



9110-04-P

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Coast Guard

33 CFR Part 117

[Docket No. USCG-2017-1026]

Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Newark Bay, Newark, NJ

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DHS.

ACTION: Notice of temporary deviation from drawbridge regulation; modification, request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard has modified a temporary deviation from the operating schedule that governs the Lehigh Valley Railroad Bridge across the Newark Bay, mile 4.3, at Newark, New Jersey. This modified deviation extends an additional 90 days to test a change to the drawbridge operation schedule to determine whether a permanent change to the schedule is needed. This modified deviation allows the Lehigh Valley Bridge to operate under an alternate schedule to alleviate high volume of rail service across the Lehigh Valley Bridge and to better accommodate vessel traffic.

DATES: This modified deviation is effective from 12:01 a.m. on April 1, 2018 to 11:59 p.m. on June 29, 2018.

Comments and related material must reach by the Coast Guard on or before June 29, 2018.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by docket number USCG-2017-1026 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 modified temporary deviation, call or e-mail Judy K. Leung-Yee, Bridge Management Specialist, First District Bridge Branch, U.S. Coast Guard; telephone 212-514-4336, e-mail Judy.K.Leung-Yee@uscg.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background, Purpose and Legal Basis

On December 19, 2017, the Coast Guard published a temporary deviation entitled “Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Newark Bay, Newark, NJ” in the Federal Register (82 FR 60116). That temporary deviation allows the bridge to test a change to the drawbridge operation schedule to determine whether a permanent change to the schedule is needed from January 1, 2018 to March 31, 2018.

The owner of the bridge, Consolidated Rail Corporation, requested a change to the Drawbridge Operation Regulations because the volume of train traffic and maneuvering of train movements from the adjacent rail yard across the bridge cause significant delays to marine traffic.

The Lehigh Valley Bridge across the Newark Bay, mile 4.3, at Newark, New Jersey is a lift bridge with a vertical clearance of 35 feet at mean high water and 39 feet at mean low water in the closed position. The existing drawbridge operating regulations are listed at 33 CFR 117.5 and 33 CFR 117.735.

The waterway users are seasonal recreational vessels and commercial vessels of

various sizes. Coordination with waterway users indicated no objection to extend the test period.

The Coast Guard is publishing this modified temporary deviation to test the proposed regulation change to determine whether a permanent change to the schedule is necessary to better balance the needs of marine and rail traffic.

Under this modified deviation, in effect from 12:01 a.m. on April 1, 2018 to 11:59 p.m. on June 29, 2018, the Lehigh Valley Bridge will open on signal if at least one hour advance notice is given.

Vessels able to pass through the bridge in the closed position may do so at any time. There are no alternate routes. The bridge will be able to open for emergencies.

The Coast Guard contacted the waterway users regarding extending the current temporary deviation in order to continue testing a proposed change to the Drawbridge Operation Regulations. No objections were received. The Coast Guard will inform the users of the waterways through our Local and Broadcast Notices to Mariners and other appropriate local media of the change in operating schedule for the bridge so that vessel operators may arrange their transits to minimize any impact caused by the temporary deviation.

In accordance with 33 CFR 117.35(e), the drawbridge must return to its regular operating schedule immediately at the end of the effective period of this temporary deviation. This deviation from the operating regulations is authorized under 33 CFR 117.35.

II. 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, indicating the specific section of this document to which each comment applies, and provide reason for each suggestion or recommendation.

We encourage you to submit comments through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <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 person information you have provided. For more about privacy and the docket, visit <http://www.regulations.gov/privacynotice>.

Documents mentioned in this notice as being available in this docket and all public comments, will be 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.

Dated: March 26, 2018

Christopher J. Bisignano
Supervisory Bridge Management Specialist
First Coast Guard District
[FR Doc. 2018-06424 Filed: 3/29/2018 8:45 am; Publication Date: 3/30/2018]