

WAC 220-460-120 Time limitations on watching southern resident killer whales. (1) It is unlawful for an operator of a motorized commercial whale watching vessel to approach within one-half nautical mile of a southern resident killer whale between October 1st and June 30th.

(2) It is unlawful for an operator of a motorized commercial whale watching vessel to approach within one-half nautical mile of a southern resident killer whale outside these time periods: 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. from July 1st through September 30th.

(3) If any motorized commercial whale watching vessel designated under a commercial whale watching business license enters within the vicinity of a southern resident killer whale between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m., no vessels operating under that business license may enter the vicinity of a southern resident killer whale after 12:00 p.m. on the same day.

(4) If an operator of a motorized commercial whale watching vessel enters within one-half nautical mile of a group of killer whales outside of the provisions in this section, after taking reasonable measures to determine whether the killer whales were southern resident killer whales, and then identifies the whales as southern resident killer whales, the operator must:

(a) Immediately safely reposition the vessel to be one-half nautical mile or farther from the southern resident killer whales.

(b) Immediately after repositioning the vessel, report the location of the southern resident killer whale(s) to the WhaleReport application for the whale report alert system (WRAS), or to a successor transboundary notification system designated by the department that is adopted by the international shipping community in the Salish Sea.

(c) Accurately log the incident, including measures taken to determine whether the whales were southern resident killer whales, following the provisions of WAC 220-460-140 and submit the log to the department within twenty-four hours of the incident.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 77.65.615 and 77.65.620. WSR 21-23-070, § 220-460-120, filed 11/15/21, effective 12/16/21. Statutory Authority: RCW 77.12.047, 77.65.615, 77.65.620, 77.15.020, 77.15.160, 77.04.012, 77.04.55 [74.05.055]. WSR 21-01-216 (Order 20-264), § 220-460-120, filed 12/23/20, effective 1/23/21.]