



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Coast Guard

33 CFR Part 117

[Docket No. USCG-2016-0776]

RIN 1625-AA09

Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Ashley River, Charleston, SC

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DHS.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard proposes to modify the operating schedule that governs the Ashley River Bridges across the Ashley River, miles 2.4 and 2.5 at Charleston, SC. This proposed rule would require a bridge tender to be present during the daytime hours only from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily for on signal openings. All other times would require 12 hours advance notification. This modification would provide some relief to vehicle traffic congestion and would have little to no effect on navigation.

DATES: Comments and related material must reach the Coast Guard on or before **[INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by docket number USCG-2016-0776 using Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

See the “Public Participation and Request for Comments” portion of the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section below for instructions on submitting comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: If you have questions on this proposed rule, call or e-mail LT John Downing with the Coast Guard; telephone 843-740-3184, e-mail john.z.downing@uscg.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Table of Abbreviations

CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
FR	<i>Federal Register</i>
NPRM	Notice of proposed rulemaking
Pub. L.	Public Law
SCDOT	South Carolina Department of Transportation
§	Section
U.S.C.	United States Code

II. Background, Purpose and Legal Basis

On May 19, 2015, the HDR/ICA contractor for South Carolina Department of Transportation requested that the Coast Guard review the current bridge operating schedule to determine whether a change could be made to improve vehicle traffic flow in the area. The bridge owner, South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) was also consulted on this issue and concurred with the recommendation to change the current 12 hours advance notice for a bridge opening to be extended to include nighttime hours.

The US 17, Ashley River Bridges, miles 2.4 and 2.5, at Charleston, SC are double leaf bascule bridges. Each bridge has a vertical clearance of 24 feet in the closed position at mean high water and a horizontal clearance of 90 feet.

Presently, in accordance with 33 CFR 117.915(a), the Ashley River bridges (US17) also known as the US17 Highway Bridge at miles 2.4 and 2.5 at Charleston, SC shall open on signal, except that from 7 a.m. until 9 a.m. Monday through Friday and 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

daily, the draws need be opened only if at least 12 hours notice is given. The draws of either bridge shall open as soon as possible for the passage of vessels in an emergency involving danger to life or property.

III. Discussion of Proposed Rule

The Coast Guard proposes to change the operation of the Ashley River (US17) Bridges, Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, miles 2.4 and 2.5, at Charleston, SC. The proposed regulation would require a bridge tender to be present during the daytime hours only from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily to open the bridge on signal. All other times would require at least 12 hours notice. This regulation change should not have a significant impact on navigation in this area.

These proposed changes will still allow vessels to pass through the bridge while taking into account the reasonable needs of other modes of transportation. Vessels not requiring an opening may pass at any time.

IV. Regulatory Analyses

We developed this proposed rule after considering numerous statutes and Executive orders related to rulemaking. Below we summarize our analyses based on these statutes and Executive orders and we also discuss First Amendment rights of protestors.

A. Regulatory Planning and Review

Executive Orders 12866 and 13563 direct agencies to assess the costs and benefits of available regulatory alternatives and, if regulation is necessary, to select regulatory approaches that maximize net benefits. Executive Order 13563 emphasizes the importance of quantifying both costs and benefits, of reducing costs, of harmonizing rules, and of promoting flexibility. This NPRM has not been designated a “significant regulatory action,”

under Executive Order 12866. Accordingly, the NPRM has not been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget.

This regulatory action determination is based on the limited impact that it is anticipated to have on vessel traffic on the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, while taking in to consideration the needs of vehicular traffic. Vessels that can transit under the bridge without an opening may do so. Emergency vessels and tugs with tows can still request openings at any time.

B. Impact on Small Entities

The Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980 (RFA), 5 U.S.C. 601–612, as amended, requires federal agencies to consider the potential impact of regulations on small entities during rulemaking. The term “small entities” comprises small businesses, not-for-profit organizations that are independently owned and operated and are not dominant in their fields, and governmental jurisdictions with populations of less than 50,000. The Coast Guard certifies, under 5 U.S.C. 605(b), that this proposed rule would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. While some owners or operators of vessels intending to transit the bridge may be small entities, for the reasons stated in section IV.A above this proposed rule would not have a significant economic impact on any vessel owner or operator.

If you think that your business, organization, or governmental jurisdiction qualifies as a small entity and that this rule would have a significant economic impact on it, please submit a comment (see **ADDRESSES**) explaining why you think it qualifies and how and to what degree this rule would economically affect it.

Under section 213(a) of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of

1996 (Pub. L. 104-121), we want to assist small entities in understanding this proposed rule. If the rule would affect your small business, organization, or governmental jurisdiction and you have questions concerning its provisions or options for compliance, please contact the person listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**, above. The Coast Guard will not retaliate against small entities that question or complain about this proposed rule or any policy or action of the Coast Guard.

C. Collection of Information

This proposed rule would not call for a new collection of information under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501-3520.).

D. Federalism and Indian Tribal Government

A rule has implications for federalism under Executive Order 13132, Federalism, if it has a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. We have analyzed this proposed rule under that order and have determined that it is consistent with the fundamental federalism principles and preemption requirements described in Executive Order 13132.

Also, this proposed rule does not have tribal implications under Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, because it would not have a substantial direct effect on one or more Indian tribes, on the relationship between the Federal Government and Indian tribes, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities between the Federal Government and Indian tribes. If you believe this proposed rule has implications for federalism or Indian tribes, please contact the person listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section above.

E. Unfunded Mandates Reform Act

The Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1531-1538) requires Federal agencies to assess the effects of their discretionary regulatory actions. In particular, the Act addresses actions that may result in the expenditure by a State, local, or tribal government, in the aggregate, or by the private sector of \$100,000,000 (adjusted for inflation) or more in any one year. Though this proposed rule will not result in such expenditure, we do discuss the effects of this proposed rule elsewhere in this preamble.

F. Environment

We have analyzed this proposed rule under Department of Homeland Security Management Directive 023-01 and Commandant Instruction M16475.ID, which guides the Coast Guard in complying with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)(42 U.S.C. 4321-4370f), and have made a preliminary determination that this action is one of a category of actions which do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment. This proposed rule promulgates the operating regulations or procedures for drawbridges. Normally such actions are categorically excluded from further review, under figure 2-1, paragraph (32)(e), of the Instruction.

Under figure 2-1, paragraph (32)(e), of the Instruction, an environmental analysis checklist and a categorical exclusion determination are not required for this rule. We seek any comments or information that may lead to the discovery of a significant environmental impact from this proposed rule.

G. Protest Activities

The Coast Guard respects the First Amendment rights of protesters. Protesters are asked to contact the person listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**

section to coordinate protest activities so that your message can be received without jeopardizing the safety or security of people, places or vessels.

V. Public Participation and Request for Comments

We view public participation as essential to effective rulemaking, and will consider all comments and material received during the comment period. Your comment can help shape the outcome of this rulemaking. If you submit a comment, please include the docket number for this rulemaking, indicate the specific section of this document to which each comment applies, and provide a reason for each suggestion or recommendation.

We encourage you to submit comments through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>. If your material cannot be submitted using <http://www.regulations.gov>, contact the person in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section of this document for alternate instructions.

We accept anonymous comments. All comments received will be posted without change to <http://www.regulations.gov> and will include any personal information you have provided. For more about privacy and the docket, you may review a Privacy Act notice regarding the Federal Docket Management System in the March 24, 2005, issue of the *Federal Register* (70 FR 15086).

Documents mentioned in this proposed rule and all public comments are in our online docket at <http://www.regulations.gov> and can be viewed by following that website's instructions. Additionally, if you go to the online docket and sign up for email alerts, you will be notified when comments are posted or a final rule is published.

List of Subjects in 33 CFR Part 117

Bridges.

For the reasons discussed in the preamble, the Coast Guard proposes to amend 33 CFR part 117 as follows:

PART 117—DRAWBRIDGE OPERATION REGULATIONS

1. The authority citation for part 117 continues to read as follows:

AUTHORITY: 33 U.S.C. 499; 33 CFR 1.05-1; Department of Homeland Security Delegation No. 0170.1.

2. Amend § 117.915 by revising paragraph (a) to read as follows:

§ 117.915 Ashley River.

(a) The draws of the US17 highway bridges, mile 2.4 and 2.5 at Charleston, SC shall open on signal; except that, from 4 p.m. to 9 a.m. daily, the draws shall open only if at least 12 hours notice is given. The draws of either bridge shall open as soon as possible for the passage of vessels in an emergency involving danger to life or property.

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Dated: April 7, 2017.

S. A. Buschman,

Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard,

Commander, Seventh Coast Guard District.

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