U.S. Department of Homeland Security
United States Coast Guard

United States Coast Guard
Sector Houston-Galveston
Vessel Traffic Service

13411 Hilliard Street
Houston, TX 77034
Staff Symbol: (VTS)
Phone: (281) 464-4837
HoustonTraffic@uscg.mil

3500
14 JUL 2026

VTS PARTICIPATION:
In accordance with 33 CFR 161.2 and 161.16, participation as a Vessel Movement Reporting System User in the Houston-Galveston Vessel Traffic Service Area is mandatory for every power-driven vessel of 40 meters or more in length, every vessel engaged in towing of 8 meters or more in length while navigating, and every vessel certificated to carry 50 or more passengers engaged in trade. Those not required to participate may receive information by contacting the Vessel Traffic Service and are subject to traffic control measures.

VTS / COTP Forms:
VTS and COTP forms are located on the Lone Star Harbor Safety Committee's website: https://lonestarhsc.org/

AIDS TO NAVIGATION:
The following is a list of navigation discrepancies reported to VTS for the Houston Ship Channel (HSC), from the Houston Turning Basin to the Galveston Bay Entrance Channel Lighted Buoy "1B".

LIGHT LIST NUMBER	LIGHT LIST NAME	DISCREPANCY SUMMARY
23655	Galveston Bay Entrance Channel Lighted Buoy 2B	LT EXT
23720	Galveston South Jetty Light 5A	LT EXT
23725	Galveston North Jetty Light 6A	LT EXT
23730	Galveston Bay Entrance Channel Lighted Buoy 7	OFF STA
23795	Galveston Bay Entrance Channel Lighted Buoy 12	LT EXT
23825	Pelican Island Spit Shoal Lighted Buoy P	OFF STA
23975	Lower Galveston Bay Outer Range Rear Light	LT EXT
23985	Houston Ship Channel Lighted Buoy 27	MISSING
24010	Houston Ship Channel Lighted Buoy 32	MISSING
24045	Houston Ship Channel Light 37	STRUCT DMGD/TRLB
24120	Houston Ship Channel Light 49	STRUCT DMGD
24170	Houston Ship Channel Light 51	LT EXT
24230	Houston Ship Channel Light 56	STRUCT DEST/TRLB/MISSING
24310	Houston Ship Channel Light 66	STRUCT DEST
24382	HOUSTON SHIP CHANNEL LIGHT 74A	STRUCT DEST/TRLB/OFFSTA
24395	Morgans Point Approach Outer Range Front Light	LT EXT
24467	LBC Houston Directional Sector Light	LT EXT
24595	Houston Ship Channel Light 91	TEMP DISCONTINUED
24750	Barbours Cut Junction Light BC	STRUCT DEST/TRLB
24760	Upper Morgans Point Inbound Range Front Light	STRUCT DEST
24785	Houston Ship Channel Light 94	TEMP DISCONTINUED
25240	Upper Red Light Bend Outbound Range Front Light	STRUCT DEST

25530	Lynchburg Inbound Range Rear Light	LT EXT
25625	San Jacinto River Buoy 20	OFF STA
25785.01	Houston Ship Channel Lighted Buoy 145	OFF STA
26090	Texas City Channel Light 10	STRUCT DMGD/TRLB
26100	Texas City Cut B Outer Range Front Passing Light	STRUCT DEST
26135	Texas City Channel Light 15	STRUCT DEST/TRLB
35915	Bolivar Peninsula Light 14	TEMP DISCONTINUED
35930	Bolivar Peninsula Lighted Buoy 17	LT EXT
35935	Bolivar Peninsula Lighted Buoy 18	TEMP DISCONTINUED
35940	Bolivar Peninsula Lighted Buoy 19	TEMP DISCONTINUED
35945	Bolivar Peninsula Lighted Buoy 20	TEMP DISCONTINUED
35965	Galveston-Freeport Cutoff Channel Light 7	STRUCT DEST/TRLB
36035	Galveston-Freeport Cutoff Channel Junction Buoy	STRUCT DEST/TRUB
36295	Galveston-Freeport Buoy 23	OFF STA

CHANNEL OBSTRUCTIONS:

DATE/TIME	CAT	TYPE	LOCATION	STATUS
06 Apr – 17 Jul / 0700-1700	II	Bulkhead Extension	Powell Industries (Carpenter's Bayou)	Approved
14 JUL / 0700-1200	II	Dry Dock Movement	Southwest Shipyard Brady's Island	Approved
14 JUL / 0700-1700	II	Roll Off	PEMEX – Dirt Road outbound of PEMEX	Approved
14Jul / 0900-1300	II	Dredge Pipeline	Cedar Bayou	Approved
15 JUL / 0900-1400	I	Dredge Pipeline	Martin Fuel Galveston to Galveston Ferry Terminal	Pending
15 JUL / 1300-1700 **ALTERNATE DATES** 16 JUL / 0800-1200 17 JUL / 0800-1200	I	Roll On/Roll Off	Powell – Carpenter's Bayou	Pending

CHANNEL OPERATIONS:

1. **SAM HOUSTON BRIDGE (Beltway 8):** Crews have commenced working on the over the water portion of the new west span through September 2026. The Captain of the Port has established a Safety Zone for the waters outside the federal channel surrounding the existing pillars. Vessels transiting this area are directed to utilize the marked Federal Channel and remain clear of transiting beneath the overhead work. POC: HoustonWWM@uscg.mil

   Channel closures to support work over the Federal Channel are expected to commence September 2026. Overnight closures, likely in the 8-to-10-hour range, every other night for a week will be needed. Following a round of overnight closures, VTS will schedule 2-3 hour blocks of no traffic in daylight hours to allow for deck placement. It is expected a pattern of these closures will continue for 3-4 months. Additional planning meetings focused on minimizing disruptions will be held with Port Partners as the closure dates approach.

2. **KINDER MORGAN PETCOKE:** New dock construction near Kinder Morgan Deer Park.

Completion date January 2027.

3. **DREDGE MBI-8 & MBI-012 (Bucket Dredge):** are staged in Sims Bayou, not working. Dredge MBI-08 Cell: 228 213- 0600 MBI-012 409-227-5775

4. **DREDGE MBI-011 (Dredge Offloader):** is discharging dredge spoils near Pelican Marine Fleet. Requesting no meeting or overtaking and a wake and surge consideration from ships and 30-minute notice for Enterprise Channelview Ship Dock 1A. Dredge Cell: 662-625-3460. STBY VHF-CH 13/67/76.

5. **DREDGE CONSTELLATION (Cutter Dredge):** is working the edge of the channel near Houston Ship Channel LT 119. Dredge requests for 30-minute notice from vessels engaged in towing and 1 hour notice from ships. VTS Houston/Galveston Directs no meeting or overtaking and wake and surge considerations from ships. Staged floating pipeline is located outside of the channel in vicinity of Houston Ship Channel light 126. Dredge cell: 713-913-7208. VHF-FM CH 13.

6. **MORGAN'S POINT DEMOLITION AND SPILLMAN ISLAND IMPROVEMENTS:** Landside and waterside crews and equipment are currently working the northeast corner of Morgan's Point to the LASH Dock as well as on Spillman Island in the northeast portion of the turning basin. Work includes demolition, installation of bulkheads, and shoreline protection. POC: Towboat EVERLINE and MOONEY. VHF CH 13.

7. **DREDGE MAGDALEN (Hopper Dredge)** and **BREAK OF DAWN (Drag Bar Tow)** are working in the Houston Ship Channel between lights 74A and 78. **DREDGE MAGDALEN and BREAK OF DAWN** request 30-minute notice from ships. Dredge Cell: 985-237-5000. STBY VHF FM CH 13 and 72.

8. **DREDGES MBI-07 & DREDGE MBI–009 (Off loaders):** are working outside the channel near Texas City Light 17. Request wake and surge consideration from ships. Assist Boat: T/V Chuck Boone 832-207-1360.

9. **DREDGE MBI-010 (Bucket Dredge)** is working near Texas City Dock 43, offloading to MBI-07 & MBI-009. Request 30-minute notice for vessels bound for Texas City Dock 43.

10. **MISSOURI H (Cutter Dredge):** is working inside the slips at Gulf Copper Shipyard. Dredge Cell: 337-349-7262. Assist Boat is God's Grace 337-330-6386.

11. **MIKE HOOKS (Cutter Dredge):** is working near Coast Guard Base Galveston with an anchor buoy in the Galveston Channel requesting wake and surge considerations. They also request a 1-hour notice from ships and a 30-minute notice from tow traffic. Additional floating pipeline is staged near Seawolf park. Dredge Cell: 337-489-6793.

12. **DREDGE GENERAL PATTON (Cutter Dredge):** is working near G&H Towing in Galveston with floating pipeline staged along the north bank. They are requesting a 1-hour notice for ships utilizing the Galveston Pier 10 turning circle. Standing by VHF-FM 12/13. POC: 409-750-1059.

13. **DREDGE LORRAINE HOOKS (Cutter Dredge):** is working near Texas A&M Galveston Request 1-hour notice from ships arriving/departing Texas A&M, Texas International, and Savage Sulphur Services. Dredge: 337-244-3911. Dredge Captain: 337-304-2567. STBY: 80A, 13, 16.

14. **DOCK CONSTRUCTION at TEXAS A&M GALVESTON:** Operations are 0700-1730 daily Monday through Saturday. Standing by VHF-FM 12 / 05A. POC: 832 996-7135 T/V Everline: 281-883-7434.

15. **DRYDOCK REMOVAL at BOLIVAR FERRY TERMINAL**: Emerge Marine is contracted to remove the abandoned drydock near the Bolivar Ferry Terminal. Periodic diving operations will occur. Check in with VTS prior to diving ops. EMERGE 4 is the standby vessel: Standby on CH 13/69. Phone: 727-631-4019. Ending date should be 11/06/26.

NOTES:

1. **RESTRICTIONS PELICAN ISLAND BRIDGE:** Vessel Traffic Service Houston-Galveston Directs: No vessel transits under the Pelican Island Bridge.

2. **BOLIVAR DIRECTIVE:** Vessel Traffic Service Houston-Galveston directs no meeting or overtaking between Bolivar Virtual Aid 22 and Bolivar Light 14. VTS recommends mariners confirm their position in the GICW with their Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS); Bolivar Aids to Navigation are set in shoal water. VTS recommends confirming Bolivar Virtual Aids to Navigation 21 and 22 prior to making the turn to/from Bolivar and/or into the Alternate Inbound Channel.

3. **Operational Limits for Western Portion of Galveston Harbor (visual below)**

    1. Vessel Traffic Service Houston-Galveston directs the following for barge operations west of a line drawn from **Point A** (29°18'44"N 94°48'37"W) at Pelican Island Storage Terminals to **Point B** (29°18'30"N 94°48'37"W) at Galveston Pier 36.
        a. No barge reconfiguration within the Main Galveston Channel.
        b. Normal dockside barge operations remain authorized.
        c. Transits under the Pelican Island Bridge remain suspended for Vessel Traffic Service Users.
        d. Mariners should plan their transit accordingly to account for the restrictions and operational window for arrivals/departures. Vessels engaged in towing will not be allowed to push-in along the channel to accommodate arrivals/departures.

    2. Additionally, Vessel Traffic Service Houston-Galveston directs the following for barge operations to and from fixed and temporary facilities west of a line drawn from **Point 1** (28°18'44"N 94°48’55"W) at Texas A&M Galveston to **Point 2** (29°18'32"N 94°49’06"W) at Gulf Sulphur Services**.**

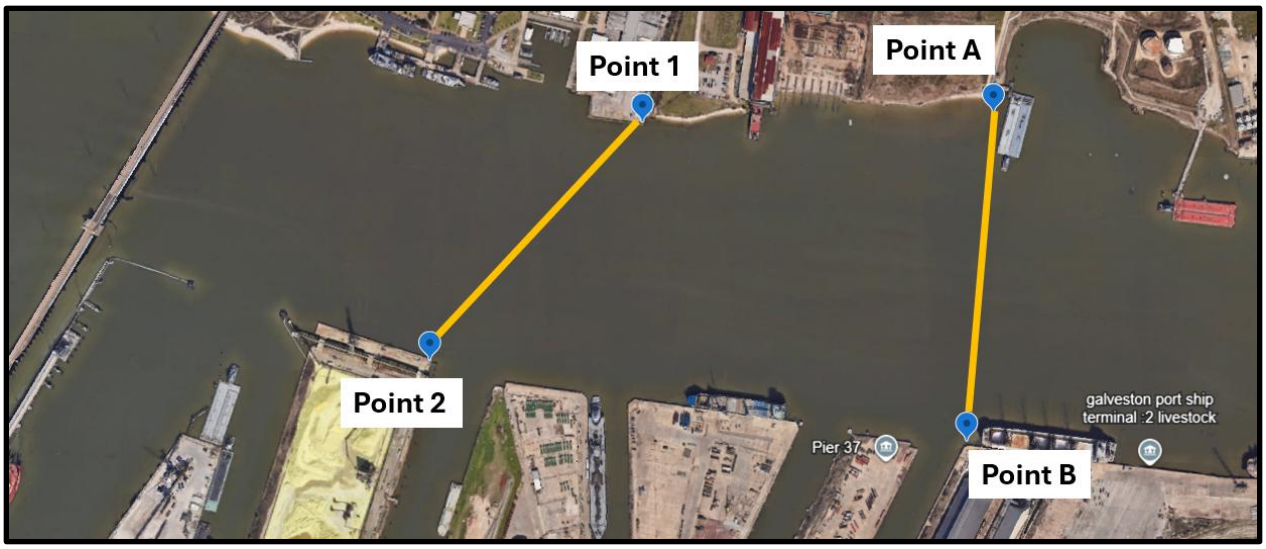
        FLOOD CURRENT

    A) No arrivals/departures with strung out barges.
    B) Must operate in keeping with Lone Star Harbor Safety Committee, Texas International Terminal Industry Best Guidance.
    C) Lead vessel and assist vessel must be a minimum of 1200 hp each.
    D) On FLOOD CURRENT – DAYLIGHT Only (local sunrise to sunset)
        a. Assist vessel required for all configurations.
        b. No transits when flood current is greater than 1.0 kt.

E) On FLOOD CURRENT – NIGHT Only (local sunset to sunrise)
   a. Assist vessel required for all configurations.
   b. No transits when flood greater than 0.5 kt.

Note: An update to the VTS Policy facilitating towing arrival/departure operations up to 1.0 kt flood current is now in effect starting on Monday, May 18, 2026. Arrival/departure operations in flood current up to 1.0 kt are restricted to DAYLIGHT only for a period of 90 days. Daylight is the local time period from sunrise to sunset. Subject to evaluation, this restriction will end at sunset, Sunday, August 16, 2026.

COMMERCIAL FISHING VESSEL REPORT: (Report is provided by MSU Texas City's Commercial Fishing Examiner.)



GENERAL: Mariners should anticipate multiple commercial fishing vessels (CFV) working in the Houston Ship Channel during daylight hours. If erratic movements are noted, or if unable to contact fishing vessels, notify VTS Houston Galveston immediately with the name of the CFV.

SHOALING REPORTS:

1. **CHANNEL DEPTHS, SPEED and RESULTING SQUAT:** Vessels are reminded to pay due regard to channel depth, vessel speed, and resulting squat while operating in the Vessel Traffic Service Area. Vessels may have recently encountered the bottom due to squat in the Bolivar Roads Inner Bar Channel.

2. **VTSA DRAFT RESTRICTIONS:** The following draft restriction is in place from the Galveston-Texas City Pilot Association:

    1. The Port of Galveston is open to commercial vessels with a draft restriction of 44 feet or less. Changes in this restriction will be posted by the Galveston Pilot Association.

3. **UPPER HOUSTON SHIP CHANNEL SHOALING**: Shoaling is reported to reduced depths of approximately 41 feet on the red side to the center line between Beltway 8 and Houston Ship Channel Light 146. This report has been correlated with US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) dredging stations 730+000 to 750+000. Deep draft vessels are advised to proceed with caution.

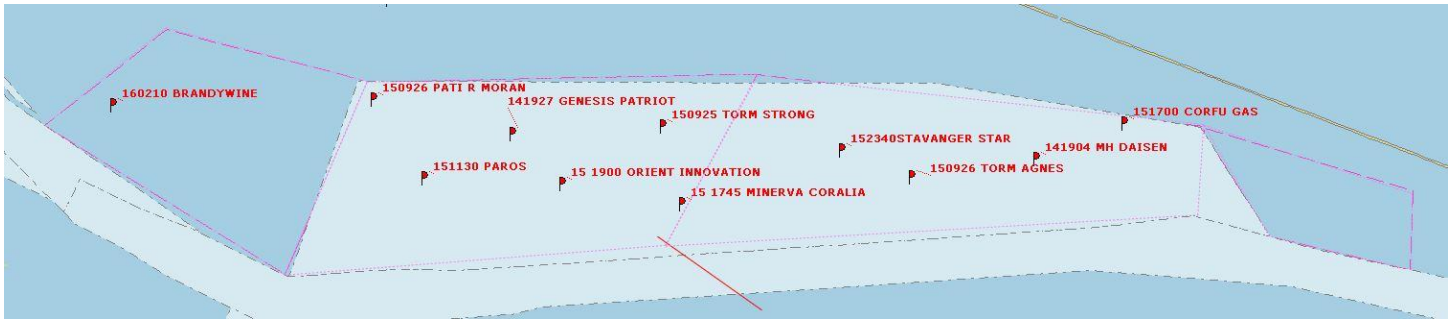
Vessel Traffic Service Houston-Galveston recommends:

1. Vessels with 35 feet or greater draft should avoid the red side of the channel in this area.

4. USACE CHANNEL SURVEY DATA:

Updated surveys with detailed dredging stations in pdf and eHydro 'xyz' format depicting this location are located on the USACE Operations Dashboard at:
www.swg.usace.army.mil/Missions/Navigation/Navigation-Projects-Contracts/

ANCHORAGE MANAGEMENT:



For more information, contact the VTS Watch Supervisor at (281) 464-4837 / HoustonTraffic@uscg.mil

VTS H-G Transit Statistics:

SHG / Local Reporting	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2026
Tanker	1,285	1,179	1,487	1,520	1,647	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7,118
Freighter / Cargo	508	453	605	533	487	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,586
Cruise Ship	87	78	86	66	66	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	383
SHIPS, Monthly	**1,880**	**1,710**	**2,178**	**2,119**	**2,200**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**10,087**
Tows	11,475	11,035	12,145	12,220	12,136	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	59,011
Public (includes Naval)	49	30	40	66	29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	214
Other (Misc)	518	432	456	527	641	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,574
Commercial Traffic	**13,922**	**13,207**	**14,819**	**14,932**	**15,006**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**71,886**
Ferries	4,783	5,346	5,174	5,210	5,192	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25,705
TOTAL	**18,705**	**18,553**	**19,993**	**20,142**	**20,198**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**97,591**
Running Total		**37,258**	**57,251**	**77,393**	**97,591**	**97,591**	**97,591**	**97,591**	**97,591**	**97,591**	**97,591**	**97,591**	
% Change Previous Yr		**5%**	**4%**	**5%**	**5%**	**-13%**	**-26%**	**-35%**	**-43%**	**-49%**	**-53%**	**-57%**	