark McDonnell
Chelsey Stroud
Chris Ritter
Eric Wilmarth
Matthew Hoffman
Noah Katka
Morgan Mak
Michael Lingrey
Colin Millan
Aaron Patterson
Sara Zeman
Brian Snausky
Kurt Waeschle
Russ Read
Dan Smiley

Lydimar Fuentes — Admin: Marine Exchange

The November 2026 Meeting of the Puget Sound Marine Firefighting Commission was called to order by Andy Collins at 1102.

Introductions followed.

100 W Harrison St Ste S-560 * Seattle, WA 98119-4135 * PH: 206-443-3830 * FX: 206-269-8269
E-mail PSMFC@MarineExchangeSea.com * PSMFC Website

Deputy Chief Andy Collins began the meeting with a welcome and overview of the agenda. He noted that work is being done to update the Commission roster and distribution list.

**National Port Partner Emergency Response Summit Update (Lt. Aaron Patterson, Seattle Fire Department)**

- Donjon-SMIT hosted a one-day marine firefighting seminar in Tacoma. The two-day WSMC conference took place at the same location. Topics included alternative fuels, mislabeled cargo, and the role of salvage and marine firefighting providers. Aaron presented a history of marine firefighting efforts in Puget Sound, noting that past programs ended when grant funding ran out and stressed the need for sustainable, long-term funding.
- The 4th annual National Port Partner Emergency Response Summit was held in Corpus Christi, TX. Among other things, lessons learned from the ONE Henry Hudson fire in Long Beach were presented. Next year's summit will be held in New York/New Jersey. There is no registration cost, and regional attendance is encouraged.
- Alternative fuels: LNG ship-to-ship bunkering began in Puget Sound this summer, and a methanol study is underway. The foam currently used by Seattle Fire is not effective on methanol fires, so alcohol-resistant foam products will need to be evaluated.
- Seattle Fire held its first drill with the U.S. Navy at Vigor aboard the USS Sampson. Challenges included personnel tracking and differences between Navy and fire department terminology. Drills are expected to become a regular rhythm, with regional partners invited to take part.
- Several recent U.S. Navy ship fires have resulted in injuries, highlighting the value of training with sailors before they deploy.

**Marine Exchange & Harbor Safety Committee Updates (Captain Mark McDonnell, Marine Exchange)**

Capt. Mark McDonnell, recently retired from Coast Guard Sector Puget Sound, introduced his new role at the Marine Exchange. He noted that the Puget Sound region was strongly represented at the Corpus Christi summit.

He gave an overview of the Marine Exchange, which provides 24/7 vessel monitoring, advocacy and outreach, and support services, including activation of the ERTV, dispatch services for WSMC, and administration of this Commission.

He presented the Marine Exchange's vision for a sustainable regional marine firefighting capability:

- Puget Sound has 15 ports but no regional marine firefighting capability. Response depends on the training of the local jurisdiction, activation of vessel response plans and salvage and marine firefighting providers, and mutual aid.
- A recent GAO report found nearly 900 nearshore vessel fires reported to the Coast Guard over the last 10 years and identified persistent gaps in coordination, training, information sharing, and plan activation.
- MFSA on the Columbia River was presented as a model for a funded organization that supports regional training, equipment, and exercises.
- The Marine Exchange is exploring serving as program administrator for a similar model in Puget Sound. A study will first identify existing training, equipment, and capabilities, along with needs and costs, as grants alone are not a sustainable funding source.

**USCG Base Seattle, Sector Puget Sound Update (USCG)**

CDR Chelsey Stroud reported that the Coast Guard's internal salvage and marine firefighting task force remains active and is expected to take further initiatives following the GAO report. Takeaways from the summit included prioritizing command integration. She also supported holding a regional tabletop exercise.

CWO Bob Simcox, USCG Northwest District, reported that Coast Guard headquarters expects to publish guidance in the Federal Register in the coming months on building a salvage and marine firefighting annex to Area Contingency Plans, which will be open for comment.

DC Collins noted the direction to form a marine firefighting working group or subcommittee, and suggested that this Commission serve that role rather than creating a new one. CDR Stroud agreed and will follow up with Ish Looney.

**US Navy Marine Firefighting Drills Funding Update (DC Andy Collins, Seattle Fire)**

DC Collins shared an update on behalf of Capt. Randy Anderson:

- Port Security Grant funding is being used to build strategic marine firefighting equipment caches. Locations are still being determined, and procurement is underway.
- Marine firefighting drills with the Navy have started, and participation will be extended to other regional fire departments where possible.
- Live-fire, full-scale marine firefighting exercises using Port Security Grant funding are being planned.

Capt. Noah Katka added that Seattle Fire is close to finalizing its contract with the Navy, which will support drills for both Seattle Fire and regional partners.

**Upcoming Trainings**

No upcoming trainings were identified.

**2027 Meeting Dates (DC Andy Collins, Seattle Fire Department)**

Meeting invitations will be sent for the following dates:

- February 9, 2027
- May 11, 2027
- September 13, 2027
- November 9, 2027

**Good of the Order**

Capt. Noah Katka highlighted recent joint training between the Coast Guard, Seattle Fire, and Bremerton Fire. Chris Ritter, Bremerton Fire, reported that several Bremerton boat operators earned NASBLA BOSAR certification earlier this year through Coast Guard Station Seattle, and that a recent joint session with Seattle Fire covered required competencies, including tows and search patterns.

Kurt Waeschle asked about similar training for South Sound agencies. CWO Simcox and CDR Stroud offered to help coordinate with Station Seattle. Chris Ritter noted that another certification class is planned for the spring and will share any open slots.

DC Collins presented to the Marine Insurance Association of Seattle on marine firefighting, including hot work hazards and permitting. Efforts are also underway to involve the Seattle Maritime Academy.

Lt. Patterson reported no update yet on regional fireboat radio communications and dispatch and will meet with Nicole Metzke in the coming weeks.

Brett Collett reported that Pierce County will roll out a countywide marine operations channel shared by police and fire, with King County expected to have access. DC Collins invited him to share the plan at a future meeting.

Chris Ritter raised concerns about an increase in uninsured, derelict, or lived-aboard vessels anchored near Port Orchard. Dan Smiley noted that WSMC cannot mobilize for non-member vessels and there is currently no mechanism for fire departments to become members, but he will look into it. The Washington

DNR Derelict and Abandoned Vessel reporting system (DART) was suggested for vessels that are truly abandoned.

**ADJOURN**:
The meeting adjourned at 1159. The next Puget Sound Marine Firefighting Commission Meeting will take place on February 9, 2027.

Lydimar Fuentes
Recorder