



Coast Guard Sector Houston-Galveston Marine Safety Information Bulletin 23-23

Date: 05/30/23

Time: 1718

Severe Weather Safety Planning For Vessels and Facilities

The 2023 Hurricane Season officially starts on June 1, 2023. All facilities and vessels in the Houston-Galveston Captain of the Port (COTP) zone are encouraged to review their severe weather plans and begin preparations for the hurricane season.

Sector Houston-Galveston has instituted a Port Condition Matrix with two tracks, a 'traditional' track and a 'modified' track, designed to clearly communicate with the port community whether the COTP intends to close the port. Both tracks have the exact same expectations except with the 'traditional' track the COTP intends to close the port, whereas with the 'modified' track, the COTP does not intend to close the port due to low intensity or low likelihood of a tropical storm. Regardless of track, the COTP will issue Marine Safety Information Bulletins (MSIBs) and broadcasts declaring the Port Condition with further requirements and instructions for vessels and facilities. The Port Conditions are:

- **Port Condition Whiskey** – 72 hours prior to arrival of tropical storm force winds associated with tropical storm activity;
- **Port Condition X-Ray** – 48 hours prior to arrival of tropical storm force winds associated with tropical storm activity;
- **Port Condition Yankee** – 24 hours prior to arrival of tropical storm force winds associated with tropical storm activity;
- **Port Condition Zulu** (FOR TRADITIONAL TRACK ONLY) – 12 hours prior to arrival of tropical storm force winds associated with tropical storm activity;
- **Post-Storm Recovery** – COTP will set once port conditions allow, after the storm has passed.

VESSELS: All commercial vessels shall follow the Heavy Weather Port Condition Matrix below. Of note, submitting a declaration will not guarantee the ability to remain in port but will give this office the ability to review the proposed request, provide situational awareness of what vessels will possibly remain in port for post storm accountability, and ensure facilities are aware of the vessels at their docks intending to remain in port. Following a storm's passing and once the port is reopened, vessels will need to resubmit Notice of Arrival as per 33 Code of Federal Regulations Part 160 and this office will rescreen vessels prior to reentry. Post storm, vessels may also be required to fill out the "Vessel Post Storm Self-Assessment Checklist".

FACILITIES: All regulated commercial facilities shall follow the Heavy Weather Port Condition Matrix below. All containers, storage tanks, pallets, and other items/equipment that could create a risk/hazard in a high wind environment shall be secured as necessary in accordance with regulations, industry standards, and best practices. Waterfront facilities are encouraged to conduct pre-storm surveys and conduct post-storm emergency surveys of their docks as soon as practical if there is reason to believe that bottom conditions have changed. The surveys help determine whether water depths have been reduced and whether ship traffic is able to safely proceed. Post storm, facilities may be required to fill out the "Facility Post Storm Self-Assessment Checklist".

Heavy Weather Port Condition Matrix		
Warning	Modified Track	Traditional Track
Heavy weather predicted for COTP Zone.	Certainty below 20% of any tropical storm conditions or any chance of only low intensity tropical storms.	Certainty above 20% of any tropical storm condition except low intensity tropical storms.
WARNING: - Vessels and Facilities are to take proper precautions for pending storm conditions.	Modified WHISKEY (72 hrs): - Initiate vessel and facility severe weather plans. - Regulated facilities submit Pre-Storm Checklist. - Commercial self-propelled vessels >500 GT submit "Declaration of Intent to Remain in Port".	WHISKEY (72 hrs): - Initiate vessel and facility severe weather plans. - Regulated facilities submit Pre-Storm Checklist. - Commercial self-propelled vessels >500 GT submit "Declaration of Intent to Remain in Port". - Ocean going vessels begin making plans for departure. - Port Closure (ZULU) expected 12 hours out from tropical storm conditions.
	Modified XRAY (48 hrs): - Any vessel requesting to remain in anchorage shall notify Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) of their intentions. - Smaller vessels shall seek shelter in preparation for possible port closure. - All containers stored near flood-prone areas should be moved.	XRAY (48 hrs): - Any vessel requesting to remain in anchorage shall notify Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) of their intentions. - Smaller vessels shall seek shelter in preparation for possible port closure. - All containers stored near flood-prone areas should be moved. - Port Closure (ZULU) expected 12 hours out from tropical storm conditions.
	Modified YANKEE (24 hrs): - Suspend all inbound transits. - Clear all vessels from Bolivar Anchorage. - Suspend bunkering and lightering. - Suspend all cargo transfers w/winds ≥ 40mph. - Disconnect transfer hoses/arms w/ winds ≥ 50mph. - Inland tows properly moored. - Regulated facilities shall secure or remove missile hazards, dangerous cargo and container and/or pallet stacks. - Regulated facilities should press up storage tanks to reduce wind damage.	YANKEE (24 hrs): - Suspend all inbound transits. - Clear all vessels from Bolivar Anchorage. - Suspend bunkering and lightering. - Suspend all cargo transfers w/ winds ≥ 40mph. - Disconnect transfer hoses/arms w/ winds ≥ 50mph. - Inland tows properly moored. - Regulated facilities shall secure or remove missile hazards, dangerous cargo and container and/or pallet stacks. - Regulated facilities shall press up storage tanks to reduce wind damage. - Port Closure (ZULU) expected 12 hours out from tropical storm conditions.

Please contact Sector Houston-Galveston WWM Division via houstonwwm@uscg.mil or the Command Center at 281-464-4851 if you have any questions.



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 Captain of the Port