



LOUISIANA MARITIME ASSOCIATION

Subject: Navigation Interruptions/Vessel Delays December 2018-January 2019 Date: 25 Jan 2019

Synopsis: Various navigation closures and draft restrictions imposed on vessels transiting the Lower Mississippi River (LMR) have resulted in transit delays.

Timeline:

1. November 26, 2018 to January 9, 2019 – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) conducted Mat-Laying Operations at MM 81, AHP, resulted in one-way traffic restrictions and daytime closures for vessels over 700' in length transiting downriver. These restrictions resulted in transit delays for all vessels.
2. November 26, 2018 – Southwest Pass (SWP) Entry Restrictions. Due to rising water levels and resulting flocculation occurrences, the Associated Branch (BAR) Pilots and Federal Pilots implemented LMR cross-in restrictions for vessels drafting more than 38 feet. Those vessels were restricted to an entry window of '3 hours after Low Tide to 3 hours after High Tide'.
3. November 05, 2018 to January 3, 2019 – Fog/Navigation Closed. Fog caused numerous navigation closures at Algiers Point, MM 94.5, AHP. These closures, implemented by the USCG, coupled with the navigation restrictions related to the USACE Mat-Laying operations further exacerbated vessel transit delays. The following are the times of closures (all times local):

- Closed 0551, 05 Nov 2018 – Re-opened 0908
- Closed 0408, 06 Nov 2018 – Re-opened 0830
- Closed 0245, 07 Nov 2018 – Re-opened 0900
- Closed 0030, 09 Nov 2018 – Re-opened 0900
- Closed 0517, 25 Nov 2018 – Re-opened 0521
- Closed 2230, 13 Dec 2018 – Re-opened 0613, 14 Dec 2018
- Closed 2221, 19 Dec 2018 – Re-opened 0533, 20 Dec 2018
- Closed 0139, 26 Dec 2018 – Re-opened 0429
- Closed 2115, 29 Dec 2018 - Re-opened 1437, 30 Dec 2018.
- Closed 1513, 30 Dec 2018 - Re-opened 0507, 31 Dec 2018.
- Closed 0030, 01 Jan 2019 - Re-opened 0636.
- Closed 0130, 02 Jan 2019 - Re-opened 2030.
- Closed 2319, 02 Jan 2019 - Re-opened 0200, 03 Jan 2019.



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4. December 14, 2018 – 12’ High Water Restrictions – Daylight Operations.

NOBRA and Federal Pilots implement High Water restrictions that require the mooring and unmooring at all mid-stream transfer facilities and any berth that requires the use of a mooring boat to handle lines shall be restricted to daylight hours only.

Crescent Pilots implement daylight restrictions for mooring at Buoy Systems and Midstream (MGMT), as well as Chalmette Slip.

5. January 3 – 12, 2019 – Vessel Convoying. Due to backlog of vessels trying to sail or enter the LMR, CRPPA and BAR Pilots begin a convoy system to sail/enter vessels.

6. January 4, 2019 – Vessel Grounding/Navigation Closed. The M/V ANGLO ALEXANDRIA, drafting 47’ went aground at MM 3.5, AHP. The USCG closed the LMR to all navigation at that location from 0900 to 1742 (local) that day.

7. January 16, 2019 – Vessel Capsize/Sank/Navigation Closed. Loss of Life. The USCG closed the LMR to all navigation between MM 15 to MM 18, AHP from 1110 to 2049 (local) that day.

8. Draft Restrictions Timeline:

- January 4, 2019 @ 1742 Local. USCG sets 30’ Draft Restriction @ Cubit’s Gap.
- January 4, 2019 @ 2200 Local. USCG sets 42’ Draft Restriction @ Cubit’s Gap.
- January 7, 2019 @ 0926 Local. USCG rescinds Draft Restriction @ Cubit’s Gap.
- January 7, 2019 @ 1158 Local. CRPPA sets 46’ Maximum Draft Recommendation.
- January 8, 2019 @ 1411 Local. CRPPA returns to 47’ Draft.
- January 10, 2019 @ 1011 Local. CRPPA sets 44’ Maximum Draft Recommendation.
- January 14, 2019 @ 1925 Local. CRPPA sets 45’ Maximum Draft Recommendation.

9. Dredging. On January 9, 2019; the USACE had 3 hopper dredges (including the USACE Dredge WHEELER) and 1 cutterhead dredge working the LMR. On January 10 and again on the 23rd the USACE advertised for bids for an additional hopper dredge. No bids were received on either day resulting in the USACE going through the ‘Red Flag’ process to retain the WHEELER on contract and working. The GLEN EDWARDS contract was extended on January 17 through March 1, 2019. The lack of additional available dredges continues to hamper efforts to return and maintain the federal channel to authorized depths.



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Note. This report does not address the Government Shutdown and the role that issue may have played in navigational delays experienced by vessels during this time.

End of report.

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