

MARINE SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Volume XVII Issue: 034

Time: 1500

Date: 05 June 2017

HIGH WATER SAFETY ADVISORY: **VTS Measure at MM 219 to MM 240 AHP LMR (40' and falling)**

When the Baton Rouge gauge reads 40 feet and falling, a U.S. Coast Guard Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) Measure is established in accordance with the Navigation Safety Regulations, Code of Federal Regulations Title 33, Subpart 161.11, for all waters of the Lower Mississippi River from Mile 219 Above Head of Passes (AHP), to Mile 240 AHP. This VTS Measure is needed to protect persons and vessels from the potential safety hazards associated with the effects of high river. This Measure is effective immediately with the following provisions.

Port Allen Lock LMR MM 219-229

1. All vessels are required 1 horsepower (HP) per 5 tons or 280 HP per regulation loaded barge restriction on canal tows entering/exiting the Locks. Empty barges may be calculated at $\frac{1}{2}$ the horsepower requirements to that of a loaded barge when computing the overall horsepower requirement.
2. Any tow may turn northbound exiting out of Port Allen Lock if making use of an assist vessel of at least 1200 HP provided they receive prior approval from the Vessel Traffic Center (VTC).
3. All tows >600 feet (excluding towboat) entering and exiting the lock must use an assist vessel with a minimum of 1200 HP and when topping around between MM 226-221.
4. All tows >600 feet (excluding towboat) planning to top around without the use of an assist vessel must proceed southbound to the safest point below MM 221.
5. If unable to meet the horsepower-to-ton requirements and obtain alternative permissions from the VTC, then an Assist Vessel is mandatory for entering or exiting the Locks.

Wilkinson Point LMR MM 232-237

1. All vessels are limited to a max tow size to a limitation of 30 barges with 280 HP per barge for southbound transits within this area. Empty barges may be calculated at $\frac{1}{2}$ the horsepower requirements to that of a loaded barge when computing the overall horsepower requirement.
2. **An 8000 HP towing vessel is allowed to push a 30 barge tow (400 HP less than the requirement).**
3. All South Bound traffic will utilize the towing assist vessel (TAV) (min 5000 HP) and will be escorted until transit of the Hwy 190 Bridge is complete. The TAV must meet the southbound vessel no lower than 2,000 feet above Wilkinson Point. The TAV will position itself alongside the stern barge.
4. No more than two southbound vessels will be allowed below Thomas Point (MM 240) at any time regardless of tow size
5. All southbound traffic will transit Wilkinson Point during **daylight hours only**.
6. Northbound vessels unable to make 3 MPH under the Highway 190 Bridge and around Wilkinson Point must use a Private Assist Vessel (PAV).
7. A "no meeting or passing zone" is in effect for MM 232 to MM 237.

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8. Tank barges shall be placed in the most protected position in the tow makeup.
9. All tows shall be squared off. No spiked barges shall extend greater than 50 feet beyond the head of the tow. **All towing companies should use their most experienced crews.**

Tows Topping Around between the I-10 and the HWY 190 Bridges and Harbor Fleet Tows

1. Tows greater than 300 feet in length must use a minimum 1000 HP Private Assist Vessel when topping around between the bridges.
2. Tows less than 300 feet in length must use a minimum 800 HP Private Assist Vessel when topping around between the bridges.
3. Harbor Fleet Tows of one load or two empties are exempt from daylight only restrictions, but must coordinate transits with the VTC.

Ocean Going Vessel requirements, Baton Rouge Harbor (MM 225-234):

1. Ocean going vessels must use tug escorts with adequate horsepower alongside while transiting northbound past the I-10 Bridge to dock, as well as departing the dock and transiting southbound past the I-10 Bridge.
2. Only one ocean going vessel at a time will be allowed to be underway between the I-10 Bridge and the US-190 Bridge.
3. Ocean going vessels shall not anchor in the upper half mile of the Baton Rouge General Anchorage. The Pilot must notify the VTC if it is necessary to anchor any vessel in the remainder of the anchorage.
4. Ocean going vessels must contact the VTC with ETA to Richard Powell range light (MM 218.4) and check in again once at MM 219.
5. Ocean going vessels departing this area must contact the VTC prior to getting underway.

Check In/Reporting

1. Vessels will primarily contact the Vessel Traffic Center via VHF-FM channel 12; and can be hailed using the Call Sign "BATON ROUGE TRAFFIC". In the event the VTC cannot be reached via radio, they may also be contacted via the 24-hour contact number at (504) 365-2230.
2. Downbound vessels shall report at MM 255 (Port Hudson Light) and at MM 240 (Thomas Point)
3. Upbound vessels shall report at MM219 (Sardine Crossing) and MM 226 (Bottom of the Baton Rouge Anchorage).
4. Vessels getting underway or entering the river between MM 255 and MM219 must provide a sail plan report prior to entry. The sail plan report must include the following information:
 - a. Name of Vessel
 - b. Current Location
 - c. Vessel Type and Horsepower

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- d. Number of loaded barges & number of empty barges
- e. Number of Red Flag barges in the tow

81-Mile Point

- 1. All tows should stay 300-400 feet off the left descending bank within ½ mile of 81-mile point to avoid dangerous eddies and potential groundings.

This Marine Safety Information Bulletin **supersedes** Volume XVII, Issue 029 High Water Safety Advisory: MM 170 to MM 240 AHP LMR (Above 40').

For additional information, contact the following:

Vessel Traffic Center Lower Mississippi River: (504) 365-2230 (24 HR), VHF-FM ch 05A, 11, or 12
Coast Guard Baton Rouge Waterways Management: (225) 298-5400 X230
Coast Guard Sector New Orleans Command Center: (504) 365-2200

CAPTAIN W. R. ARGUIN
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