

# Introduction

## General

*Waterborne Commerce of the United States, Parts 1 – 5 is a series of publications which provides statistics on the foreign and domestic waterborne commerce moved on the United States waters.*

**WCUS, Parts 1-4** present detailed data on the movements of vessels and commodities at the ports and harbors and on the waterways and canals of the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

Beginning with the calendar year 2007 publications, **WCUS Parts 1-4** are provided in HTML format on the Navigation Data Center (NDC) website.

<http://www.ndc.iwr.usace.army.mil/wcsc/wcsc.htm>

Data on foreign commerce are supplied to the Corps of Engineers by the U.S. Bureau of the Census and Border Protection, U.S. Customs, and purchased from the Commonwealth Business Media, Inc., Port Import Export Reporting Service.

The publication numbers and the geographical areas covered in **WCUS, Parts 1-5** are detailed below:

**WCUS, Part 1 Atlantic Coast**

**WCUS, Part 2 Gulf Coast, Mississippi River System and Antilles**

**WCUS, Part 3 Great Lakes**

**WCUS, Part 4 Pacific Coast, Alaska and Hawaii**

**WCUS, Part 5 National Summaries**

## Legal Authority

The legal authority for the collection, compilation and publication of waterborne commerce statistics by the Army Corps of Engineers is Section 11 of the Rivers and Harbors Appropriations Act of 1922 (42 Stat. 1043), as amended, and codified in 33 U.S.C. 555 and provides the following:

Owners, agents, masters, and clerks of vessels and other craft plying upon the navigable waters of the United States, and all individuals and corporations engaged in transporting their own goods upon the navigable waters of the United States, shall furnish such statements relative to vessels, passengers, freight and tonnage as may be required by the Secretary of the Army: Provided, That this provision shall not apply to those rafting logs, except upon a direct request upon the owner to furnish specific information.

Every person or persons offending against the provisions of this section shall, for each and every offense, be liable to a fine of not more than \$5,000 or imprisonment not exceeding two months, to be enforced in any district court of the United States within whose territorial jurisdiction such offense may have been committed. In addition, the Secretary may assess a civil penalty of up to \$2,500 per violation against any person or entity that fails to provide timely, accurate statements required to be submitted pursuant to this section by the Secretary.

The vessel and commodity movement information collected and compiled is designed to meet the data requirements of the Department of the Army in connection with the duties assigned by Congress. These data also provide valuable information for other governmental departments, commercial and shipping concerns and others interested in the U.S. transportation industry.

## Domestic Commerce

Contiguous and non-contiguous states and territories constitute the geographical space upon which domestic commerce may be transported. This includes Hawaii, Alaska, the 48 contiguous states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, Wake Island and the U.S. Trust Territories.

The waterborne traffic movements are reported to the Corps of Engineers by all vessel operators of record on ENG Forms 3925 and 3925b (or equivalent) approved by the Office of Management and Budget under the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3510(a)). The reports are generally submitted on the basis of individual vessel movements completed. For movements with cargo, the point of loading and the point of unloading of each individual commodity must be delineated. Cargo moved for

the military agencies in commercial vessels is reported as ordinary commercial cargo; military cargo movements in Department of Defense vessels are not collected.

In summarizing the domestic commerce certain movements are excluded: Cargo carried on general ferries; coal and petroleum products loaded from shore facilities directly into bunkers of vessels for fuel; and insignificant amounts of government materials (less than 100 tons) moved on government owned equipment in support of Corps projects.

## Foreign Commerce

Foreign commerce is waterborne import, export and in-transit traffic between the United States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands and any foreign country. These statistics do not include traffic between any foreign country and the United States Territories and Possessions (American Samoa, Guam, North Mariana Islands and U.S. Outlying Islands).

Beginning with the calendar year 2000 publication, foreign waterborne import, export and in-transit cargo statistics are derived primarily from data purchased from the Port Import Export Reporting Service, a division of the Commonwealth Business Media, Inc. and supplemented by data furnished to the Corps of Engineers by the U.S. Bureau of the Census and Border Protection and the U.S. Customs. Foreign cargo is matched to vessel moves to improve geographic specificity.

The Republic of Panama is considered a foreign country. However, individual vessel movements with origin and destination at United States ports traveling via the Panama Canal are considered domestic traffic. Alaskan crude oil (origin at Valdez, AK) shipped via the Panama pipeline (west to east) and destined for gulf and east coast ports is also considered domestic commerce.

Import and export shipments for use of the United States Armed Forces abroad are not reported to the Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center (WCSC). Beginning with calendar year 1989 shipments under the military assistance program of the Department of Defense are included in the statistics under the appropriate commodity code. In prior years these cargoes were given as commodity code 9999.

## Commodity Descriptions

The first two digits of the WCSC publication codes correspond with the Lock Performance Monitoring System (LPMS) commodity codes. Both LPMS and WCSC codes were standardized to reflect the hierarchical structure of the Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) Revision 3 commodity codes. SITC, Rev. 3 commodity codes conform to the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS). Using SITC, Rev. 3 allows direct comparisons with U.S. Imports, exports, and in-transits, as well as, with commodity movements of other countries.

## Tonnage

The tonnage figures provided throughout the **WCUS, Parts 1-5** represent short tons (2,000 pounds). The "**All Traffic Types**" columns include the sum of all domestic and all foreign traffic tons.

## Trips

A trip is a vessel movement. For self-propelled vessels, a trip is logged between every point of departure and every point of arrival. For loaded barges, a trip is logged from the point of the loading of the barge to the point of unloading of the barge (i.e., excluding fleeting areas). For empty barges, trips are logged from point of unloading to the point of loading counting the fleeting areas in between (e.g. if an empty barge moved from Dock A to Dock B and the barge stopped at three fleeting areas in between, then four trips are logged.) Some towboat trips and empty barge moves are estimated from a sample to expedite processing and reduce costs. The number of trips also includes vessels engaged in foreign trade. These moves are furnished by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

To more accurately reflect actual traffic patterns (e.g. inbound versus outbound trip counts), some adjustments are made to the domestic trip counts in the trip and draft tables in this publication.