

Waterways Commerce Cutter (WCC) Frequently Asked Questions

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Acquisition Process, Contracting, and Schedule; Industry Engagement

1. What was the WCC alternatives analysis (AA), and what did it include?

The WCC AA was an independent analysis of potential ways to meet the aids to navigation (ATON) mission need. The AA satisfied the statutory requirement for the program’s analysis of alternatives as required by [14 U.S.C. § 1132](#), and it identified and documented viable solutions to meet the Coast Guard’s ATON mission needs currently covered by the inland tender fleet. The AA results enabled the Coast Guard to make an informed acquisition decision based on cost and performance trade-offs among different types and combinations of materiel and non-materiel solutions.

The WCC Program partnered with the Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) to conduct the AA and ensure its independence, as required by statute. In addition, the Coast Guard and NAVSEA designated an AA study plan director from the Research and Development Center to serve as a liaison to the AA team.

The materiel analysis, focused on one-to-one cutter replacement, was completed in mid-2019. The full AA was completed in June 2020.

2. Will the WCC be a monohull ship, tug and barge, or some combination of these ship types? How many WCC variants will there be?

The Coast Guard is planning to acquire 30 monohull ships consisting of three variants. The river buoy tender and inland construction tender variants are expected to share extensive commonality except for their hull lengths, working deck layouts, and deck equipment, including cranes designed for their specific mission set. These two variants will be acquired under a single contract.

The third variant covers the inland buoy tending mission set, which will be acquired under a separate contract.

3. How many WCCs is the Coast Guard acquiring?

The Coast Guard plans to acquire 16 river buoy tenders, 11 construction tenders, and three inland buoy tenders to replace the 35 legacy inland tenders in the current fleet.

	WLR	WLIC	WLI
Current Fleet	18	13	4
New Fleet	16	11	3

The new WCCs will have greater endurance, speed, and deck load capacity than their predecessors, allowing the Coast Guard to acquire fewer overall vessels to replace the current capability. The ships will also feature improved habitability and will accommodate mixed-gender crews, increasing underway opportunities for Coast Guard service members.

4. What is the WCC Program’s anticipated schedule, including request for proposal (RFP) releases and contract award dates?

Notional Date	Event
2021	River buoy tender/inland construction tender RFP release
2022	River buoy tender/inland construction tender contract award
2025	Initial operational capability* – achieved following post-delivery availability, test and evaluation, and certification that the first hull of each WCC variant satisfies all key performance parameters, or threshold requirements without which the ATON mission cannot be performed.
2030	Full operational capability* – achieved following delivery and shakedown of the last cutter.

*Initial and full operational capability dates are defined in the WCC Operational Requirements Document.

The Coast Guard is working to release the river buoy and inland construction RFP by the end of May 2021.

The Coast Guard is continuing to finalize the inland buoy tender acquisition schedule.

5. Can I still submit information or feedback related to a previously released request for information (RFI) or special notice (including the draft river buoy and inland construction tender RFP)?

The Coast Guard will continue to accept feedback through Feb. 1, 2021.

NOTE: The Coast Guard uses contracted support to assist with its acquisition programs, and these contractors are prohibited from disclosing source selection sensitive information. If you consent to the Coast Guard’s contracted support accessing any submitted proprietary information, please note that in your submission.

6. The arrangement “contract” drawings provided with the draft RFP have some issues with practicality. Will the government accept comments to the “contract” drawings?

The Coast Guard will continue to accept feedback through Feb. 1, 2021.

7. Is the Coast Guard planning to release a five-year budget profile to help industry determine the risk of bidding?

The Coast Guard has released an Acquisition Planning Forecast System announcement with rough cost estimates for the river buoy tender and inland construction tender acquisition ([F2019047728](#)) and the inland buoy tender acquisition ([F2019047737](#)).

8. Will the WCC acquisitions be small business set-asides?

The acquisition of the river buoy tender and inland construction tender will be a small business set-aside in accordance with [Federal Acquisition Regulation 19.5](#).

The Coast Guard is continuing to finalize the inland buoy tender acquisition plan.

9. Is there any way for large businesses to participate in the river buoy and inland construction tender acquisition now that it has been declared a small business set-aside?

Large businesses may still participate in the river buoy and inland construction tender acquisition by subcontracting to a small business; however, small business must be responsible for 51 percent of the total cost of the contract.

10. Does the government plan to fund industry design development via industry studies or a down-select?

No.

11. Will the Coast Guard require bonding or performance guarantees? If so, to what level?

No.

12. Is the Coast Guard considering acquiring the WCCs via block buys?

At this time, the Coast Guard is not considering block buys as part of the WCC acquisition strategy.

13. Is the Coast Guard considering a single-source vendor?

There will be two solicitations: one for the river buoy tenders and inland construction tenders and one for the inland buoy tenders, and subsequently two separate contracts. Both will be competitive and allow for the possibility that the same company could be awarded both contracts.

14. Is there a list of proposed prime vendors to allow interested suppliers to begin planning teaming arrangements?

No, not at this time.

15. The draft RFP refers to a lot of drawings that would help bidders understand requirements. Could these be made available?

The Coast Guard will make drawings related to commercial standards available prior to RFP release and will make all reference drawings available with the RFP release.

16. What are the next steps and timelines after receiving proposals?

Following receipt of proposals, the Coast Guard will conduct evaluations with the intent of awarding a detailed design and construction contract in fiscal year 2022. Federal Acquisition Regulation Subpart 15.3 prescribes policies and procedures for the source selection process. Timelines will continue to be updated via the [WCC website](#).

17. Will the Coast Guard accept information such as white papers and capability statements from industry? Where can I send this information?

The Coast Guard is not actively requesting information outside of the RFIs it has released. While industry members may submit information to wcc@uscg.mil, the Coast Guard is not currently providing feedback on information submitted.

Requirements/Specifications

18. Will the WCC be required to follow any classification society rules?

The WCC will be built to American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) rules and classed by ABS, as required by [14 U.S.C. § 1133\(c\)\(3\)\(A\)](#).

19. How will the ships be classed? Will an ABS representative provide oversight during the production process?

The ships will be built to the ABS Rules for Building and Classing Steel Vessels Under 90 Meters in Length, and the Coast Guard will provide project peculiar documents (PPD) with deviations from the rules. An ABS representative will monitor the shipbuilding process and perform surveys to ensure each vessel meets applicable requirements.

20. Will individual ship components need to be classed, or just the ship? Will all ships need to be classed, or just the first ship in each class?

All WCCs will need to be classed. Type approval for certain components will be required in accordance with ABS standards.

21. Within the specifications, which objective values are higher priority?

The RFP will provide detailed criteria the Coast Guard will use for evaluating designs.

22. Is the Coast Guard open to two inland buoy tender variants to optimize mission performance in the areas of operation?

The Coast Guard is willing to consider two inland buoy tender variants if the variants maximize commonality.

23. Regarding the raked bow and related key performance parameters, is it correct that the draft should be no more than 4 feet at a point 20 feet aft of the bow?

No. The draft specification requires a raked bow to approach, establish, discontinue, and maintain floating ATON and fixed ATON structures in 4 feet of water without touching the riverbed or seafloor, with a slope of 20:1.

24. Does the WCC RFP allow for proposals of electric propulsion vessels?

No, the WCC RFP does not allow for proposals of electric propulsion vessels.

25. Has the Coast Guard examined diesel/electric or hybrid propulsion?

The Coast Guard has considered diesel/electric or hybrid propulsion, but due to weight concerns has specified direct shafting between the Z-drive and propulsion engine.

26. What are the emissions requirements? Will the propulsion engines need to meet IMO Tier 3 emissions?

The WCC's diesel engines will be required to meet current engine emission requirements and must comply with [40 CFR 1042 – Control of Emissions from New and In-Use Marine Compression-Ignition Engines and Vessels](#).

27. Is the Coast Guard open to an aluminum hull?

No. The Coast Guard is planning to acquire steel vessels that meet the ABS Rules for Building and Classing Steel Vessels Under 90 Meters in Length.

28. Is the Coast Guard open to an aft buoy deck?

For the river buoy tender and inland construction tender, an aft buoy deck would not meet operational requirements. The raked bow of the river buoy tenders allows them to get close to shore to retrieve and stow aids to navigation. The raked bow also allows both river buoy tenders and inland construction tenders to navigate sufficiently close to fixed aids.

The Coast Guard will evaluate proposals that include an aft working deck on the inland buoy tender, assuming all performance requirements are met.

29. The top-level requirements for all three variants call for a beam no wider than 35 feet, inclusive of appendages. Does this include fixed fendering?

Yes. Thirty-five feet is the maximum allowed beam, which is based on the distance between bridge abutments in the tenders' areas of operation.

30. Will the cranes need to have the same capacity as the cranes on the current cutters?

The capabilities required for the river buoy and inland construction class cranes can be found in Section 589 of the draft specifications.

31. Is it the Coast Guard's intent to have the cranes designed and built to the API 2c standards? If so, does the crane manufacturer need to hold a current API Monogram license to participate in the WCC program?

Yes, the cranes must be designed and built to the API 2c standards, and the crane manufacturer must hold a current API Monogram license.

32. Why does the hatch for the ATON workshop have to be ahead of the crane on the river buoy tender but aft on the inland construction variant?

The hatch for the ATON workshop is located to minimize interference with the work area of each variant.

33. There are two deck winches mentioned. Only one forward winch is shown in the drawings. Where should the second winch be located?

The different winch configurations are shown on the working deck drawings, WCC-SK-580-001 and WCC-SK-580-002.

34. Is there a habitability standard to follow for crew berthing (i.e., is the U.S. Navy habitability standard acceptable)?

The Coast Guard has its own habitability standards; the habitability requirements for the WCC are located in Section 640 of the draft specifications.

35. The river buoy and inland construction tender specification includes a separate and highly detailed noise requirement section. Why doesn't the Coast Guard use ABS habitability notations?

Overall, the WCC and ABS requirements are very similar; however, the Coast Guard has tailored the ABS standards to address issues encountered on previous cutters.

36. Are the berthing, mudroom, and mess deck all air-conditioned?

Air conditioned spaces are specified in the draft WCC PPD 512-001 and include berthing areas, the mess deck, and the mudroom.

37. About how big is the repair locker (square feet)?

The minimum gross deck area for the repair locker will be 45 square feet. A range for the dimensions will be provided in the final RFP.

38. Regarding wastewater, are you planning on treating both black and gray water, or just black water?

Only adequate holding tanks (without treatment) are required for WCC wastewater.

39. Is there a need for a bow thruster?

Currently there is no requirement for a bow thruster.

40. Would the Coast Guard prefer spuds or a Dynamic Positioning System (DPS)?

The Coast Guard draft specification requires that the river buoy and inland construction tender use spuds.

41. What DPS level does the Coast Guard require for the inland buoy tender?

If used, the Coast Guard would require DPS Level 1. However, spuds would also be an acceptable solution.

42. Where will copper nickel piping be used?

Section 505 of the river buoy tender and inland construction tender draft specification provides piping requirements, including copper nickel piping.

43. Will there be any work with C3CEN (Command, Control and Communications Engineering Center) or the C4IT (Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Information Technology) Service Center on electronics systems or subsystems?

The WCC Program is working with these organizations to determine the requirements for electronics systems.

44. Does any part of the specification address cybersecurity controls (e.g., technical solutions to protect ECDIS, engine control, crew access to internet)?

The Coast Guard has examined cyber requirements and specified systems and communications architecture appropriate to the WCC missions. Cyber requirements are located in Section 402 of the draft river buoy and inland construction tender RFP, and are under revision.

45. Will the WCC include SeaWatch?

There are no plans for the WCC to include SeaWatch.

Logistics, Government-Furnished Property, and Sparing

46. Does the government expect to provide government-furnished property (GFP) and/or information for the ships? If so, what would be provided?

The Coast Guard Electronic Chart Display and Information System (CG-ECDIS) will be furnished to the contractor as government-furnished information 13 months post-award.

The specification and statement of work will provide the parameters necessary to ensure the cutters are able to support the cutter boat embarkation, deployment, and sustainment. The Coast Guard will provide the data required to support the sustainment of the cutter boats and develop the required integrated logistics support products for sustainment.

47. What kind of cutter boat(s) will the WCCs have? Do you have dimensions/specifications/a detail design for the cutter boats? Will the boats be provided by the government or the shipbuilder?

The Coast Guard is developing preliminary requirements for WCC embarked cutter boats. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

48. Will the Coast Guard provide a maker's list or an approved vendor list of equipment to be installed on the WCC?

The specification will include some specific vendor requirements to maintain standardization (e.g., watertight doors). Otherwise, the Coast Guard is not developing a maker's list or approved vendor list at this time.

49. To facilitate the design process, does the Coast Guard plan to release a list of items with which the ship will need to be outfitted?

Yes, the Coast Guard will provide a draft outfit list with the RFP.

50. What is the Coast Guard's definition of "initial spares?" What are the Coast Guard's initial spares requirements?

Initial spares will be driven by a reliability-centered maintenance analysis of the component selection.

Operations/Miscellaneous

51. In January 2021, the Coast Guard released videos explaining operations on the river buoy and inland construction tenders. Does the Coast Guard intend to issue a program Concept of Operations (CONOPS) document from this video series?

The Coast Guard does not plan to release a full CONOPS document; however, scenarios from the CONOPS have already been provided in the previously released RFIs.

52. What types of activities do crews perform in the ATON workshop?

The ATON workshop is used for pre-staging associated ATON hardware to include lights (such as self-contained LED); signaling equipment (such as various retroreflective numbers and letters and associated hardware); and required tools (such as impact guns, nail guns, chainsaws, and brush cutters) used for maintenance and/or visits to aids. The crews also needs additional storage

for ATON lights and signaling equipment for any unplanned discrepancies found while transiting waterways.

53. How many ATON would you typically have in the ATON workshop at a time?

Major ATON equipment—buoys, sinkers, pilings, towers, and dayboards—are only stowed on deck. Minor components, such as lights and other fixtures, are stored in the ATON workshop.

54. Are the ATON on the deck stored in a rack?

The river buoy tenders have a buoy pen, where buoys are stored upright, and sinker stowage, where sinkers are stacked. The inland construction tenders have pile stowage areas with stanchions to keep the piles in place. The drawings provided in the draft RFP show how ATON will be stored for both variants.

55. How is the wire for the ATON stored? On a reel? Do you make your own splices and thimbles?

Wire comes in a large spool, and crews cut it up and splice it themselves. Wire is stored on portable racks on deck and chain is stored in barrels.

56. Do you paint the ATON?

Painting ATON is not typically performed on the ship.

57. Is the welding repair to the inland construction ATON performed on deck? If so, should there be a designated welding area?

ATON welding is typically conducted either on the working deck or in areas that allow necessary crew access. A designated welding area is required for general repair.

58. How do you operate the deck hatch? Do you take entire ATON down to the workshop?

The deck hatch will be opened and closed with the crane. The Coast Guard does not anticipate crewmembers moving ATON into the workshop.

59. The videos mentioned that the cutters work from sunrise to sunset. Would a thermal imager be a way to extend working hours to nighttime operations as required?

These ships avoid traveling at night; a thermal imager will not be necessary.

60. How do crews get ashore for brush cutting?

Crews can reach shore either via cutter boat or by pushing the cutter into the shore to allow disembarking.

61. What do spuds allow inland tenders to do?

Spuds allow the current inland construction tenders and river buoy tenders to remain in fixed positions. They allow inland construction tenders to be more precise when constructing fixed aids and allow river buoy tenders to hold position when pushing into a bank or using their jetting system.

The current inland buoy tenders also have spuds to maintain position; however, DPS could also provide this capability for this variant.

62. What is the current horsepower per engine now?

The existing inland tender fleet's engines range from 300 to 650 horsepower.

The horsepower of the WCC engines will be based on speed, maneuvering, and endurance requirements; there will be no minimum horsepower required in the RFP.

63. During the January webinar, you mentioned that you use a forklift to move things around. Is a forklift track preferable? Will the forklift traverse bow to stern?

Forklifts are not used onboard the vessel.

64. What is your relationship with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)? Do they notify you with changing channel depths?

The Coast Guard coordinates with USACE to better assess flood levels and future dredging plans, as well as changes to ATON placement, requirements, and changes.

Additionally, the USACE Marine Design Center is performing engineering trade studies to inform development of the WCCs.

65. Does the Coast Guard or USACE service lights on bridges?

Lights on bridges are not serviced by the Coast Guard or USACE.

66. There is a push in the Navy to unmanned and autonomous vehicles. Are there currently any plans or requirements to use these types of vehicles for ATON work?

No.