



Marine Safety Information Bulletin

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Reporting Anchoring Activities in the Vicinity of Submerged Pipelines

As a result of the 2021 San Pedro Bay oil pipeline leak caused by a ship's anchor, the Coast Guard is issuing this guidance to ensure vessels take appropriate precautions when anchoring in the vicinity of submerged pipelines. This bulletin outlines the reporting obligations and safety recommendations for vessels anchoring near submerged pipelines.

Some anchorage grounds in US waters have subsea pipelines in close proximity and others contain pipelines within the anchorage area. Anchoring activities can pose a significant risk to pipelines, which if damaged, may result in environmental harm and substantial economic losses. Even when anchoring in a designated anchorage ground, mariners must maintain situational awareness for anchoring activities that could lead to a hazardous condition.



Figure: Submerged pipeline laid on seafloor

To reduce anchoring risk to submerged pipelines, the Coast Guard is clarifying that anchoring in or immediately adjacent to a submerged pipeline area may result in a hazardous condition that must be reported to the Coast Guard in accordance with [Title 33 Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\) 160.202](#) and [160.216](#). The primary responsibility for reporting a potential pipeline incursion remains with the master of the involved vessel.

To minimize risks associated with anchoring near submerged pipelines, vessel operators are advised to:

- Review and follow all local Coast Guard regulations for the intended anchorage ground.
- Use designated anchorage areas away from pipelines whenever possible.
- Exercise caution during all anchoring operations.
- Set an alarm to warn bridge personnel and watchstanders of potential anchor dragging.
- Promptly report all instances where the vessel or its anchor may have dragged into a pipeline area.
- Monitor surroundings for signs of pipeline damage or leaks and report any anomalies immediately.
- Closely monitor weather forecasts and conditions when anchored near pipeline areas and take appropriate precautionary measures ahead of storm conditions (e.g., have a main engine running, place a deck crew on standby to raise the anchor quickly).

For questions regarding the matter, contact the Office of Waterways and Ocean Policy (CG-WWM-1) by email at cgwwm@uscg.mil with the subject line: "INFO REQUEST: Anchoring IVO Pipeline MSIB".

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