

MARINE SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Volume XXV Issue: 035

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Date: April 23, 2025

High Water Safety Advisory: VTS Safety Measure and Advisories between LMR MM 170 to MM 235 AHP LMR (40' and Rising)

This Marine Safety Information Bulletin supersedes Volume XXV, Issue 033: VTS Safety Measure and Advisories between LMR MM 170 to MM 235 AHP LMR (38' and Rising). **Changes from the previous bulletin are in bold print.**

1. As a result of the Baton Rouge gauge expected to reach **40' and continue to rise**, the COTP New Orleans has issued a Safety Advisory and VTS Safety Measure **effective Thursday April 24th at 7:00 A.M.** for all waters of the Lower Mississippi River (LMR) from Mile 170 to Mile 235 Above Head of Passes (AHP) in accordance with the Waterways Action Plan Baton Rouge Annex. 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 LMR. VTS LMR has the authority to grant exceptions to the requirements in this bulletin based on the conditions and the size of the tow.
2. Port Allen Lock LMR MM 219-229:
 - A. **All tows** are required to employ an assist vessel of at least 1200 horsepower (HP) when entering or exiting the Port Allen Lock.
 - B. All tows exiting Port Allen Lock into the LMR intending to turn northbound shall use an assist vessel of at least 1200 HP or proceed southbound below MM 221 if topping around unassisted before heading north.
 - C. Approval must be granted by VTS LMR prior to exiting Port Allen Lock and turning northbound.
 - D. If a vessel is unable to meet HP requirements and permission is obtained to enter the RNA from VTS LMR, then an assist vessel of at least 1200 HP is mandatory for entering and exiting.
 - E. Tows are required to have **300 HP** per standard loaded barge on canal tows entering/exiting the Locks. Empty barges may be calculated at ½ the horsepower requirements to that of a loaded barge when computing the overall horsepower requirement. Towing vessels with Z-drive propulsion type may be treated as having a horsepower 20% greater than its engine's rating for the purpose of this calculation. VTS has authority to grant exceptions to these requirements up to 400 HP based on conditions and the size of the tow.
 - F. The Port Allen Lock has a max tow size of 1050 feet, including the towboat.
3. Tows Topping Around Between LMR MM 221 to 235 (Duncan Point to Hwy 190 Bridge):
 - A. Tows greater than 600 feet in length **are required** to use a minimum 1200 HP assist vessel when topping around.
 - B. Tows between 300 feet and 600 feet in length **are required** to use a 1000 HP assist vessel when topping around.
 - C. Tows less than 300 feet in length **are required** to use an 800 HP assist vessel when topping around.
4. Deep Draft Vessels, LMR MM 225 to 234:
 - A. Ocean going vessels must use tug escorts with adequate horsepower alongside while transiting above the I-10 Bridge to the dock, as well as departing the dock and transiting southbound past the I-10 Bridge.
 - B. Pilot Associations shall notify VTS LMR prior to oceangoing vessels transiting the area.
 - C. Only one ocean going vessel at a time will be allowed to be underway between the I-10 Bridge and the US-190 Bridge.
 - D. Ocean going vessels shall not anchor in the upper half mile of the Baton Rouge General Anchorage. The Pilot must notify VTS LMR if it is necessary to anchor any vessel in the remainder of the anchorage.
 - E. Ocean going vessels must contact VTS LMR on VHF FM Ch. 12 with ETA to Richard Powell Range light (MM 218.4) and check in again at MM 219.
 - F. Oceangoing vessels departing this area must contact the VTS LMR prior to departure.

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5. Dangerous Eddies: 81-Mile Point, Bringier Point, and Plaquemine Point, MM 170-208:

- A. All vessels should stay 300 to 400 feet off the left descending bank within ½ mile of 81-Mile Point (MM 178 – 179) to avoid dangerous eddies.
- B. Mariners are advised to proceed with caution in the vicinity of Bringier Point (MM 172-173) and Plaquemine Point (MM 206-208) where dangerous eddies have been previously reported.
- C. Although the above locations have had eddies specifically reported, mariners are advised to be continuously on the lookout for irregular currents which may pose a threat to navigation throughout the LMR.

6. VTS Safety Measure and Advisory: 81-Mile Point, Bringier Point, and Point Houmas, MM 170 – 182:

- A. Oceangoing vessels shall navigate through MM 170-182 during daylight hours only.
- B. Towing vessels must be able to maintain at least 3 mph through the VTS regulated area.
- C. No holding up is allowed within ¾ of a mile of 81-Mile Point on the LDB.
- D. Vessels transiting the area should avoid passing or overtaking situations at or near; 81-Mile Point, Bringier Point, and Point Houmas.

For further information, contact the following:

Vessel Traffic Service Lower Mississippi River: (504) 365-2512, VHF-FM CH 1005 (05A), CH 12, & 67
Coast Guard Baton Rouge Waterways Management: (225) 298-5400 x 230
Coast Guard Sector New Orleans Waterways Management: (504) 365-2278
Coast Guard Sector Command Center New Orleans (24 hours): (504) 365-2209



CAPTAIN GREGORY A. CALLAGHAN
Captain of the Port, New Orleans