

MARINE SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Mississippi River Regulated Navigation Area Vessel Requirements

Recently, the Captain of the Port (COTP) New Orleans has received several reports of vessels underway on the lower Mississippi River with a main engine unable to immediately achieve maximum ahead revolutions as requested by the Pilot on board. During our investigation of these matters, it was determined that the main engines were all in good working order, but were unable to answer the full range of commands because of some type of automatic acceleration-limiting program that prevented the main engine from responding immediately.

Requirements

In accordance with 33 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 165.810, Mississippi River, LA-Regulated Navigation Area (RNA), Masters are reminded that before embarking a Pilot when entering or getting underway in the Mississippi River RNA, main propulsion machinery must be available to immediately respond to the full range of maneuvering commands and that any **load-limiting programs or automatic acceleration-limiting programs** that would limit the speed of response to engine orders beyond that needed to prevent immediate damage to the propulsion machinery are **capable of being overridden immediately**. Prior to entering or transiting the Mississippi River, the attending Pilot shall be provided information on how any load-limiting programs or automatic acceleration-limiting programs effect the operation of the main propulsion plant and the mechanism/procedure used to override the system should that become necessary for safe navigation.

Furthermore, each self-propelled vessel of 1,600 or more gross tons subject to 33 CFR Part 164 shall also comply with the following:

1. While under way in the RNA, each vessel must have an engineering watch capable of monitoring the propulsion system, communicating with the bridge, and implementing manual-control measures immediately when necessary. The watch must be physically present in the machinery spaces or in the machinery-control spaces and must consist of at least a licensed engineer.

In addition, the Master shall ensure that the Chief Engineer of the vessel has certified that the following additional operating conditions will be satisfied so long as the vessel is underway within the RNA:

1. The main propulsion plant is in all respects ready for operations including the main propulsion air-start systems, fuel systems, lubricating systems, cooling systems, and automation systems;
2. Cooling, lubricating, and fuel-oil systems are at proper operating temperatures;
3. Main-propulsion standby systems are ready to be immediately placed in service.

For additional information, contact the following:

Vessel Traffic Center Lower Mississippi River (24 hours): (504) 365-2230, VHF-FM ch 05A, 11, or 12
Coast Guard Sector New Orleans Command Center (24 hours): (504) 365-2200

CAPTAIN W. R. ARGUIN
Captain of the Port New Orleans

For a current list of MSIBs within the COTP New Orleans Zone visit: <https://homeport.uscg.mil/my-homeport/safety-Notifications/MSIB?cotpid=39>