

# UNITED STATES COAST GUARD SECTOR NEW ORLEANS

## MARINE SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Volume XXV Issue: 048

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Date: May 20, 2025

### **High Water Safety Advisory: VTS Safety Measure at LMR MM 170 TO MM 237 AHP LMR (35' and Falling)**

This Marine Safety Information Bulletin supersedes Volume XXV, Issue 046: VTS Safety Measure at LMR MM 170 to MM 237 AHP LMR (38' and Falling).

1. As a result of the Baton Rouge gauge expected to reach **35' and continue to fall**, the COTP New Orleans has issued a Safety Advisory and VTS Safety Measure effective **Wednesday, May 21<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 a.m.** for all waters of the Lower Mississippi River (LMR) from Mile 170 to Mile 237 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. Exception requests should be made to the VTS LMR Watch Supervisor by telephone at (504) 365-2514.
2. Port Allen Lock LMR MM 219-229:
  - A. Companies should consider staffing vessels with the most experienced crews.
  - B. All tows greater than 600' (excluding the towboat) **are recommended** to employ an assist vessel of at least 1200 hp when entering the Port Allen Lock.
  - C. All tows exiting the Port Allen Lock intending to turn northbound **are recommended** to use an assist vessel or proceed southbound and then top around at or below MM 221 prior to heading north.
  - D. Towing vessels shall catch a headline when entering the Port Allen Lock.
  - E. Vessels will be put on queue for lock turn when their tow is built and may remain in the area in which their tow was built until it is time for lock turn.

#### 3. Line Tows Transiting Wilkinson Point LMR MM 232-237:

- A. Companies should consider staffing vessels with their most experienced crews.
- B. Tows should be kept to a maximum of **36 barges**.
- C. All tow operators and towing companies should use a ratio of **240 horsepower** per standard barge or **480 horsepower** per oversize barge for southbound transits. For the purpose of this calculation, barges with dimensions 290' x 50' or larger are considered "oversize" while barges with dimensions less than 290' x 50' are considered "standard". If one of the barge dimensions (length or width) meets or exceeds the 290' x 50', the barge is considered "oversize". 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 types may be treated as having a horsepower 20% greater than the engine's rating for the purpose of this calculation.

For further information, contact the following:

**Vessel Traffic Service Lower Mississippi River:** (504) 365-2514, VHF-FM CH 1005 (05A), CH 12, CH 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



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