



Release Date: June 1, 2024

## HURRICANE SEASON 2024: PORT CONDITION IV

The Captain of the Port (COTP) has set **Port Condition IV**. This seasonal alert remains in effect from June 1 to November 30. Vessel and facility operators are encouraged to review their heavy weather contingency plans and make preparations to mitigate vessel, facility, and environmental damage. **Notice, vessels over 500GT desiring to remain in port throughout hurricane season, who have not already submitted layup plans to the COTP, should be prepared to depart the port upon order of the COTP.**

This Port Community Information Bulletin (PCIB) clarifies Coast Guard mandated hurricane procedures and defines port conditions for the ports of Tampa Bay, St. Petersburg, and Manatee along with all terminals, facilities, and waterways in Sector St. Petersburg's area of responsibility (AOR).

### Port Condition Whiskey:

- Sustained gale force winds (39-54 mph / 34-47 knots) are predicted to arrive within **seventy-two** hours.
  - Take due diligence to prepare for potential storm impacts.
  - Ports and waterfront facilities shall begin removing all debris and secure potential flying hazards.
  - Container stacking plans shall be implemented. Waterfront facilities that are unable to reduce container stacking height to no more than four high must submit a container stacking protocol to the COTP.
  - Vessels unable to depart the port must contact the COTP via Sector St. Petersburg Waterways Management Branch at [WWMTampa@uscg.mil](mailto:WWMTampa@uscg.mil) to request and receive permission to remain in port within six hours of setting Port Condition Whiskey. Proof of facility owner/operator concurrence is required.
  - The COTP will convene the Port Heavy Weather Advisory Group (PHWAG) as deemed necessary.

### Port Condition X-Ray:

- Sustained gale force winds (39-54 mph / 34-47 knots) are predicted to arrive within **forty-eight** hours.
  - All potential flying debris shall be removed or secured.
  - Hazardous materials/pollution hazards must be secured in a safe manner and away from waterfront areas.
  - Facilities shall continue to implement container stacking protocol.
    - Containers must not exceed four tiers unless previously approved by the COTP.
    - Containers carrying hazardous materials may not be stacked above the second tier.

- All oceangoing commercial vessels greater than 500-gross tons must prepare to depart the ports and anchorages. These vessels shall depart upon the setting of Port Condition Yankee.
- Slow-moving vessels may be recommended to depart to ensure safe avoidance of the incoming storm. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Vessels with COTP's permission to remain in port must implement their approved mooring arrangement.
- Terminal operators shall prepare to suspend all cargo operations.
- The COTP may require additional precautions to ensure the safety of the ports and waterways.
- Coast Guard Port Assessment Teams will be deployed to validate implementation of Port Condition X-Ray.
- The COTP will convene the PHWAG as deemed necessary.

### **Port Condition Yankee:**

- Sustained gale force winds (39-54 mph / 34-47 knots) are predicted to arrive within **twenty-four** hours.
  - Inbound vessel transits are suspended in all affected ports.
  - Except as approved by the COTP, all oceangoing commercial vessels greater than 500-gross tons must depart the ports and anchorages of Tampa Bay immediately.
  - Appropriate container stacking protocol must be completed.
  - Terminal operators must terminate all waterfront cargo operations not associated with storm preparations; *cargo operations associated with storm preparations include moving cargo within or off the port for securing purposes, crane and other port/facility equipment preparations, and similar activities.*
  - All facilities shall continue to operate in accordance with their approved Facility Security Plans and comply with the requirements of the Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA).
  - Anticipate drawbridges closing to vessel traffic as early as eight hours prior to the arrival of tropical storm force winds.
  - Coast Guard Port Assessment Teams will conduct Port Condition Yankee validation.
  - The COTP will convene the PHWAG as deemed necessary.

### **Port Condition Zulu:**

- Sustained gale force winds (39-54 mph / 34-47 knots) are predicted to arrive within **twelve** hours.
  - All port waterfront operations are suspended except for final preparations as expressly permitted by the COTP necessary to ensure the safety of the ports and facilities.
  - Movement of vessel traffic in affected ports is suspended.
  - Coast Guard Port Assessment Teams will conduct final port assessments.

### **Post-Storm:**

- Waterfront operations and vessel movements in the port(s) will remain suspended until the passage of sustained gale force winds (39-54 mph / 34-47 knots) and the COTP in conjunction with the PHWAG, has determined that it is safe to reopen. The following conditions will be considered:
  - Port-managed assessment teams have conducted ports and waterways damage surveys.
  - Aids to navigation assets have verified critical aids are on station and functioning properly.

- Port facilities have begun conducting facility damage assessments. Landside movement within the port is authorized when deemed safe by each ports operations management team, provided appropriate security measures are in place in accordance with Marine Transportation Security Act requirements.
- Emergency Operations Centers will retain operational control of bridges in order to maximize landside traffic control until normal operations resume.
- Facilities may not receive cargo or passengers without COTP approval. At a minimum, the COTP must be advised by the Facility Security Officer that facility security plans are fully implemented, Customs and Border Protection is prepared to process passengers or cargo, as applicable, and Coast Guard Port Assessment Teams have verified that security measures are in place.
- No vessel movement or port operations will be authorized without the express permission of the COTP. Anticipate the potential for draft and other restrictions based upon the assessment of waterways and aids to navigation surveys.

### **Return to Port Condition IV:**

- When directed by the COTP, ports may return to this condition after the storm passes and is no longer a threat to the AOR. The COTP will disseminate a PCIB to notify the maritime community that Port Condition IV has been reset.

Questions regarding this PCIB or required actions should be directed to the U.S. Coast Guard, Sector St. Petersburg Chief, Waterways Management Division, LCDR Eunice James at (813) 918-5137 or to your Port Heavy Weather Advisory Group representative.

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Acting Captain of the Port