Latest Polar Icebreaker USCGC Storis Departs on First Voyage



PASCAGOULA, Miss. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Storis is shown here underway, June 3, 2025. The Storis is the Coast Guard's first new polar icebreaker acquisition in 25 years and will expand U.S. operational presence in the Artic Ocean. Photos courtesy of Edison Chouest Offshore.
From U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, June 4, 2025

PASCAGOULA, Mississippi – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Storis (WAGB 21), the Coast Guard's first polar icebreaker acquired in more than 25 years, departed on its initial voyage to safeguard U.S. sovereign interests in the Arctic and conduct Coast Guard missions.

Storis' departure marks an early milestone in the service's transformation through Force Design 2028 (FD2028), which includes reforming Coast Guard acquisitions to rapidly deploy capabilities to execute the Coast Guard's missions.

The motor vessel Aiviq, acquired Dec. 20, 2024, from an Edison Chouest Offshore subsidiary, was renamed Storis following modifications to enhance communications and self-defense capabilities. The vessel will expand U.S. operational presence in the Arctic and support Coast Guard missions while the service awaits the delivery of the Polar Security Cutter (PSC) class. The Coast Guard will continue evaluating the cutter's condition and requirements to achieve full operational capability.

Storis is commanded by Captain Keith M. Ropella who currently serves as chief of cutter forces at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington D.C., and previously commanded Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star (WAGB 10), from July 2022 to July 2024.

The vessel is manned with a hybrid crew consisting of military cuttermen and civilian mariners. This is the second vessel in Coast Guard history to bear the name Storis. The original Storis, known as the "**Galloping Ghost of the Alaskan Coast**," had a storied history conducting 64 years of icebreaking operations in Alaska and the Arctic before being decommissioned in 2007.

Storis will be commissioned this August in Juneau, Alaska, which will eventually be the vessel's permanent homeport. Until the necessary shore infrastructure improvements are completed in Juneau, Storis will be temporarily berthed in Seattle, Washington, with the Service's two other polar icebreakers.

The acquisition was made possible through the Don Young Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022 and fiscal year 2024 appropriations. It does not affect the ongoing procurement of

PSCs and is not part of the PSC program of record.

The Coast Guard operates the United States' fleet of icebreakers to assure access to the polar regions to protect U.S. sovereignty. To fulfill this mission and meet operational needs in the polar regions, the Coast Guard requires a fleet of eight to nine polar icebreakers. In support of the President's intent to acquire at least 40 new icebreakers, the Coast Guard is working to replace, modernize and grow its aging fleet of icebreakers, which currently includes three polar icebreakers, 21 domestic icebreakers and 16 ice-capable buoy tenders. As the United States' third polar icebreaker, Storis will provide near-term operational presence and support national security as a bridging strategy until the full complement of PSCs is delivered.

Announced by Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem on May 21, FD 2028 is a blueprint to transform the Coast Guard into a stronger, more ready and capable fighting force. This initiative will include campaigns focused on people, organization, contracting and acquisition, and technology. You can read more about FD 2028 here: **Force Design 2028**.