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Coast Guard

33 CFR Part 165

[Docket Number USCG-2025-0850]

RIN 1625-AA00

Safety Zone; Chesapeake Bay, Baltimore, MD

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DHS.

ACTION: Temporary final rule.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard is establishing a temporary safety zone for navigable waters of the Chesapeake Bay within 500 yards of the M/V W-SAPPHIRE. The safety zone is needed to protect personnel, vessels, and the marine environment from potential hazards created by the presence of explosive cargo on board the vessel. Entry of vessels or persons into this zone is prohibited unless specifically authorized by the Captain of the Port, Sector Maryland-National Capital Region (NCR) (COTP), or a designated representative

DATES: This rule is effective without actual notice from [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER] through December 31, 2025. For the purposes of enforcement, actual notice will be used from September 22, 2025, 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-2025-0850 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 on this rule, call or email Mr. Charles Bullock, Sector Maryland-NCR, Waterways Management Division, U.S. Coast Guard: telephone 410-365-8125, email Charles.D.Bullock@uscg.mil

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Table of Abbreviations

CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
COTP	Captain of the Port, Sector Maryland-National Capital Region
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
FR	Federal Register
NPRM	Notice of proposed rulemaking
§	Section
U.S.C.	United States Code

II. Background and Authority

At approximately 6:30 PM on August 18, 2025, the M/V W-SAPPHIRE experienced an explosion in cargo hold #2. See 90 FR 41506 (Aug. 26, 2025). The vessel will be transiting and anchoring in the Chesapeake Bay with explosive cargo onboard. The Coast Guard is establishing this safety zone to protect personnel, vessels, and the marine environment in these navigable waters from the potential hazards arising from the presence of the ship's explosive cargo. No vessel or person is permitted to enter the safety zone without obtaining permission from the COTP or a designated representative.

The Coast Guard is issuing this temporary rule under the authority in 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B). This statutory 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 rule because immediate action is necessary to mitigate risks associated with moving a vessel with explosive cargo onboard. It is impracticable to publish an NPRM because we must establish this safety zone as soon as possible.

Also, 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 and contrary to the public

interest because immediate action is necessary to ensure the safety of vessels and persons on these navigable waters during the movement of a vessel with explosive cargo onboard.

III. Discussion of the Rule

This rule establishes a 500-yard radius, temporary safety zone around M/V W-SAPPHIRE on September 22, 2025 through December 31, 2025. Enforcement may end sooner upon the safe departure or repair of the vessel. The safety zone will cover all navigable waters within 500 yards of the vessel when at anchor or transiting the Chesapeake Bay. This rule will prohibit persons or vessels from entering this zone unless specifically authorized by the COTP or a designated representative.

The COTP or a designated representative may forbid and control the movement of all vessels in the zone. When hailed or signaled by an official patrol vessel, a vessel shall come to an immediate stop and comply with the directions given. Failure to do so may result in expulsion from the zone, citation for failure to comply, or both.

IV. 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.

A. Impact on Small Entities

The regulatory flexibility analysis provisions of the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980, 5 U.S.C. 601-612, do not apply to rules that are not subject to notice and comment. Because the Coast Guard has, for good cause, waived the notice and comment requirement that would otherwise apply to this rulemaking, the Regulatory Flexibility Act's flexibility analysis provisions do not apply here.

Under section 213(a) of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (Pub. L. 104-121), if this rule will affect your small business, organization, or

governmental jurisdiction and you have questions, contact the person listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section.

Small businesses may send comments to the Small Business and Agriculture Regulatory Enforcement Ombudsman and the Regional Small Business Regulatory Fairness Boards by calling 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.

B. 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).

C. Federalism and Indian Tribal Governments

We have analyzed this rule under Executive Order 13132, Federalism, and have determined that it is consistent with the fundamental federalism principles and preemption requirements described in that Order.

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.

D. Unfunded Mandates Reform Act

As required by The Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1531-1538), the Coast Guard certifies that this rule will not result in an annual expenditure of \$100,000,000 or more (adjusted for inflation) by a State, local, or tribal government, in the aggregate, or by the private sector.

E. 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 is a safety zone. It is categorically excluded from further review under paragraph L60(a) 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.

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. 01.4.

2. Add § 165.T05-0850 to read as follows:

§ 165.T05-0850 Safety Zone; Chesapeake Bay, Baltimore, MD.

(a) *Location.* The following area is a safety zone: All navigable waters encompassing a 500-yard radius around the M/V W SAPPHIRE while the vessel is in the Chesapeake Bay.

(b) *Definitions.* As used in this section, *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 of Baltimore (COTP) in the enforcement of the safety zone.

(c) *Regulations.* (1) Under the general safety zone regulations in subpart D of this part, you may not enter the safety zone described in paragraph (a) of this section unless authorized by the COTP or the COTP's designated representative.

(2) To seek permission to enter, contact the COTP or the COTP's representative by telephone number 410-576-2693 or on Marine Band Radio VHF-FM channel 16 (156.8 MHz). Those in the safety zone must comply with all lawful orders or directions given to them by the COTP or the COTP's designated representative.

(d) *Enforcement periods.* This section will be enforced from September 22, 2025 until December 31, 2025, or earlier upon the safe departure or repair of the vessel.

Dated: September 22, 2025

Patrick C Burkett,
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard,
Captain of the Port, Sector Maryland-National Capital Region.

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