

Newly Modified Coast Guard Cutter Storis Prepares for Arctic Duty



The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Storis (WAGB 21) transits the Puget Sound near Whidbey Island and crosses paths with the Coast Guard Cutter Eagle (WIX 327), July 11, 2025. The arrival of Storis marks a milestone in the Coast Guard's Force Design 2028 initiative and broader Arctic strategy. *Photo credit: U.S. Coast Guard*

The U.S. Coast Guard's newly acquired icebreaker Storis recently arrived in Seattle to prepare for its first Arctic patrol, after a six-week voyage from Bollinger Shipyards in Mississippi.

The Coast Guard bought the M/V Aiviq (now the Storis) late last November in a \$125 million deal with Offshore Surface Vessels LLC. Aiviq is a 360-foot U.S.-built vessel that has supported oil exploration in the Chukchi Sea off the coast of Alaska in the Arctic Ocean and has deployed twice to the Antarctic, according to the service.

Aiviq was built in 2012 and acquired by the Coast Guard in December 2024, making Storis 13 years old as of 2025. It's the

youngest of the icebreaking fleet; before *Storis*, the Coast Guard had only two active-duty icebreakers, the 26-year-old medium Arctic icebreaker *Healy* and the 49-year-old heavy Antarctic icebreaker, *Polar Star*.

The *Storis* (WAGB-21) is a Polar Class 3 icebreaker meant for Arctic ice patrols. Polar Class 3 denotes an icebreaker that can break about 2.5 meters (approximately 8 feet) of ice. *Storis* has four Caterpillar C280-12 engines producing 4,060 kilowatts each and propulsion is provided by two ducted controllable-pitch propellers and three bow thrusters and two stern thrusters. Speed is 15 knots (28 km/h; 17 mph) in the open ocean and five knots (9.3 km/h; 5.8 mph) when breaking one meter (3.2 feet) of ice. Crew size is approximately 60 officers and the crew that will be assigned in the summer of 2025.

“*Storis* departed Pascagoula, Mississippi on June 4 [2025] and transited the Panama Canal June 12 enroute to its future homeport of Juneau. *Storis* will be commissioned into service in August in Juneau,” said Lieutenant Commander Steve Roth, chief of media relations at the Coast Guard.

Seapower also asked what kinds of modifications were made to *Storis*.

“Prior to CGC *Storis* departing Mississippi, the Coast Guard installed StarShield and Coast Guard network connectivity for communications and crew safety,” Roth said. “The service also added standard Coast Guard self-defense capabilities, including a modular armory, ammunition storage, four .50 caliber machine gun mounts, and pyrotechnic lockers. *Storis* has not been fitted with a Mark 38 [25mm autocannon].”

StarShield is SpaceX’s military-centric satellite program that uses the Starlink satellite constellation network for secure high-bandwidth data and communications transmissions for the government, national security and the military.

Storis will hold a commissioning ceremony in Juneau in August, where it will transition to active status before conducting an Arctic District presence patrol.

“Following that patrol, the Coast Guard will conduct further assessments of the ship to define its capability, develop operational requirements, develop program management planning (including cost, schedule, performance), and look to modify the ship to bolster the U.S. Coast Guard’s capability in the Arctic as required,” Roth said.