



STATE OF WASHINGTON
BOARD OF PILOTAGE COMMISSIONERS

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Concerning the 2024 Marine Pilot Exam in Washington State

Puget Sound Pilot Specific

- 1. If selected, following application, testing and training, will membership in APA and/or MMP be required?**

All pilots for the Puget Sound Pilots are members of MMP and APA.

- 2. Can you disclose the average and median age of the current pilot corps?**

The average age of a Puget Sound Pilot is 55.26 years old and the median age is 57 years old.

- 3. What do the pilots enjoy most about their jobs?**

There are currently 56 pilots in the State of Washington: 53 in Puget Sound and 3 in Grays Harbor and all 56 would give you a different answer. However, some of the most common answers are: Family-friendly, challenging work, beautiful environment, diversity of pilots professional experience, and the pilot 'community' found here. Piloting is challenging work, each day presents a new puzzle to solve and this can be very rewarding.

- 4. Can you talk about what your rotation is?**

PSP's work schedule consists of fifteen on-duty days and 13 off-duty days. After every 5th work cycle, pilots receive a cycle off. In the summer cruise season, pilots work an additional three consecutive days (determined by lottery) to meet the higher traffic demands. PSP is currently short of pilots and often pilots are needed to work when on their time off period. Pilots off duty time is equally important and working on their time off is not required. PSP desires to see the demand for pilots working on their off-duty days decrease, and this next exam should help.

- 5. How does PSP handle the buy-in?**

The buy-in represents the share of the partnership that each pilot holds. This is handled by an equity payment (buy-in/buy-out) based on the average of the last 3-years of DNI (Distributable Net Income) as determined in the pilotage tariff. The "buy in" is paid by a new pilot over 72 months and is deducted from their monthly

distribution. Upon retirement, pilots receive their "buy-out" payments in installments over 72 months. The increase in the value of the partnership share over a pilot's career is taxable as a long-term capital gain.

6. How have pilots handled recessions in the past?

Puget Sound pilots are owners of their own business, and income is not guaranteed and is subject to the same market fluctuations that can impact any business. While no business is recession-proof, PSP has the ability to seek annual rate adjustments from the Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) to account for changes in vessel traffic. The UTC is charged with implementing a tariff structure that is fair, just reasonable, and sufficient for the provision of pilotage services in Puget Sound.

7. Can you swap days with another pilot?

Yes, pilots can swap days and frequently do. PSP strives to run as efficiently as possible and part of that is spreading out the pilots work schedules to maximize on watch productivity, this can create challenges when trying to find another pilot to swap days with, but it can be done.

8. What is the maternity and paternity leave policy for both Puget Sound and Grays Harbor Pilots?

PSP has a maternity policy for pregnant pilots. The primary focus of the policy is for the health and safety of the baby and the pilot. A pregnant pilot may exercise major medical leave as described in PSP's operating rule. The major medical provision allows a pilot to remain on full distribution while taking up to 24 weeks of leave for a major medical condition. A pregnant pilot is entitled to an additional 3 off-duty rotations in excess of the major medical leave. In order to exercise the major medical or the maternity policy, the pilot will need to cover the first rotation of watch with either earned call back days or future earned time off.

PSP does not have a paternity leave policy, though many pilots have had children while piloting and PSP values the importance of family. Many pilots have volunteered to step up and cover or help the pilot get some time at home with their growing family.

9. How often are you sleeping at home versus the pilot station?

It all depends on what job you are dispatched to, but during your watch, you will likely spend about half the time at the pilot station. Pilots are home or at the pilot station for their minimum 10 hours of rest between assignments and pilots sometimes need to sleep during daylight hours to obtain adequate rest.

10. Is pay based on ship traffic handled by an individual pilot or is the total revenue by the pilot association taken in and split up equally amongst the total pilots?

Puget Sound Pilots are equal partners. After the tariff is collected, expenses are paid, with the remaining revenue distributed evenly. Individual expenses may be deducted from a pilot's distribution, including buy-in payments, medical insurance, or disability insurance.

11. If I debark a vessel in Cherry Point and live in Gig Harbor, do I have a place to sleep in Cherry Point or do I go back home? Do I go to the pilot station?

As a pilot, if you take a ship to Cherry Point, you would travel home after the assignment, every port is given a set amount of travel time home. The travel time for Cherry Point is 3.5 hours. If you take a ship to Port Angeles, you would sleep at the pilot station. However, sometimes after an outbound assignment to Port Angeles, you may be sent back to the Seattle side for efficiency measures, depending on ship traffic.

12. Is transportation paid?

Pilot transportation is part of the tariff and is fully reimbursed. Trainees are not reimbursed for transportation, though pilots are often amenable to helping trainees get to and from training assignments.

13. How much time do you get off between assignments?

Pilots are required by Washington law to rest for 10 hours between assignments. There are exceptions to this rule for shorter assignments, like harbor shifts. The 10-hour rest requirement does not include the necessary travel time to and from your assignment or the time to prepare for the next assignment. The 10-hour rest period begins once you've arrived at your home or the pilot station to get the required rest.

14. Does PSP have a pilotage annual manual?

PSP does not have any kind of pilotage manual. Pilots are independent contractors licensed by the state to perform pilotage services and it is improper for the PSP partnership to direct the performance of any individual pilot. PSP has operating rules, bylaws, and guidelines. Additionally, there is a committee that maintains information for each port, berth and waterway.

15. What are the challenges regarding commuting to or from jobs? How does that factor into work rest requirements?

Travel time is allotted depending on the port you are transiting to/from and is independent of the State rest requirements. Travelling in Puget Sound can be challenging, but once in the training program, you quickly learn how best to get to an assignment.

16. How much do pilots make their first year piloting?

There is no fixed distribution amount, the BPC annual reports have good information about pilot earnings. As of August 2023, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission has set the Per Pilot DNI (Distributable Net Income) to approximately \$475,000. This number is not a guarantee and is also dependent on many factors including the number and type of vessel assignments, the number of pilots on distribution at any given time and expenses. As a first-year pilot you can expect to earn an equal share of the revenue after expenses minus your equity payment (buy-in).