

WAC 220-460-140 Commercial whale watching compliance and reporting.

(1) An automatic identification system (AIS) must be fitted aboard all motorized commercial whale watching vessels. The AIS must be capable of providing information about the vessel (including the vessel's identity, type, position, course, speed, and navigational status) to state and federal authorities automatically. Operators must maintain the AIS in operation at all times that the vessel is on a commercial whale watching tour.

(2) All motorized and nonmotorized commercial whale watching license holders and alternate operators must complete annual training from the department on marine mammals, distances on the water, impacts of whale watching on marine mammals, and southern resident killer whale-related rules and reporting.

(a) At completion of training, license holders must demonstrate adequate understanding of course materials.

(b) It is unlawful for an operator to operate a commercial whale watching vessel without completing the training for the current calendar year.

(c) Naturalists and others who work upon commercial whale watching vessels but are not license holders are encouraged to attend.

(3) All motorized and nonmotorized commercial whale watching license holders shall maintain accurate logs on each instance a vessel operating under a license enters within one-half nautical mile vicinity of southern resident killer whales and submit copies of the logs to the department.

(a) Logs must include license holder name; vessel operator and staff names and roles; vessel name; port(s) of departure; departure time(s); return time(s); number of passengers; location(s) (Lat/Long) of southern resident killer whales encountered; time(s) entering and departing the one-half nautical mile vicinity of southern resident killer whales; time(s) entering and departing within four hundred yards of southern resident killer whales; and qualitative details of southern resident killer whale encounters including whale identification, whale behavior and health, other vessel behavior, and any operator behavior, including contact with other boaters or government entities, and resulting outcomes.

(b) Information from the logs shall be submitted to the department on the following schedule:

(i) All vicinity instances in July must be reported by August 15th.

(ii) All vicinity instances in August must be reported by September 15th.

(iii) All vicinity instances in September must be reported by October 15th.

(iv) Operators of motorized commercial whale watching vessels must report vicinity instances that happen outside of the permitted hours and days described in WAC 220-460-120 within twenty-four hours.

(v) Operators of nonmotorized whale watching vessels must report vicinity instances that happen October through June within one week.

(c) It is unlawful to fail to report a vicinity instance or to fraudulently report the details of a vicinity instance.

(d) Logs must be provided for inspection on request of department law enforcement.

(4) All motorized commercial whale watching license holders must log accurate, complete sighting information to the whale report alert system (WRAS) or a successor transboundary notification system that is adopted by the international shipping community in the Salish Sea im-

mediately upon entering within one-half nautical mile of a southern resident killer whale.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 77.12.047, 77.65.615, 77.65.620, 77.15.020, 77.15.160, 77.04.012, 77.04.55 [74.05.055]. WSR 21-01-216 (Order 20-264), § 220-460-140, filed 12/23/20, effective 5/1/21.]