



Marine Safety Information Bulletin 52-20 December 2, 2020

Oversize Tow Permits Port Arthur COTP Zone

The Captain of the Port (COTP), Marine Safety Unit Port Arthur is suspending the requirement to obtain advance permission for certain oversize tows regulated under 33 CFR 162.75(b)(5)(i) operating within the Port Arthur COTP Zone (as defined in 33 CFR 3.40-28) including the portion of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) from Mile Marker 191 to 319.5 at High Island.

Specifically, telephone notification requirements are suspended for oversize tows operating on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway within the following parameters:

Tows of 108-feet in width or less if under 750-feet in length including the towboat but excluding the hawser that can be broken down.

Tows operating under this notification suspension **must still comply with** 33 CFR 162.75(b)(5)(i), which states that “before entering any narrow section of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, tows in excess of one-half the channel width or 55 feet, will be required to stand by until tows which are less than one-half the channel width or 55 feet wide have cleared the channel. When passing is necessary in narrow channels, overwidth tows shall yield to the maximum.”

This suspension of notification requirements does not preclude owners and operators from the requirements of 33 CFR 162.75(b)(1), which includes reducing the size of a tow as necessary to ensure that “... A clear channel shall at all times be left open to permit free and unobstructed navigation by all types of vessels and tows normally using the various waterways covered by the regulations of this section.”

Oversized tows, which **cannot** be broken down, or that may require a closure of part of a waterway, including, but not limited to: large vessels being delivered, drill rigs, large derrick barges, etc. must be submitted for COTP approval through the office in which the tow originates. Requests must be received no less than 24-hours prior to desired movement. The evaluation of the tow permit request must meet the COTP’s full satisfaction that the proposed movement can be safely made and competently performed and that it will not place an undue risk or burden on the environment, other waterway users, or the waterway itself, prior to approval.

This notification suspension applies only to the Port Arthur COTP Zone (GIWW Mile 191 to 319.5 WHL). Oversized tows intending to transit outside of the Port Arthur COTP zone shall notify the cognizant COTP for their intended transit. The COTP retains the option to reinstate existing telephone notification requirements should conditions warrant.

This notice will be posted on the Coast Guard's HOMEPORT website at <http://homeport.uscg.mil> and the VTS website at <https://www.atlanticarea.uscg.mil/vtspportarthur/>. If you have any questions regarding this notice, please call VTS Port Arthur at (409) 719 -5070.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "M. A. Wiike". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

M. A. WIKE
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard
Captain of the Port