



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Coast Guard

33 CFR Part 100

[Docket Number USCG-2026-0225]

RIN 1625-AA08

Special Local Regulation; lower Chesapeake Bay, Hampton Roads, and the Elizabeth River, Virginia

AGENCY: Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security.

ACTION: Temporary final rule.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard is establishing a temporary Special Local Regulation (SLR) for certain navigable waters of the lower Chesapeake Bay, Hampton Roads, and the Elizabeth River, before, during, and after a series of events centering on a global gathering of tall ships and military ships to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the United States. This SLR is needed to protect personnel, vessels, and marine environment from potential hazards created by the presence of a parade of ships, fireworks, and other events that will attract large crowds of spectating vessels and result in extremely congested waters.

DATES: This rule is effective June 16, 2026 through June 21, 2026.

ADDRESSES: To view available documents go to <https://www.regulations.gov> and search for USCG-2026-0225.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: If you have questions about this rule, contact LCDR Justin Z. Strassfield, Sector Virginia Waterways Management Division, U.S. Coast Guard; by phone, at (206) 815-7367, or by email, at VirginiaWaterways@uscg.mil .

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Table of Abbreviations

CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
COTP	Captain of the Port, Sector Virginia
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
FR	<i>Federal Register</i>
NPRM	Notice of proposed rulemaking
§	Section
SLR	Special Local Regulation
U.S.C.	United States Code

II. Background and Authority

Coast Guard regulations define “regatta or marine parade” as an organized water event of limited duration which is conducted according to a prearranged schedule. 33 CFR 100.05(a). And, as explained in 33 CFR 100.15, Coast Guard requires that an organization planning to hold a regatta or marine event apply for a permit if the event, by its nature, circumstances, or location, will introduce extra or unusual hazards to the safety of life on the navigable waters of the United States. These permits may be approved by the Coast Guard, or by the state in which the event is to take place, if there is a Coast Guard-State agreement in place. See 33 CFR 100.10. Upon the approval of an application, the Captain of the Port, Sector Virginia (COTP) may promulgate such “Special Local Regulations” (SLR's) as he or she deems necessary to ensure safety of life on the navigable waters immediately prior to, during, and immediately after the event. See 33 CFR 100.35(a).

On January 13th, 2026, the event sponsor of “Sail250® Virginia” submitted an application under 33 CFR 100.15 to conduct ‘Tall Ship Parade of Sail’ on June 19th, 2026. Sail250®Virginia is part of Sail250®, a series of events which celebrates the 250th

anniversary of the United States of America,¹ and which has been designated as a Marine Event of National Significance under Coast Guard regulations (46 CFR 26.03-8).²

The Virginia event, Sail250® Virginia, is being held from June 19th, 2026, through June 23rd, 2026, with participating tall ships mooring in various berths throughout Norfolk, VA. It will commence with the arrival and anchoring of 60 tall ships and military vessels at Anchorage “B” in Lynnhaven, Virginia Beach, VA on June 16th, 2026. We have included a graphic below entitled “Parade of Sail” which illustrates the location of the anchoring along with the route the tall ships will use beginning in the Thimble Shoal Channel.

In addition to the Sail250® Virginia ‘Tall Ship Parade of Sail’ into Norfolk, VA on June 19th, 2026, there will be fireworks displays on June 19th and June 20th, 2026, and an alternate weather day scheduled June 21st, 2026, for which we create a temporary regulated area. To illustrate that area, we have included a separate graphic below entitled “Fireworks” which will encompass a zone within Norfolk, Virginia on the Elizabeth River.

Sail250Virginia® and the fireworks display present potential hazards. Hazards during the parade of sail include limited maneuverability due to the likely high concentration of spectators and participant vessels, with an increased likelihood of potential collisions. Hazards from fireworks displays include the accidental discharge of fireworks, and the chance that people or vessels may be hit by dangerous projectiles, falling hot embers, or other debris. The COTP has therefore determined these regulations are necessary to ensure the safety of the ‘Sail250® Virginia’ registered participants and

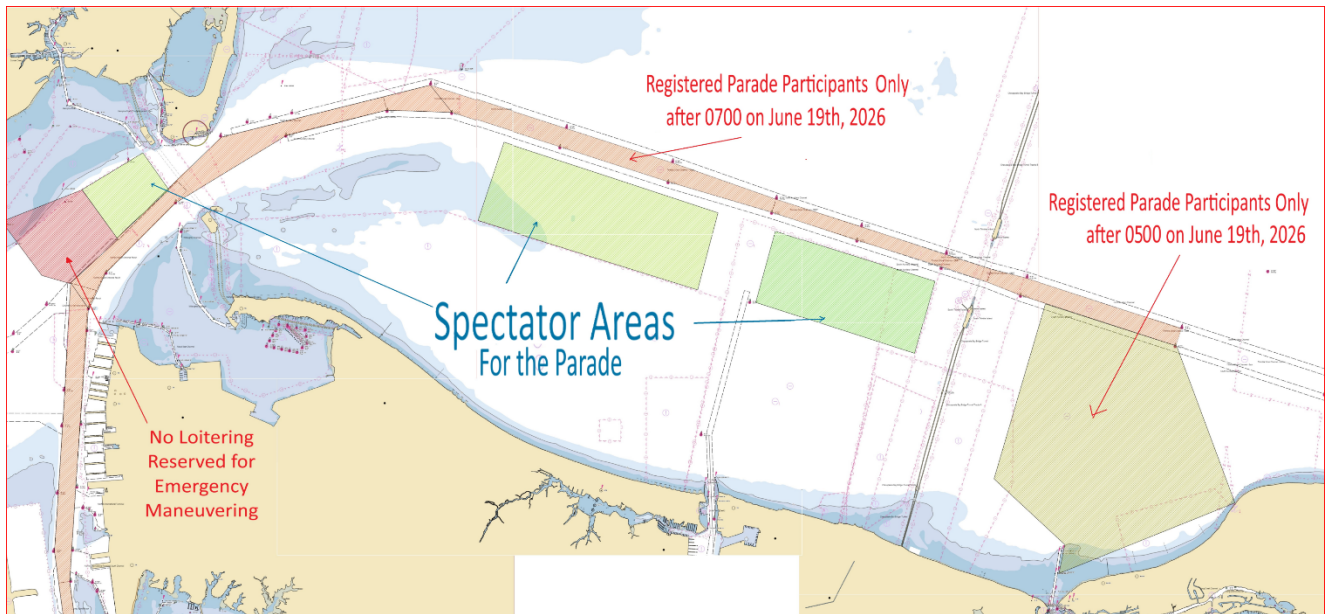
¹ Among this series of events is a multiport tall ships tour, which includes the ports of New Orleans, LA; Norfolk, VA; Baltimore, MD; New York City, NY, and Boston, MA. Additional information about Sail250® can be found at <https://www.sail250.org/>.

² Typically, events so designated draw a large number of tall ships (sailing vessels) or other traditional ships from around the world, with an underlying purpose to promote maritime heritage, cultural heritage, and international goodwill. The participants usually include a broad mix of U.S. and foreign-flag vessels, including public vessels and ships of war, commercial vessels and recreational vessels, or yachts.

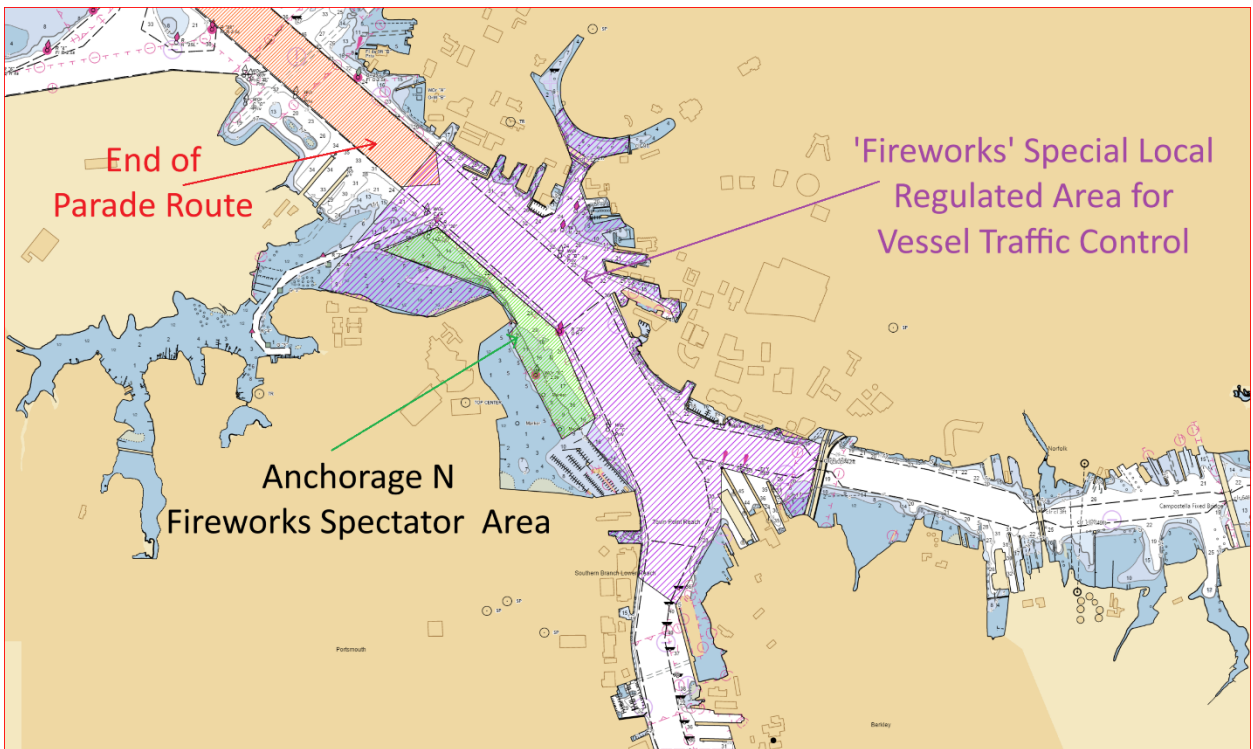
spectators, and their vessels while operating in and around the Port of Virginia before, during, and after the scheduled events are completed. The Coast Guard is establishing this rulemaking under authorities in 46 U.S.C. 70041; 33 CFR 1.05-1.

As is authorized by 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 it is impracticable, given the amount of time we have before the rule must be in place.

For the same reasons, the Coast Guard finds that under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), good cause exists for making this rule effective less than 30 days after publication in the Federal Register.



“Parade of Sail”



“Fireworks”

III. Discussion of the Rule

This rule, containing restrictions which will only be subject to enforcement at various specified times between June 16th, 2026, through June 21st, 2026, establishes a “Tall Ship Staging Area,” “Spectator Areas,” and a “Parade Regulated Area” for tall ships participating in the ‘Sail250® Virginia Tall Ship Parade of Sail’. The “Parade Regulated Area” encompasses the navigational channel between Thimble Shoal Channel Buoys “3” and “4” until the end of the parade route at Town Point Reach. Restrictions are subject to enforcement in the “Tall Ship Staging Area” from 6 a.m. June 16th to 2:30 p.m. on June 19th. Restrictions in the “Parade Regulated Area” and in the “Spectator Areas” are subject to enforcement from 5 a.m. until 5 p.m. on June 19th.

The rule includes two buffer zones. A stationary 25-yard buffer zone exists around all Tall Ships while within Lynnhaven Anchorage (from June 16th, 2026, through June 19th, 2026). Additionally, a moving buffer zone 1,000-yards ahead, 50-yards

abeam, 50-yards astern of participating Tall Ships exists during their transit from anchorage to and through the parade route, when registered participants will depart Lynnhaven Anchorage to begin the parade route within Thimble Shoal Channel and end in Norfolk Harbor on June 19th, 2026.

Under existing authority provided in 33 CFR 165.501, the auxiliary channels of the Thimble Shoal Channel will be designated for support vessels under COTP or designated representatives' authority during the Tall Ship Parade of Sail. Mariners may not loiter within the auxiliary channels, nor impede safety vessels.

In addition to the regulated area for the ships, the rule establishes a second regulated area for the Juneteenth/Sail250® Virginia Fireworks Extravaganza on June 19th, 2026, and Sail250® Virginia/Norfolk Harborfest Fireworks Spectacular on June 20th, 2026, from 9 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. on the Elizabeth River on the Downtown Norfolk Waterfront, with an alternate weather day scheduled for June 21st, from 9 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. in the event of rain.

Based on information from the event sponsor and regional maritime stakeholders, we determined that vessel control measures that direct non-participants (as defined at 33 CFR 100.501(b)) into designated spectator areas near the beginning and end of the parade of sail will enhance navigational safety. Vessels intending to observe the parade of sail will be encouraged to utilize Anchorage "C", "E", "F" and "N" as spectator areas to reduce the impact of spectator congestion on the rest of the local marine transportation system. Vessels may not utilize Anchorage "G-3" and "G-4" during the Parade of Sail on June 19th, 2026. The regulatory text we are establishing appears at the end of this document.

In summary, and based on the latest Sail250 Virginia schedule of events, we are establishing regulations which include:

1. A special local regulated area, ‘Parade Regulated Area,’ the transit route to be used for Tall Ship Parade of Sail. (Prior to the parade, participating ships would make use of (existing) Anchorage “B” and Lynnhaven Anchorage. There will be buffer zones around each registered Tall Ship while anchored in Lynnhaven and while transiting into Norfolk, VA.)
2. A special local regulated area for fireworks events scheduled to occur June 19th and 20th, with an alternate date scheduled for the 21st.
3. Designated spectator areas – Anchorage “C”, “E”, “F” and “N” for the ‘Parade of Sail’ and Fireworks

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 et seq.), 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 special local regulation. It is categorically excluded from further

review under paragraph L61 of Appendix A, Table 1 of DHS Instruction Manual 023–01–001–01, Rev. 1.

List of Subjects in 33 CFR Part 100

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 100 as follows:

PART 100—SAFETY OF LIFE ON NAVIGABLE WATERS

1. The authority citation for part 100 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 46 U.S.C. 70041, 4; 33 CFR 1.05-1.

2. Add § 100.T599-0225 to read as follows:

§ 100.T599-0225 Special Local Regulation; Sail250® Virginia, Norfolk, VA

(a) *Locations.* The following locations are special regulated areas:

(1) *Parade regulated area.* All waters of the Thimble Shoal Channel bounded by line drawn from Thimble Shoal Channel “3” Buoy latitude 36°57'32.5"N , longitude 076°3'40.3"W to Thimble Shoal Channel “4” Buoy latitude 36°57'46.3"N, longitude 076°3'34.4"W to a point North West of “1ER” Buoy at latitude 36°59'23.5"N, longitude 076°18'50.3"W, to Norfolk Harbor Reach “1ER” Buoy latitude 36°59'16.2"N, longitude 076°18'41.4"W to Town Point Reach at points latitude 36°50'20.6"N, longitude 76°17'43.1"W and latitude 36°50'19.9"N, longitude 76°17'28.7"W. These coordinates are based on the World Geodetic System (WGS 84).

(2) *Fireworks regulated area.* All waters of the Elizabeth River and its branches from shoreline to shoreline, bounded to the northwest by a line drawn across the Port Norfolk Reach section of the Elizabeth River between the Portsmouth, VA shoreline at latitude 36°50'56.1"N, longitude 076°18'44.3"W, and the Norfolk, VA shoreline at latitude 36°51'18.8"N, longitude 076°18'22.0"W; bounded on the southwest by a line

drawn from the southern corner of the landing at Hospital Point, Portsmouth, VA, at latitude 36°50'50.9" N, longitude 076°18'07.7" W, to the northern end of the eastern most pier at the Tidewater Yacht Agency Marina, located at latitude 36°50'33.6" N, longitude 076°17'54.1" W; bounded to the south by a line drawn across the Lower Reach of the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River, between the Portsmouth Lightship Museum located at the foot of London Boulevard, in Portsmouth, VA at latitude 36°50'13.2" N, longitude 076°17'44.8" W, and the northwest corner of the Norfolk Shipbuilding & Drydock, Berkley Plant, Pier No. 1, located at latitude 36°50'08.8" N, longitude 076°17'37.5" W; and to the southeast by the Berkley Bridge which crosses the Eastern Branch of the Elizabeth River between Berkley at latitude 36°50'21.5" N, longitude 076°17'14.5" W, and Norfolk at latitude 36°50'35" N, longitude 076°17'10" W. These coordinates are based on the World Geodetic System (WGS 84).

(3) *Spectator areas.* All waters of Anchorage C, identified in 33 CFR 110.168(a)(2)(ii), Anchorage E identified in 33 CFR 110.168(a)(2)(iv), Anchorage F identified in 33 CFR 110.168(a)(3), and Anchorage N, identified in 33 CFR 110.168(a)(5)(ii), shall be designated approved spectator areas as described in 33 CFR 100.501(d)(4) during the enforcement of the parade of sail regulated area. Non-participants intending to view Sail250 events will be directed by the PATCOM into these areas to reduce the impact of the marine event on areas adjacent to but not inside the regulated areas. Mariners may not utilize Anchorage G, identified in 33 CFR 110.168(3)(vi) and (vii), for any reason for the duration of the Parade of Sail.

(4) *Tall Ship Staging Area.* All waters within Anchorage B and Lynnhaven Anchorage bounded in the northwest by a line drawn from point latitude 36°57'27.6"N, longitude 076°3'42.2"W to a point southeast at latitude 36°55'38.7"N, longitude 076°2'50.6"W, to a line drawn to the south at point latitude 36°54' 3.2"N, longitude 076°5'22.7"W, to a line drawn to the north at point latitude 36°55'19.9"N, longitude

076°5'19.8"W, to a line draws to the northwest at point latitude 36°55'48.7"N, longitude 076°6'13.5"W, to a line drawn to the north at point latitude 36°57'57.4"N, longitude 076°5'34.6"W, and back to the original starting point. These coordinates are based on the World Geodetic System (WGS 84).

(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 COTP in the enforcement of the regulated area. *Participant* means all persons and vessels registered with the event sponsor as a participant in the events involved. *Non-participant* means a person or a vessel not registered with the event sponsor either as a participant or an official patrol vessel.

(c) *Regulations.* (1) During the enforcement period(s), and within the Parade regulated area and Tall Ship Staging Area, all non-participants are prohibited from entering, anchoring in, transiting or remaining within the regulated area described in paragraph (a)(1) of this section unless authorized by the COTP or their designated representative. All Tall Ships will be protected by a moving buffer zone 1,000-yards ahead, 50-yards abeam, 50-yards astern. Any parading non-registered participants must proceed inbound behind the last registered participant. Normal traffic flow will resume at the discretion of the COTP, or their designated representative, when conditions permit.

(2) During the enforcement period and within the Fireworks location, all non-participants are prohibited from entering, anchoring in, transiting or remaining within the regulated area described in paragraph (a)(2) of this section unless authorized by the COTP or their designated representative.

(3) During the enforcement period and within the Tall Ship Staging area, all non-participants are prohibited from approaching within 25-yards of any anchored Sail250 Tall Ship within the regulated area described in paragraph (a)(4) of this section unless

authorized by the COTP or their designated representative.

(4) To seek permission to transit the regulated areas during enforcement periods, contact the COTP, or the COTP's designated representative, on VHF channel 16 or 877-722-5727 (Sector Virginia Command Center). Those in the special regulated areas must comply with all lawful orders or directions given to them by the COTP or the COTP's designated representative.

(5) The COTP will provide notice of the regulated area through advanced notice via broadcast notice to mariners and by on-scene designated representatives.

(d) *Enforcement period(s)*. (1) The special location regulation for the Parade regulated area described in paragraph (a)(1) of this section will be enforced from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. on June 19, 2026.

(2) The special local regulation for the fireworks location described paragraph (a)(2) in will be enforced from 9 p.m. until 10:30 p.m. on June 19, 2026, and June 20, 2026, with an alternate date scheduled for June 21st, 2026

(3) The special local regulation for the Tall Ship Staging Area described paragraph (a)(4) of this section in will be enforced from 6 a.m. June 16th, 2026, until 2:30 p.m. on June 19th, 2026.

(e) *General Operational Requirements for all spectator areas*. Vessel operators using any of the spectator areas established in this section shall:

(1) Ensure their vessels remain safely within the spectator area during marine events.

(2) Vessel operators shall comply with the directions and orders of the COTP, or the COTP's representatives, upon being hailed by siren, radio, flashing lights, or other means. The COTP's representative may be any Coast Guard commissioned, warrant, or petty officer or any Federal, state, or local law enforcement officer who has been designated by the COTP to act on the COTP's behalf. The COTP's designated

representative may be on a Coast Guard vessel, a Coast Guard Auxiliary vessel, a federal, state, or local law enforcement or safety vessel, or a location on shore.

(3) Vacate spectator areas after termination of their effective periods.

(4) All vessels are required to exhibit appropriate anchoring lights as prescribed by the Rules of the Road (33 CFR Subchapter E, Inland Navigation Rules) while at anchor.

(5) Do not leave vessels unattended in any spectator area at any time.

(6) Do not tie off to any aid to navigation or buoy.

(7) Maintain at least 20 feet of clearance when maneuvering between vessels.

Peggy M. Britton
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard,
Captain of the Port, Sector Virginia

[FR Doc. 2026-10159 Filed: 5/20/2026 8:45 am; Publication Date: 5/21/2026]