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Tanker traffic is strictly monitored

Re: A world-class spill response system?; Bellingham can have a boom around a leaky vessel within the hour, says harbourmaster, April 14

Before a loaded tanker is allowed to leave the Burnaby terminal it must pass inspection for compliance with Canadian and international regulations, it must have a captain and two local pilots on the bridge and be escorted by three tugboats, one of them tethered to the tanker.

Also, it is only allowed to sail during daylight hours and slack tide, and when its shipping lane is clear of all other traffic and its trip is monitored by the port's advanced airport-type guidance system.

Once well beyond Lions Gate Bridge, two tugboats leave while the third now-untethered tug accompanies the tanker to East Point off Saturna Island, where it is again tethered to the tanker for the trip through Boundary Pass and Haro Strait. And only then the two pilots and the tug boat leave.

To increase the tankers' safety even more, Kinder Morgan is proposing the tug escort continues all the way to the mouth of Juan de Fuca Strait.

JERRY SKLENAR North Vancouver

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