



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Coast Guard

33 CFR Part 165

[Docket Number USCG-2023-0838]

RIN 1625-AA00

Safety Zone; Saint Thomas, USVI

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DHS.

ACTION: Temporary final rule.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard is establishing a temporary safety zone for navigable waters within a 0.25 nautical miles radius around the Motor Vessel (M/V) BONNIE G grounded near the coast of Saint Thomas, U.S.V.I. This action is necessary to protect personnel, vessels, and the marine environment from potential hazards created by the M/V BONNIE G grounding. Entry of vessels or persons into this zone is prohibited unless specifically authorized by the Captain of the Port San Juan.

DATES: This temporary final rule is effective without actual notice from [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER] through October 20, 2023. For the purposes of enforcement, actual notice will be used from October 6, 2023 until [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: To view documents mentioned in this preamble as being available in the docket, go to <https://www.regulations.gov>, type USCG-2023-0838 in the search box and click "Search." Next, in the Document Type column, select "Supporting & Related Material."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: If you have questions about this rule, call or email Lieutenant Commander Carlos M. Ortega-Perez, Waterways

Management Division Chief, U.S. Coast Guard; telephone 787-729-2380, email

Carlos.M.Ortega-Perez@uscg.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Table of Abbreviations

CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
FR	Federal Register
NPRM	Notice of proposed rulemaking
§	Section
U.S.C.	United States Code

II. Background Information and Regulatory History

The Coast Guard is issuing this temporary rule without prior notice and opportunity to comment pursuant to authority under section 4(a) of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) (5 U.S.C. 553(b)). This provision authorizes an agency to issue a rule without prior notice and opportunity to comment when the agency for good cause finds that those procedures are “impracticable, unnecessary, or contrary to the public interest.” Under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B), the Coast Guard finds that good cause exists for not publishing a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) with respect to this TFR because doing so would be impracticable. The M/V BONNIE G grounded near the coast of Saint Thomas, U.S.V.I, and immediate action is needed to respond to the potential safety hazards associated with the emergency response and salvage operations. It is impracticable to publish an NPRM because we must establish this safety zone by October 6, 2023.

Under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), the Coast Guard finds that good cause exists for making this rule effective less than 30 days after publication in the Federal Register. Delaying the effective date of this rule would be impracticable because immediate action is needed to respond to the potential safety hazards associated with the emergency response and salvage operations.

III. Legal Authority and Need for Rule

The Coast Guard is issuing this rule under authority in 46 U.S.C. 70034. The Captain of the Port San Juan (COTP) has determined that there are potential hazards associated with the response and salvage operations regarding the M/V BONNIE G grounding. There will be a safety concern for anyone within a 0.25 nautical miles radius around the M/V BONNIE G grounded near the coast of Saint Thomas, U.S.V.I. This rule is needed to protect personnel, vessels, and the marine environment in the navigable waters within the safety zone during response and salvage operations.

IV. Discussion of the Rule

This rule establishes a safety zone on certain waters of the Caribbean Sea off the coast of Saint Thomas, U.S.V.I. The safety zone will be enforced from October 6, 2023 through October 20, 2023. The safety zone will cover all navigable waters within 0.25 nautical miles radius of 18°19'27"N 64°58'25"W, the current location of the M/V BONNIE G. The duration of the zone is intended to protect personnel, vessels, and the marine environment in these navigable waters while the Owning company of the vessel completes their salvage plan.

No person or vessel will be permitted to enter, transit through, anchor in, or remain within the safety zone without first obtaining permission from the COTP or a designated representative. If authorization to enter, transit through, anchor in, or remain within the safety zone is granted by the COTP or a designated representative, all persons and vessels receiving such authorization must comply with the instructions of the COTP or a designated representative. The Coast Guard will provide notice of the safety zone by Broadcast Notice to Mariners, and/or by on-scene designated representatives.

V. Regulatory Analyses

We developed this rule after considering numerous statutes and Executive orders related to rulemaking. Below we summarize our analyses based on a number of these statutes and Executive orders, and we 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. This rule has not been designated a “significant regulatory action,” under section 3(f) of Executive Order 12866, as amended by Executive Order 14094 (Modernizing Regulatory Review). Accordingly, this rule has not been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

This regulatory action determination is based on following reasons: (1) the temporary safety zone will only be enforced for 15 consecutive days and may be removed earlier if the response and salvage operations are completed prior October 20, 2023; (2) although persons and vessels may not enter, transit through, anchor in, or remain within the safety zone without authorization from the COTP or a designated representative, they may operate in the surrounding area during the enforcement period; (3) persons and vessels may still enter, transit through, anchor in, or remain within the areas during the enforcement period if authorized by the COTP or a designated representative.

B. Impact on Small Entities

The Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980, 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 rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

While some owners or operators of vessels intending to transit the safety zone may be small entities, for the reasons stated in section V. above, this rule will not have a significant economic impact on any vessel owner or operator.

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 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 call or email the person listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section.

Small businesses may send comments on the actions of Federal employees who enforce, or otherwise determine compliance with, Federal regulations to the Small Business and Agriculture Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman and the Regional Small Business Regulatory Fairness Boards. The Ombudsman evaluates these actions annually and rates each agency's responsiveness to small business. If you wish to comment on actions by employees of the Coast Guard, call 1-888-REG-FAIR (1-888-734-3247). The Coast Guard will not retaliate against small entities that question or complain about this rule or any policy or action of the Coast Guard.

C. Collection of Information

This rule will 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 Governments

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 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 rule does not have tribal implications under Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, because it does 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.

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 rule will not result in such an expenditure, we do discuss the effects of this rule elsewhere in this preamble.

F. Environment

We have analyzed this rule under Department of Homeland Security Directive 023-01, Rev. 1, associated implementing instructions, and Environmental Planning COMDTINST 5090.1 (series), which guide the Coast Guard in complying with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321–4370f), and have determined that this action is one of a category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment. This rule involves a .25 nautical mile perimeter safety zone, lasting the duration of response and salvage operations or a maximum of 15 consecutive days and thus limited in scope. This zone will prohibit entry while in effect. It is categorically excluded from further review under paragraph L60(d) of Appendix A, Table 1 of DHS Instruction Manual 023–01–001–01, Rev. 1. A Record of Environmental Consideration supporting this determination is available in the docket. For instructions on locating the docket, see the **ADDRESSES** section of this preamble.

G. Protest Activities

The Coast Guard respects the First Amendment rights of protesters. Protesters are asked to call or email 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.

List of Subjects in 33 CFR Part 165

Harbors, Marine safety, Navigation (water), Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Security measures, Waterways.

For the reasons discussed in the preamble, the Coast Guard amends 33 CFR part 165 as follows:

PART 165-- REGULATED NAVIGATION AREAS AND LIMITED ACCESS

AREAS

1. The authority citation for part 165 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 46 U.S.C. 70034, 70051, 70124; 33 CFR 1.05–1, 6.04–1, 6.04–6, and 160.5; Department of Homeland Security Delegation No. 00170.1, Revision No. 01.3.

2. Add § 165.T07-0838 to read as follows:

§ 165.T07-0838 Safety Zone; Saint Thomas, U.S.V.I.

(a) *Location.* The following area is a safety zone: All waters of the Caribbean Sea off the coast of Saint Thomas, U.S.V.I, from surface to bottom, that are within a 0.25 nautical mile radius of 18°19'27"N 64°58'25"W, the current location of the M/V BONNIE G, from surface to bottom.

(b) *Definitions.* As used in this section, the term “designated representative” means a Coast Guard Patrol Commander, including a Coast Guard coxswain, petty officer, or other officer operating a Coast Guard vessel and a Federal, State, and local officer designated by or assisting the Captain of the Port (COTP) San Juan in the enforcement of the safety zone.

(c) *Regulations.* (1) All persons and vessels are prohibited from entering, transiting through, anchoring in, or remaining within the regulated area unless authorized by the COTP San Juan or a designated representative.

(2) Persons and vessels desiring to enter, transit through, anchor in, or remain within the regulated area may contact the COTP San Juan by telephone at (787) 289-2041, or a designated representative via VHF-FM radio on channel 16 to request authorization. If authorization is granted, all persons and vessels receiving such authorization must comply with the instructions of the COTP San Juan or a designated representative.

(3) The Coast Guard will provide notice of the regulated area by Local Notice to Mariners, Broadcast Notice to Mariners via VHF-FM channel 16, or the COTP's designated representative

(d) *Enforcement period.* This section will be enforced from 6 a.m. until 6 p.m. on October 6, 2023, through October 20, 2023.

Dated: October 6, 2023.

José E. Díaz,
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard,
Captain of the Port San Juan.

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