



Oceans Protection Plan

Places of Refuge Initiative

Background

A place of refuge is a site where a ship in need of assistance can take action to stabilize her condition to protect human life and the environment.

Place of refuge requests may be complex and urgent, requiring close coordination and communications between the vessel and Marine Safety authorities. Transport Canada is the lead agency for decisions related to ships requesting a place of refuge in Canadian waters.



Places of refuge are not designated in advance because the most suitable shelter can be determined only after the details of the incident are known.

To be best prepared for such incidents, the Government of Canada has created a [National Places of Refuge Contingency Plan](#) and is updating five regional plans.

Pre-identifying coastal locations

Through the Places of Refuge Initiative, Transport Canada is pre-identifying coastal locations for suitable places that ships can take shelter. The department is working with partners through this process so that Places of Refuge decision making can be efficient, evidence-based, and inclusive.

Decision makers will be able to use these pre-identified coastal locations in the event of an incident.

This proactive approach to planning will set in place the following considerations before an incident:

- ✓ Logistics, environmental sensitivities, human use and navigation
- ✓ Potential conflicts of use
- ✓ Local and traditional knowledge

Working with partners

The involvement of Indigenous peoples, coastal communities, government organizations and industry is helping to:

- ✓ Evaluate potential places of refuge using site-specific data to inform decisions
- ✓ Improve the contingency plan's environmental, socio-economic and cultural sensitivities content
- ✓ Improve communications and broaden coordination in decision making

The Places of Refuge Initiative is another action that the Government of Canada is taking to protect our coasts and waterways. The Government is investing \$1.5 billion in the Oceans Protection Plan, a national strategy to create a world-leading marine safety system that provides economic opportunities for Canadians today, while protecting our coastlines for future generations.