

MARINE SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Volume XIX Issue: 031

Time:

Date:

HIGH WATER SAFETY ADVISORY:

Additional VTS Measure for Wilkinson Point MM 232-237, AHP LMR (ABOVE 43')

When the Baton Rouge gauge reads above 43', 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 **from Mile Marker (MM) 232 Above Head of Passes (AHP) to MM 237 AHP.** This VTS Measure is needed to protect persons and vessels from the potential safety hazards associated with the effects of high water levels on the Lower Mississippi River. This Measure is effective immediately with the following provisions:

Wilkinson Point MM (232-237)

1. **All down bound traffic will use both the minimum 5000 horsepower (HP) Towing Assist Vessel (TAV) and the Secondary Towing Assist Vessel (STAV) (min 2000 HP) until transit of the Hwy 190 Bridge is complete. The TAV must meet the down bound vessel no lower than 2000 feet above Wilkinson Point and will position itself alongside the most appropriate agreed upon location on the barge tow after consultation with the vessel's captain.**
2. The TAV will maintain constant situational awareness of the river conditions in the vicinity of Wilkinson Point and will make corrections to the down bound vessel's positioning as conditions dictate.
3. The STAV will be stationed 500 feet above the Hwy 190 Bridge and will shadow the tow until it is clear of the Hwy 190 Bridge, relaying the position and attitude of the southbound vessel as appropriate.
4. There will be a LOMRC representative onboard the assist vessel with pilots on scene to ensure safe navigation. The TAV captain/pilot will satisfy this requirement, provided they are familiar with the Baton Rouge Waterway Action Plan and the current MSIB.
5. All vessels are limited to a max tow size of **25 barges with 320 HP per standard loaded barge for down bound transits; super jumbo barges will be calculated at 750 HP per loaded super jumbo barge.** Empty barges may be calculated at ½ the HP requirements to that of a loaded barge when computing the overall HP requirement. Vessels unable to meet the HP requirements will not be permitted to transit Wilkinson Point without a VTS exemption. VTS may grant exemptions to these requirements on a case-by-case basis.
6. **A 6000-6400 HP towing vessel is allowed to push a 20-barge tow with the following conditions:**
 - **The Master must contact the VTS Supervisor and be granted permission.**
 - **If the transit is approved, the vessel will utilize the TAV and STAV's assistance until safely through the Hwy 190 Bridge.**
 - **The VTS Supervisor has the discretion to reject the transit if conditions warrant.**
7. All down bound traffic is required to flank Wilkinson Point and advise VTS when safely clear of the Hwy 190 Bridge. The only exception to the flanking requirement are tows pushing 1 loaded barge or 2 empty barges.
8. No more than two down bound vessels will be allowed below Thomas Point (MM 240) at any time, regardless of tow size.

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9. All down bound traffic will transit Wilkinson Point during **daylight hours only**. Harbor Fleet Tows of one load or two empties are exempt from daylight only restrictions, but must coordinate transits with VTS.
10. Up bound vessels unable to make 3 MPH under the Hwy 190 Bridge and around Wilkinson Point (between MM 232 and 237) must use a Private Assist Vessel (PAV).
11. Vessels shall not meet or overtake between MM 232 to MM 237.
12. Tank barges shall be placed in the most protected position in the tow makeup.
13. All tows shall be squared off. No spiked barges shall extend greater than 50 feet beyond the head of the tow.
14. **All towing companies should use their most experienced crews and ensure that all doors and windows on the first deck are closed and secured.**
15. Tows transiting Wilkinson Point pushing one loaded standard barge or two empty standard barges are exempt from the queue, but are still required to check-in with VTS LMR and the TAV prior to getting underway.

All requirements and precautions contained in MSIB Volume XIX Issue 028d (High Water Safety Advisory: MM 167.5 to MM 254.5 AHP LMR Above 40') and MSIB Volume XIX Issue 027b (Additional Towing Vessel Safety Precautions During High Water MM 0 – 303 AHP) remain in effect. The purpose of this advisory is to establish Wilkinson Point-specific additional measures while the Baton Rouge gauge reads above 43'.

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 K. M. LUTTRELL
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For a current list of MSIBs within the COTP New Orleans Zone visit: <https://homeport.uscg.mil/port-directory/new-orleans> under "Safety Notifications"