



THE NORTHWEST
SEAPORT ALLIANCE

SEATTLE + TACOMA

nwseaportalliance.com

The Northwest Seaport Alliance: Marine Terminal Operator Updates Webinar Webinar Q&A January 27, 2021

These questions were asked by webinar attendees. Duplicate questions were combined, and some questions were modified for clarity and standardized terminology. Answers to terminal-specific questions were provided by the respective terminal manager.

Husky Terminal

- 1. Why are there so many and prolonged empty return shut outs? Is this ocean carrier or terminal operator-driven (or both)?** As mentioned by other marine terminal operators (MTOs) on the webinar, each terminal has a certain amount of space for empty containers. MTOs advise the ocean carriers of this amount and it is the ocean carriers' responsibility to manage their empty allocations. When they exceed their allocation an MTO may stop receiving their empties.
- 2. Why does the vessel schedule allow for five days at berth every other week?** All driven by vessel proforma (schedule.) It is important to know that vessel proforma is the driving force for all container movement in and out of a terminal.
- 3. Some weeks containers are available on Mondays, others it takes up to five days for containers to be off vessels and/or out of closed areas. For example, the Seaspan Brilliance shows 1/23-1/28 on your site and other vessels show three days?**
When vessels are off proforma and ad hoc vessels arrive, it creates "vessel bunching." This creates a higher than normal volume of imports and exports on the terminal. Therefore, an MTO may have to put import containers in an undeliverable area of the yard. As imports are delivered and space becomes available Husky will "pitch" the containers into a deliverable area.
- 4. There now seems to be a "predictable" weekend bunching arrival pattern due to vessel delays. Our PN2 vessel proforma is Thursday through Sunday. The recent ad hoc vessels have arrived on the weekend. What is the plan with TRAC to align chassis pools Monday-Thursday to cover common Thursday last free days (LFDs)?**
Husky evaluates our chassis needs daily and conveys that information to TRAC. Husky will also forecast chassis needs in advance to TRAC when necessary. TRAC is our chassis pool provider. TRAC would be able to provide you with their plan to cover Husky's chassis needs.
- 5. Given the new truck gate complex at Lot F is complete, what positive impact do you expect for truck turn times? Also, do you expect Husky Terminal will be consistently open on Fridays going forward?**
Quicker turn times. Friday is part of our normal weekly gate schedule. However, it all depends on vessel proforma, volumes, holidays, etc. Husky and the NWSA will notify customers in advance of any gate closures at Husky.
- 6. When will the RFID readers be fully working inside Lot F?**
Husky and the NWSA are currently working together to provide the most accurate data as quickly as possible.



THE NORTHWEST
SEAPORT ALLIANCE

SEATTLE + TACOMA

nwseaportalliance.com

Pierce County Terminal (PCT)

7. Can you align the empty return scheme with other terminals vs. stringent one-hour time slots? It is nearly impossible to align picking up loads with empty returns.

Appointment slots are one hour with 30-minute grace periods on each end of the appointment, essentially a two-hour appointment. If you are having trouble acquiring an appointment, please contact tiwyard@everport-terminals.com.

8. We are not seeing empty appointments for an average of 2+ days out of any current day. How many daily in-gate transactions can PCT manage?

ETS has the ability to handle 1500 transactions on the 1st shift, Monday-Friday. For appointment availability issues, customers should contact tiwyard@everport-terminals.com. Based on activity, appointments may be added.

9. Can you add daily empty receiving grid to your site please?

ETS rarely locks out empty receiving. On those rare occasions, ETS sends eModal broadcast emails to announce any lockout.

Terminal 18

10. Can you please provide more accurate vessel ETA updates on your site?

Due to the frequent changes in the vessel ETAs from the ocean carriers, providing highly accurate ETAs has been a challenge.

11. What is your "brush pile" process (average days in piles, what determines which containers get held, are certain container types more susceptible to going into piles, etc.)?

"Brush pile" is a term used to identify cargo that is temporarily unavailable. When the rubber tire gantry (RTG) area is full we will deck cargo outside of the RTG row until space becomes available, at which time cargo in "brush piles" is moved into the RTG row for delivery. There are no specific containers identified, just when space in the RTG row is unavailable. Generally, these containers will be unavailable for up to 48 hours from vessel discharge. Port free time is extended accordingly. This is not an everyday occurrence, only when vessels are off schedule and bunch together.

12. Can you please provide a "brush pile" indicator on your site? It will mitigate a lot of emails!

The website shows cargo as unavailable while in brush piles.

13. Why are there so many and prolonged empty return shut outs? Is this ocean carrier or terminal operator-driven (or both)?

As mentioned, the proforma vessel schedules are compromised for a multitude of reasons. This sometimes creates longer windows of time between service calls. Without regular reposition of empties to vessels, the terminal space becomes limited and empty receiving has to be suspended until empties are loaded to a vessel.

14. What is your new email address?

Email addresses remain the same, no changes.

15. What is your "normal gate times" [turn times]? What is "normal rail performance"?



THE NORTHWEST
SEAPORT ALLIANCE

SEATTLE + TACOMA

nwseaportalliance.com

Normal gate times and normal rail performance means that there have not been impacts to these areas of the operations as a result of the vessel schedules. Our gates continue to perform well with turn times in the normal range of approximately 45 minutes, gate to gate, for all dual transactions combined. Our rail operations continue to load/discharge at least one train a day and the rail road is meeting their spot windows, making equipment available to support operations.

16. Are you foreseeing any further changes in regard to hazmat/class 7 or will it be business as usual? Will Terminal 18 revisit its policy to limit class 7 to 20 containers per vessel?

Not at this time.

17. There are vessels showing at anchor on the Marine Traffic website. Is this not accurate? Also, the NWSA previously reported 1-2 vessels at anchor at T18 for up to 24hrs. There are 5-6 vessels showing "at anchor" on that site right now.

I can only speak for T18, we do not and have not had vessels waiting to berth.

Additional NWSA feedback: Most of the ships at anchor near Seattle are bulk vessels waiting to berth at the grain facilities. As of January 28th, there is a container ship at anchor, which is waiting for a berth in Vancouver after NWSA departure.

Terminal 30

18. Are you also doing a "brush pile" process? Frequently unclear based on delayed container availability.

We do brush pile any import container that does not have a designated trucker at discharge time, which does cause a delay in availability depending how deep the container is once a trucker is picked. Other brush piles are rail loads, which can turn into a big headache when the line switches from rail to local move and the container is in the middle of the pile. Then we have to wait until the rail picks up those containers to make the new local move available.

19. Will the Friday closures continue? What impact is this having on Monday terminal volumes, wait times, etc. as this consistently seems like a congested day there?

Friday closures will continue until at least the beginning of May. This is due to the skipping of 12 weeks of [CEN service] sailings lasting through most of February, all of March and April and the first week of May. Impact is negligible as we usually hire additional manning if a ship is not working on Mondays. From my time here (started on October 22), we have had on average 1,094 trucks serviced on Mondays with an average turn time of 23:25. In total we service around 903 trucks a day with an average turn time of 23:48.

20. Could you advise the carrier that is cutting out services for 12 weeks at T30 and why?

COSCO [CEN service] is eliminating the 12 vessel calls from Seattle. I have asked why, and no answer was given.

Washington United Terminal (WUT)

21. Will you be extending your afternoon gate to 16:30? If so when? If not, why not?

The out gate is open until 16:30. The in gate is usually closed at 15:30 to ensure we have enough time to process trucks in the yard out. These times line up with the current working time of the ILWU.



THE NORTHWEST
SEAPORT ALLIANCE

SEATTLE + TACOMA

nwseaportalliance.com

Since COVID, the ILWU is working continuously from 13:00-16:30 for all operations. They made this change to eliminate close contact during mid-shift meal breaks (contractual breaks). As long as that practice remains in place the gate hours will not change. On occasion we will work past 16:30 to service customers in the yard at or before 15:30.

22. Thank you for temporarily lifting empty return appointments. How long will that last?

No plans to require an empty in appointment at this time. This change was made to encourage more empty returns and therefore more vessel lifts. It is a balancing act – the empties do not necessarily load a vessel and accumulate on terminal leading to congestion and reduced service levels, but they also have led one [ocean carrier] customer to bring in extra vessels with additional volume. We have had to shut off empty receiving for a few customers because they are well above their on terminal empty allocation. The other piece is that an empty return typically starts with a full import pickup. We know how many of those are picked up and therefore about how many empties are being returned. We can hire labor accordingly.

Other NWSA Questions

23. What is your maximum gate moves/day (in+out)? What is the frequency percentage of missed eModal appts? What advise do you have for truckers?

All terminals combined can handle about 9,500 transactions per day. We do not have information on missed appointments from eModal, and terminals may be able to provide that information. For truckers, it is highly advisable for drivers to arrive a terminal only within the designated appointment window. For terminals that do not require empty in appointments, it is advisable to return them during off peak hours.

24. If ocean carriers are creating the empty return shut outs (and with blank sailings increasing) vs. terminal decisions, what recourse is there for these inefficient restrictions? We continue to hear directions to reach out to the ocean carriers to extend LFDs due to the split returns, but NONE of the ocean carriers will extend LFDs as long as there is “somewhere” to return an empty. Where is their representation on this call?

The NWSA will work to get ocean carrier representation on future webinars, as well continue to work with ocean carriers to highlight local operational issues and offer assistance to mitigate split returns, such as off dock opportunities.

25. What is the NWSA’s tariff timing for on/off-dock? For example, why does the on-dock timing start when a container is discharged on a Sunday? Can this be temporarily extended to 6-8+ days due to the extreme circumstances underway?

Tariff timing and terminal free time for BCOs is dictated by the agreement with their ocean carrier.

26. What is needed to get Terminal 46 set up as a temporary empty return depot? What off-dock space is available in Tacoma? What threshold(s) meets a red line for the NWSA to act?

There are several factors to get Terminal 46 set up as an empty return depot and is it currently under review. There are several off-dock facilities with space in both Seattle and Tacoma, which we list on our website [here](#).



THE NORTHWEST
SEAPORT ALLIANCE

SEATTLE + TACOMA

nwseaportalliance.com

27. MTOs need to update empty return grids 2-hours prior to opening at 8:00am in the morning. Dispatching of initial loads must be arranged by 6:00am or earlier. Mid-morning alterations to plans negatively impact the market overall.

The NWSA will share this feedback with the MTOs.

28. What regional impact on carbon emissions and additional fuel consumption has been incurred as a result of increased empty return shut-outs requiring Tacoma-originated containers to be returned to Seattle? We invested in clean trucks as demanded but are continually faced with inefficient ways to properly utilize them. Further proposed restrictions on truck emissions is meaningless if fuel is being burned unnecessarily on wasteful runs such as forced Tacoma to Seattle split empty returns.

The NWSA has not studied the impact specifically from split empty returns. We continually work with the MTOs and ocean carriers to try improving operational efficiency, which we recognize will also lessen idling and added mileage. Empty return locations are determined by ocean carriers' on terminal empty allocation and utilization, their desired vessel/service string routing, and other factors.

29. Will there be peak planning strategy session(s) this summer?

We would like to host a Peak Planning Meeting this year and are currently evaluating whether it will be virtual or can be in-person later this year.

30. Is peel off and free flow only for import containers?

Correct, import only.

31. I feel that the appointment required to pick-up and drop should be eliminated. With the ocean carrier and terminal operations that we are experiencing the appointments are not working. Not enough personnel on the ground at port even with this system. Logistics inside terminal is less that satisfactory. Is this something that can be eliminated?

Appointments help meter trucks into the terminal to better align with cargo handling equipment capacity, as well as help MTOs gauge labor required for the following day. We recognize there is room for improvement in the total truck turn times and actively work with MTOs and ocean carriers to improve vessel on time performance and find efficiencies such as through peel off piles, extra gates, and outreach to the wider community regarding best practices.

32. Given the issues with vessel schedules and the possibility of multiple vessels arriving at the same time, is there any thoughts of Saturday gates or hoot gates to help with the influx of export and import cargo?

Consideration of Saturday or hoot gates varies by terminal and volume. There have been ad hoc extra gates in recent months at Husky, Pierce County Terminal, Terminal 18 and Washington United Terminals, however, there are no plans for fixed extra gates at the moment.

33. Can you also please include a list of ocean carrier contacts (EQC, on/off-hires, etc.)?

Given the size and variety of contacts at each ocean carrier, the NWSA does not have a list of all their contacts by departments. We do have links to each ocean carriers' website on our website [here](#).

34. Is there any option for all of the terminals to update their export receiving schedules a couple times a day instead of once a day which is usually near the end of the work day? With vessel schedules changing drastically it makes it difficult for planning cargo returns especially if the



THE NORTHWEST
SEAPORT ALLIANCE

SEATTLE + TACOMA

nwseaportalliance.com

terminal is still showing TBA and then changes to show ERD as next day at the end of the current day.

We understand from the terminals they are updating receiving information as soon as they learn of changes, although as expressed above information is fluid and not always timely.

35. Focusing on Exports: What steps are the terminals taking to ensure vessel arrival is reconfirmed before allowing vessel to open for receiving? There is nothing more disruptive (and expensive) than having a vessel open, then shut and open days later.

Steps vary by terminal since their services' previous ports of call may differ (e.g. calling Canada ports first vs. calling California ports first vs. NWSA is first port of call from Asia.) The NWSA is seeking better vessel arrival information from a variety of sources and will work with terminals to see if they can use it to better plan vessel receiving.

36. What is the status of the work on Terminal 5? When will it be operational?

Construction continues at Terminal 5 and it is expected phase 1 will be complete and operational by summer.