



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Coast Guard

33 CFR Part 117

[Docket No. USCG-2016-0434]

Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, South Branch of the Elizabeth River, Portsmouth-Chesapeake, VA

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DHS.

ACTION: Notice of deviation from drawbridge regulation.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard has issued a temporary deviation from the operating schedule that governs the Norfolk and Western railroad bridge (Norfolk Southern V6.8 Bridge) across the South Branch of the Elizabeth River, mile 3.6, at Portsmouth-Chesapeake, VA. The deviation is necessary to perform bridge maintenance and repairs. This deviation allows the bridge to remain in the closed-to-navigation position.

DATES: This deviation is effective from 7 a.m. on June 6, 2016, to 5 p.m. on June 23, 2016.

ADDRESSES: The docket for this deviation, [USCG-2016-0434] is available at <http://www.regulations.gov>. Type the docket number in the "SEARCH" box and click "SEARCH".

Click on Open Docket Folder on the line associated with this deviation.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: If you have questions on this temporary deviation, call or e-mail Hal R. Pitts, Bridge Administration Branch Fifth District, Coast Guard, telephone 757-398-6222, email Hal.R.Pitts@uscg.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Norfolk Southern Corporation, that owns and operates the Norfolk and Western railroad bridge (Norfolk Southern V6.8 Bridge), has requested a temporary deviation from the current operating regulations to install a new tie deck across the vertical lift span and under the mitre joints on the fixed approach spans. The bridge is a vertical lift draw bridge and has a vertical clearance in the closed position of 10 feet above mean high water.

The current operating schedule is set out in 33 CFR 117.997(b). Under this temporary deviation, the bridge will remain in the closed-to-navigation position from 7 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and from 12:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. from June 6, 2016 through June 9, 2016, June 13, 2016 through June 16, 2016, and June 20, 2016 through June 23, 2016. At all other times the bridge will operate per 33 CFR 117.997(b).

The South Branch of the Elizabeth River is used by a variety of vessels including deep draft ocean-going

vessels, U. S. government vessels, small commercial vessels, recreational vessels and tug and barge traffic. The Coast Guard has carefully coordinated the restrictions with waterway users.

There will be limited opportunity for vessels to transit through the bridge in the closed position during this temporary deviation. Vessels able to pass through the bridge in the closed position may do so after receiving confirmation from the bridge tender that it is safe to transit through the bridge. The bridge will be able to open for emergencies and there is no immediate alternate route for vessels to pass. The Coast Guard will also inform the users of the waterways through our Local and Broadcast Notices to Mariners of the change in operating schedule for the bridge so that vessel operators can arrange their transit 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.

Dated: May 24, 2016

Hal R. Pitts
Bridge Program Manager
Fifth Coast Guard District
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