



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Coast Guard

33 CFR Part 117

[Docket No. USCG-2016-0280]

Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Chambers Creek, Steilacoom, WA

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DHS.

ACTION: Notice of temporary deviation from regulations; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard has issued a temporary deviation from the operating schedule that governs the Chambers Creek Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad vertical lift railroad bridge across Chambers Creek, mile 0.01, near Steilacoom in Pierce County, WA. This deviation will test a change to the drawbridge operation schedule to determine whether a permanent change to the schedule is appropriate. This test deviation will change the requirement for a bridge operator, and modify the existing regulation to add an advance notification requirement for obtaining bridge openings during designated evening hours.

DATES: This deviation is effective from Midnight (12:01) on December 28, 2016 to Midnight (11:59) on June 23, 2017.

Comments and related material must reach the Coast Guard on or before June 15, 2017.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by docket number USCG-2016-0280 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 temporary deviation, call or e-mail Mr. Steven Fischer, Bridge Administrator, Thirteenth Coast Guard District; telephone 206-220-7282, e-mail Steven.M.Fischer3@uscg.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background, Purpose and Legal Basis

The Chambers Creek Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad vertical lift railroad bridge across Chambers Creek, mile 0.01, near Steilacoom in Pierce County, WA, has a vertical clearance of 10ft in the closed-to-navigation position, and 50ft of vertical clearance in the open-to-navigation position (reference plane is MHW elevation of 12.2 feet). The bridge currently operates under 33 CFR 117.5.

The bridge owner, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad, has observed minimal to no usage of the drawbridge between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., and has requested to test this schedule to see if it better balances the needs of marine and rail traffic. The USCG conducted a test deviation from July 1, 2016 to December 27, 2016. However, only one bridge opening request was received during that time, and a quantitative ruling could not be made from the lack of data. The following facts support BNSF's proposal: (1) over the last 6 years only 2% of the subject bridge lifts have occurred between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., which equates to approximately 5 openings a year, (2) from February 2009 to June 2015 there were 1932 total openings of which only 40 occurred between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., and (3) the navigation traffic consists primarily of the tenants of Chambers Bay marina (recreational users) that are members of the Chambers Bay Boating Association.

The Coast Guard is publishing this temporary deviation to test the proposed schedule change to determine whether a permanent change to the schedule is appropriate to better balance the needs of marine and rail traffic. Under this temporary deviation, in effect from Midnight (12:01) on December 28, 2016 to Midnight (11:59) on June 23, 2017, the subject bridge shall open on signal, except from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. the draw shall open on signal if at least 4 hours notice is given. The bridge will be required to open as soon as possible, no later than 1 hour after notification, for vessels engaged in emergency response.

The Coast Guard will inform the users of the waterways of this temporary deviation through our Local and Broadcast Notices to Mariners and through direct outreach with the Chambers Creek Boating Association so that vessel operators can arrange their transits to minimize any impact caused by the temporary deviation. Vessels able to pass underneath the bridge in the closed-to-navigation position may do so at any time. 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, indicate the specific section of this document to which each comment applies, and provide a reason for each suggestion or recommendation.

We encourage you to submit comments through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>. If your material cannot be submitted using

<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 personal information you have provided. For more about privacy and the docket, you may review a Privacy Act notice regarding the Federal Docket Management System in the March 24, 2005, issue of the Federal Register (70 FR 15086).

Documents mentioned in this notice, and all public comments, are 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: December 19, 2016

Steven M. Fischer
Bridge Administrator
Thirteenth Coast Guard District

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