



U.S. Coast Guard Sector Maryland-NCR

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MARINE SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETIN 049-24

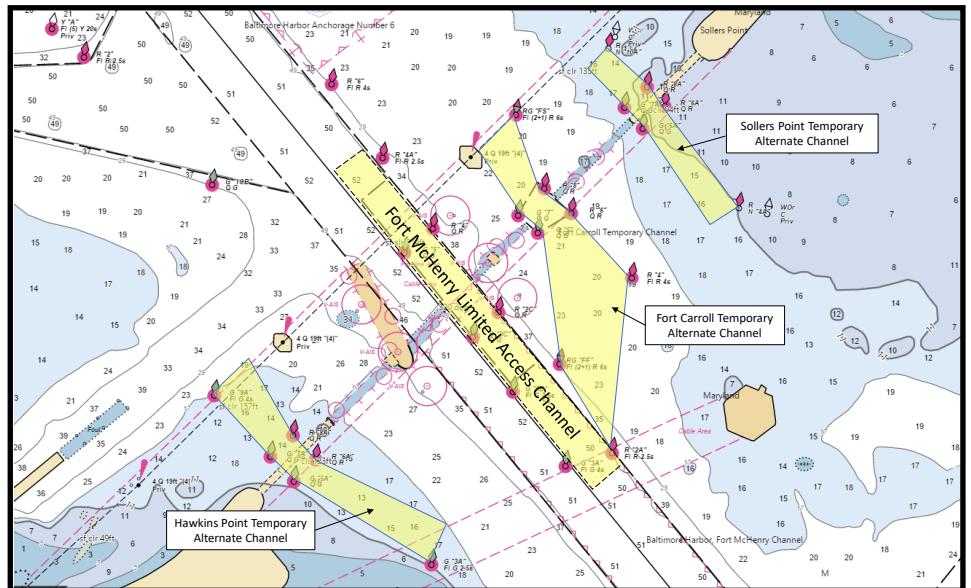
May 21, 2024

Port of Baltimore Safety Zone – Francis Scott Key Bridge Fort McHenry Limited Access Channel and Temporary Alternate Channels

**** This cancels MSIBs 036-24 and 048-24 ****

Fort McHenry Limited Access Channel: Following the successful refloat and removal of the M/V DALI, the Captain of the Port (COTP) opened the Fort McHenry Limited Access Channel to commercial vessel traffic for 24-hour availability. This channel now has a depth of 50 feet, 400-foot horizontal clearance, and vertical clearance of 214 feet due to the adjacent BG&E powerlines.

Deep draft vessels still require a Maryland State Pilot and two escort tugs. The Maryland Pilots will impose a 3 ft under keel clearance (UKC) requirement. For container ships greater than a 1,000 ft in length and over 125 ft in beam, transits will be limited to winds being less than 15 knots; all other vessel transits will be limited to winds being less than 20 knots per [Weather Forecast for 39.22N 76.54W](#).



Deep draft traffic has priority use of this channel. Tug and barge traffic should make maximum use of the three Temporary Alternate Channels. Any use of the Fort McHenry Limited Access Channel by non-deep draft commercial vessels should be deconflicted with the Maryland Pilots at (410) 342-6013.

Temporary Alternate Channels:

Fort Carroll Temporary Alternate Channel is open 24-hours daily to non-deep draft commercial vessels with a controlling depth of 20 ft, a 300-ft horizontal clearance, and vertical clearance of 135 ft.

Hawkins Point Temporary Alternate Channel is open 24-hours daily to non-deep draft commercial vessels with a controlling depth of 14 ft, a 280-ft horizontal clearance, and vertical clearance of 124 ft.

Sollers Point Temporary Alternate Channel is open 24-hours daily to all traffic, to include recreational vessels, with a controlling depth of 11 ft, a 264-ft horizontal clearance, and vertical clearance of 95 ft.

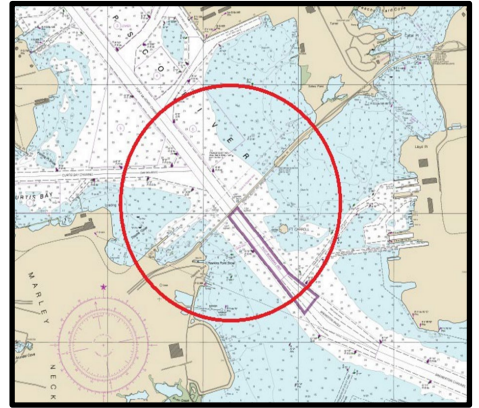
The most current U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hydrographic survey data is available on the internet at [eHydro](#).

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Francis Scott Key Bridge Safety Zone: The safety zone identified in [33 CFR §165.89](#) established for all navigable waters of the Chesapeake Bay within a 2,000-yard radius of the Francis Scott Key Bridge remains in effect and is intended to protect personnel, vessels, and the marine environment. Except for vessels transiting in one of the four marked channels, no vessel or person will be permitted to enter the safety zone without first obtaining permission from the Captain of the Port (COTP).



- The Maryland Pilots will resume their regular coordination of deep draft traffic and are available at (410) 342-6013.
- Within the safety zone, recreational vessels must transit at a no wake speed; commercial vessels must transit under 10 knots. All vessels transiting the safety zone must remain within the marked channels and well clear of vessels engaged in salvage and safety operations.
- All commercial vessels not associated with salvage operations shall make a Sécurité broadcast on VHF channel 16 at 30-minutes prior to passing the remaining structure of the Key Bridge.

Fort McHenry Limited Access Channel operational constraints and limiting factors:

1. All traffic must be one-way, restricted to less than 10 knots, and require two escort tugs.
2. Limited availability of harbor assist tugs during heavy traffic times due, in part, to current escort requirements.
3. Outbound/inbound vessels must clear the Fort McHenry Limited Access Channel before any inbound vessel comes above the Chesapeake Bay Bridge.
4. Westbound vessels cannot enter the Brewerton Eastern Extension Channel until the outbound/inbound vessel clears the Fort McHenry Limited Access Channel.

Due to the above constraints and limitations, the following processes are in place by the COTP in partnership with the Maryland Pilots for all Baltimore traffic:

1. Pilot and tug scheduling will generally be coordinated on a first-come-first serve basis.
2. Outbound and shifting vessels must sail within 15 minutes of their ordered sailing time or the assigned tugs will depart for the next scheduled movement. The movement may be rescheduled when traffic permits and necessary tug assets are available.
3. The below matrix establishes the times between all vessel movements within the Port of Baltimore for each direction combination to most efficiently use available tug assets.

Outbound - Outbound: 2 hours (1 hour if separate tugs)
Inbound - Outbound: 2 hours (1 hour if separate tugs)
Inbound - Inbound: 2 hours
Outbound - Inbound: 2 hours

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