



CANAL DE PANAMÁ



EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENCY FOR OPERATIONS

OPERATIONS MANUAL

2018 Edition

FOREWORD

The Operations Manual has been revised to incorporate changes made to the operation of the Panama Canal. This revision includes updated nautical charts of several sections of the waterway, new depths and drafts in the terminal ports, the updated tugboat fleet specifications, new definitions, and modifications to vessel requirements in order to comply with new SOLAS standards and reduce the risk of pollution due to oil spillage, as well as new information regarding the operation of the expanded Canal.

The continuous efforts to improve channels, installations and equipment have always been part of a tradition that began on the first day of Canal operations – a tradition of quality maintenance and permanent improvement that has made the Panama Canal a hallmark amongst the maritime community. This tradition of excellence still continues today, as the new expanded Canal is fully operational since June 26th, 2016.

Throughout the years, the key to the continuous success of the Panama Canal has been its workforce; from the sacrifice and ingenuity of Canal builders, to the joint dedication and commitment of thousands of Americans and Panamanians whom achieved the successful transfer of the waterway to the Republic of Panama, and to all those involved in the design and construction of the expanded Canal.

Today, this success is reflected in our capacity and perseverance, not only to give our best to achieve the waterway's mission, but also to dare and innovate, constantly implementing new and better ways to meet and exceed the demands of Canal customers.

It is through competitiveness and innovation that the Panama Canal has maintained its position amongst the leading maritime thoroughfares in the world and has expanded its services to a larger segment of the shipping industry, thus increasing its impact on the global economy while directly benefitting Panama and its people.

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Esteban G. Sáenz
Executive Vice President for Operations

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1 – GENERAL INFORMATION

SECTION 2 – OPERATION PROCEDURES

SECTION 3 – VESSEL REQUIREMENTS

SECTION 4 – VESSEL DEFICIENCIES AND GUIDELINES FOR RELEASES

SECTION 5 – HANDLINE VESSELS AND DEAD TOWS

SECTION 6 – COMMUNICATIONS

SECTION 7 – HARBOR OPERATIONS

SECTION 8 – DREDGING OPERATIONS AND NAVIGATIONAL AIDS

SECTION 9 – POLLUTION CONTROL

SECTION 10 – TRANSIT OPERATIONS

SECTION 11 – LOCKS OPERATIONS

SECTION 12 – MARINE ACCIDENTS, INCIDENTS AND INVESTIGATIONS

SECTION 13 – MARITIME TRAINING

**SECTION 14 – MAINTENANCE, IMPROVEMENT AND REPLACEMENT
PROGRAMS**

SECTION 15 – SECURITY AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

SECTION 16 – FLEET AND EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

SECTION 17 – TRANSIT RESOURCES

SECTION 18 – MARITIME SAFETY

History of Revisions

Revision	Date	Section	Revision Description
Original	20-Apr-09	-	Operations Department Operations Manual
1	1-Sept-10	-	2010 Edition of the Operations Department Operations Manual
2	1-Sept-13	1	Paragraphs were modified to update responsibilities of several OP units, and subsection 1.3, <i>Office Symbols</i> , was updated.
		2	Tables II, III and IV were updated. Paragraph d was added on p. 28; Form 3821 (OPTS) was added on p. 32, and Sheet 9B (Balboa Harbor) was updated on p. 92.
		3	The term "articulated" was changed to "integrated" and the definition of <i>Articulated Tug-Tank Combination</i> was eliminated, on p. 2. New definitions were added on p. 4. Tables II, III and IV were updated. Paragraph 3.2.i (7) was eliminated and subsection 3.2.j was added on p. 15. Modifications were made to the following paragraphs on section 3.10: d (3), e (2) and f on p. 40, f (1) (a) and (b) on p. 41, f (1) (j) and (k) on p. 43, f (2) (a) and (b) on p. 44. Paragraph 3.10.f (3) was eliminated on p. 45. The first and last paragraphs of Section 3.11 were modified on p. 46, as well as paragraph 3.16 h (4) on p. 54. Subsection 3.16.l was added on page 57 and subsection 3.17 was modified on p. 57. Chart 9B (Balboa Harbor) was updated on p. 91.
		6	Table III, <i>Standard Pilot/Tug Orders</i> , was updated on p. 10, and restrictions on pilot usage of cell phones was incorporated in paragraph 6.4 c., on p. 3
		7	Tables II, III and IV were updated. Updated Sheets 10 (Pacific Entrance), 9B (Balboa Harbor), 1 (Atlantic Entrance) and 1A (Cristobal Harbor) were added on ps. 23, 24, 25 and 26, respectively; and Form 3821 (OPTS) was added on p. 27.
		8, 11, 14	Several paragraphs were updated or modified to better reflect procedures, responsibilities and new organizational nomenclature.
		9	Paragraph e. (<i>Environmental Management Division</i>) was eliminated and Paragraph f. (<i>Security and Emergency Response Division</i>) was updated, on p. 2; and the PCSOPEP forms were updated, on pages 14 and 15.
		10	Corrections were made to the last paragraphs of items g (3) (l) and (m) on p. 18; and to paragraphs g (4) (n) on p. 22, g (6) (c) on p. 23 and g (7) (b) on p. 24, and on the table on p. 26.
		12	The term Investigative Board was changed to Investigative Committee, the requirement of an administrative assistant was incorporated, the language of the hearing was changed to Spanish, a 30-day working period was established to conclude the investigation, and the process to review and approve the final report was modified. Subsection 12.11, <i>Catastrophe Insurance and Reporting Procedures</i> , was updated.
		13	The term Maritime Training and Development Section was changed to Maritime Training Unit and the unit's responsibility of administering the towboat training program was eliminated.
17	Unit names were changed in items 10.2 b (3) and (9), on p. 7 and 8, and Table IV (Tugboat Fleet Specifications) was updated on p. 24 and 25.		

History of Revisions

Revision	Date	Section	Revision Description
3	1-ene-14	10	Paragraphs 10.2.g.(2)(d)(e)&(j) were added, on p.13. Actual arrival time is explained and the sealed bid special booking period was eliminated, on p.14. The number of reserved transit slots for supers was increased and sealed bid option column was eliminated from chart, on p.15. Paragraph 10.2.g.(3)(e) was added and paragraph 10.2.g.(3)(f) was eliminated, on p.15. Subsections 10.2.g.(3)(l)&(m) were modified, on p.19. Paragraphs 10.2.g.(4)(l)&(m) were modified, on p.23. Paragraph 10.2.g.(4)(o) was modified, on p.24. Paragraph 10.2.g.(6)(a) was modified, on p.25. Paragraph 10.2.g.(7)(a) was modified, paragraphs 10.2.g.(7)(c)&(d) were added, on p.26. Paragraphs 10.2.g.(7)(f)(g)&(h) and (8)(b) were updated, on p.27. Paragraph 10.2.g.(9)(a) was modified on p.28.
4	30-nov-14	-	2014 Edition of the Executive Vice Presidency for Operations Manual.
5	31-mar-15	2	Table III was updated on p. 13; the Balboa Harbor chart was updated on p. 83.
		3	Paragraph 3.2 b (4) was incorporated on p. 5; Tables II, III and V were updated on ps. 10 to 12; paragraph 3.10 f (2) (c) was eliminated on p. 45; e-mails were updated on ps. 47, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58 and 60; paragraph 3.15 c and d were modified on p. 51; paragraphs 3.16 d (1) and (2) (b) and (c) were updated and unit 3.16 e was modified, on p. 52; paragraph 3.16 g (10) was eliminated on p. 54; paragraph 3.19 b was modified on p. 60; paragraphs 3.25 a, b and c were modified on p. 64.
		7	Subsection 7.3 was incorporated on p. 3; Tables I, II and IV were updated on ps. 5 to 7; paragraphs 7.8 e was modified on p. 8; units 7.13 c and 7.14 f were modified on ps. 12 and 18, respectively; charts were updated on ps. 23-26.
6	24-jul-15	2	The Balboa Harbor and Third Locks Mooring Area charts were updated on p. 83 and 84, respectively.
		3	Table III was updated on p. 11.
		7	Table II was updated on p. 6. The Balboa Harbor chart was updated on p. 24.
7	11-dec-15	2	Table of contents was updated on p. 1. Table I was updated on p. 23.
		3	Table of contents was updated on p. 1. Table V was updated on p. 7.
8	Dec-16	2	The Balboa Harbor chart was updated on p. 83
		7	The following charts were updated: Sheet 10 – Pacific Entrance (p. 23); Sheet 9B – Balboa Harbor (p. 24); Sheet 1 - Limon Bay and Atlantic Entrance (p. 25); Sheet 1A - Cristobal Piers (p. 26). Table 1 – Depths and Drafts in Balboa was updated on p. 5.
9	June-17	18	The contact information of OPXI-S was updated (p.2)
		7	The following chart was updated: Sheet 1 - - Limon Bay and Atlantic Entrance (p. 25)
10	Dec-17	3	The numbering of the Table of Contents on p. 1 was updated. Paragraph 3.2.a (1)(c) on p. 4; Paragraph 3.2.a (2)(c) on p. 5; and Paragraph 3.2.b (1)(c) on p. 6 were modified to update the numeration of the paragraphs mentioned in them.
		5	The numbering of the Table of Contents on p. 1 was updated.
		10	The numbering of the Table of Contents on p. 1 was updated.

History of Revisions

Revision	Date	Section	Revision Description
		12	The numeration of the Table of Contents on p. 1 was updated. The following paragraphs were modified: Paragraph 12.2 (f) on p. 2 and 3; Paragraphs 12.3 (a)(1) and 12.3 (b)(2) on p. 3; Paragraphs 12.5 (a) and 12.5 (b) on p. 5; Paragraphs 12.6 (b)(1), 12.6 (b)(2), 12.6 (c)(3), 12.6 (c)(4), 12.6 (c)(5), 12.6(c)(6), 12.6 (c)(7), 12.6 (d)(2), 12.6 (d)(3), 12.6 (e)(1)(b), 12.6 (e)(5), 12.6 (e)(6), 12.6 (f)(1), 12.6 (f)(2), 12.6 (f)(3), 12.6 (f)(4), 12.6 (f)(5), 12.6 (f)(6), 12.6 (g)(2)(i), 12.6 (i)(1)(b), 12.6 (i)(2)(a), 12.6 (i)(2)(h), 12.6 (i)(2)(h), 12.6 (i)(2)(i), 12.6 (i)(2)(j), 12.6 (j)(1), 12.6 (j)(4); 12.7; 12.8; 12.9 (b) – from pages 5 to 18.
		13	The following paragraphs were modified: 13.1 (b) on p. 2; 13.3 (b)(2) on p. 4; 13.4 (a)(4) on p. 8; 13.5 (c) on p. 11; 13.6 (j) on p. 12.
		15	The numbering of the Table of Contents on p. 1 was updated.
		1	Item 5 was modified on p. 1 and 2; Item 7 was modified on p. 6; Items 3 and 4 were modified on p. 7
11	Jan-18	-	2018 Edition of the Executive Vice Presidency for Operations Manual.