

NOTES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Applicability of this guidance: This guidance applies for vessels that are derelict or abandoned under RCW 79.100.010 and applies to Authorized Public Entities, as defined in RCW 79.100.010. The vessel log and photos can be used to document when a vessel becomes abandoned or derelict.

Note: This guidance is not intended to cover the process for taking temporary emergency custody of a vessel. For more details on temporary emergency custody (which applies when the vessel poses a reasonably imminent threat to health, safety, or the environment or is in immediate danger of sinking, breaking up, or blocking channels) see RCW 79.100.040.

For immediate emergencies, dial 911 and report to the US Coast Guard at (206) 217-6001 or Channel 16 VHF-FM. For vessels leaking fluids or hazardous materials, report to: US National Response Center [800-424-8802], Washington Department of Ecology [800-OILS-911], and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife [800-258-5990].

TAKE PHOTOS WITH LOCATION SERVICES ON.

To demonstrate that a vessel is abandoned or derelict, it must remain in one location for a specific amount of time, per RCW 79.100.010. If location services are turned on when a photo is taken, the photo attributes will include the coordinates of the photo location and additional information such as the date and time. Submit these photos (along with vessel information) to Kitsap County DCD for inclusion in the Vessel Tracking Database. Also retain these photos in the case of an appeal. These photos will be used to help demonstrate that a vessel has not moved outside the specified area for a certain period of time.

For vessels being declared derelict on the basis of noncompliant registration for 2 years [after June 2026; per RCW 79.100.010(5)], be sure to take photos of all vessel registration decals.

CREATE A VESSEL LOG.

The Authorized Public Entity may choose to create their own log form. Example log form templates are available for use. It is critical that APEs document all known information about the vessel, all correspondence with the vessel owner or other parties, information about vessel posting and custody (including dates), and additional relevant information (see log form and excel templates for additional information). These logs will be useful in the case of an appeal and should be retained. In the event of a Public Disclosure Request, certain information such as information obtained from the WA State Department of Licensing database, will need to be redacted. The log form is also useful for keeping track of where you are in the tracking, custody, and vessel removal process, which can take several months. DNR has 30-60 days to reimburse payment to APEs, provided the APE followed the state custody process properly.

CONTACT DNR TO OBTAIN A DVRP NUMBER AND TO RESERVE FUNDS.

If an APE intends to post and take custody of an abandoned or derelict vessel, it is recommended that you contact the DNR Derelict Vessel Removal Program first so they can assign a DVRP number and if necessary, set aside funds for reimbursement of the vessel removal costs. Provide DNR the vessel and APE information from the vessel log.



CONTACT THE VESSEL OWNER.

APEs must make a good faith effort to contact the last known registered or documented vessel owner. Pull information from the Department of Licensing on the last registered owner and also contact the US Coast Guard.

POST THE VESSEL.

If a vessel meets the abandoned or derelict vessel criteria in RCW 79.100.010, an Authorized Public Entity may follow the custody process in RCW 79.100.040 to take custody of the vessel. Prior to taking custody of the vessel, the APE must post the vessel with a Notice of Intent to Seize. Check the DNR Derelict Vessel Removal Program webpage for the most current version of the vessel posting templates. Fill out the form and print on bright paper (such as red). Put it in a protective sleeve cover and secure to the vessel, such as by using tape or zip ties.

When the vessel is posted, notify the US Coast Guard and the DNR Derelict Vessel Removal Program.

Once posted, wait 15 more days for vessel owner to claim. The day you post the vessel, send DNR an email with the copy of the posting and photos of the posting attached to the vessel. Take a photo at close range so text can be read and further away to show where the notice is posted on the vessel. DNR will assign the vessel a case number.

Note: Administrative costs and staff time are reimbursable by DNR from the time the vessel was posted, if that information is well-tracked and documented.

SEND A CERTIFIED LETTER.

Within 24 hours of posting the vessel, send two letters to the last known owner- One letter is regular mail, and the other is Certified Mail (see the Certified Letter template). Frequently, the letter and Certified letter will be returned as “Return to Sender” or “address unknown.” Scan these and keep them in the vessel file and record the date in the vessel custody log.

TAKE CUSTODY OF THE VESSEL.

After the 15 day custody process has passed, the APE can take custody of the vessel. Consider your capacity to store the vessel and the priority of the vessels to be removed. Consider the risk to the environment, safety, and property. See the [DNR Vessel Prioritization Process](#) for assistance. Also consider whether the vessel will be disposed of or auctioned.

FOLLOW THE APPEAL PERIOD.

After the 15-day custody process has passed, the APE can take custody of and dispose of the vessel. However, the vessel owner has an additional 30 days to appeal the decision to take custody. Some APEs prefer to wait until the 30-day appeal period has ended before disposing of the vessel.

AUCTIONING A VESSEL

Vessels removed under RCW 79.100 *may* be auctioned, following the requirements in RCW 79.100.050. We recommend setting a minimum bid that recuperates administrative costs associated with posting and taking custody of the vessel, and vessel storage and removal, as well as costs to offset any environmental damages from the vessel. Do not auction vessels that are in poor condition. See RCW 79.100.150 for more information.



PROCURE A CONTRACTOR FOR REMOVAL.

Government entities must go through a fair procurement process for awarding public funds to a contractor for removing the vessel. Use the standard "Work Request Form" for Statewide Contract 16122 specifically for vessels. We recommend requesting in the form that bids include any applicable taxes. Allow at least 2 weeks for vendors to respond. Include a clear deadline for the form to be returned.

Send the Work Request Form to at least three Vendors and record this in the "Vessel Custody and Removal Log." Interested contractors will complete and return the Work Request Form. If they are interested, they will fill it out and return it.

Once the deadline has passed, select your lowest bidder from the forms received.

Note: Check with your entity's leadership- your entity may have an existing contract for services that include vessel removal.

ENSURE PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS ARE MET.

Some (but not all) contractors maintain active permits for vessel removal and deconstruction. Additionally, some vessels must be removed in a way that is not covered by general permits, and individual permits must be obtained. Work with your contractor, DNR, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to ensure the vessel removal method is covered under an existing permit or that an individual permit is obtained. Notably, Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA permit) may be required by WDFW, especially for removing vessels that are beached or sunken.

FOLLOW YOUR ENTITY'S CONTRACTING PROTOCOL.

This process will differ for each jurisdiction. Consult with your leadership, contracting, and fiscal teams. Once the contract is approved, notify the Vendor that they are clear to proceed.

Vendor must provide photos and a "dump slip" to prove they disposed of the vessel. If hazardous materials are involved, the vendor should include documentation. For example, vessels made in 1979 or prior require testing for asbestos and other hazardous materials. When the work is completed, the vendor will send an invoice, which you pay directly. Save the invoice and any payment receipts.

When the work is completed, please inform Kitsap County Derelict Vessel Program so they can update the status of the vessel in the vessel tracking database.

BILL THE VESSEL OWNER.

Send the bill for vessel expenses to the last registered owner or owner on file via Certified Mail. Wait 30 days from the postmarked date for a response. If no response is received, move forward with an application for reimbursement from the DNR Derelict Vessel Removal Program.

APPLY FOR REIMBURSEMENT.

Complete the DNR Application for Reimbursement and attach your vessel log, Vessel Custody Log, scans of all mailing and return to sender receipts and docs showing the custody process was followed, the bid package (including Work Request Form) and vendor information, the invoice, payment receipt, and disposal/waste ticket receipt. DNR prefers all documents be in pdf format. Send this package, including the signed Application for Reimbursement, to the DNR Derelict Vessel Removal Program at dvrp@dnr.wa.gov.

Note: Administrative costs and staff time can be submitted for reimbursement from the time the vessel was posted, if that information is well-tracked and documentation is included in the Application for Reimbursement.

FOLLOW UP.

In 30-60 days check with your fiscal department to determine whether you were reimbursed. If not, follow up with the DNR Derelict Vessel Removal Program for status.

