Safe Navigation Guidelines for Tampa Bay, Vessels of Concern

Vessel of Concern (VOC) is defined as a vessel carrying Especially Hazardous Cargos or of a class type, with a certain size or maneuvering characteristics, that requires special handling while transiting within Tampa Bay.

This protocol addresses the arrival and departure of a single VOC as well as the arrival and departure of multiple VOC(s) on the same calendar day based on local time, therefore it is essential that all affected vessel traffic adhere to the following vessel traffic protocol. This protocol does not supersede or negate security zone regulations established by reference (a) of COTP Policy Letter 01-17 Change 1.

Requirements Common to All VOC Movements:

Except as follows, all transits will be one way, with no meeting or passing between Mullet Key Channel Buoys 23/24 and Port Tampa Bay Berth 272.

Gadsden Point Cut Channel and Mullet Key Channel west of LB 23/24 may be used for passing arrangements as follows:

a. A single VOC may only meet a maximum of two opposing vessels (no hawser tows unless tug master and pilot make prior passing arrangements) when forecasted, sustained winds are predicted to be 15 knots or less and reasonable visibility (no fog or heavy rain) is predicted. Only one opposing vessel shall plan on meeting two VOCs in convoy.

b. A single VOC may meet a maximum of one opposing vessel (no hawser tows unless tug master and pilot make prior passing arrangements) when forecasted, sustained winds area predicted to be between 16 and 20 knots and reasonable visibility (no fog or heavy rain) is predicted. Only one opposing vessel should plan on meeting two VOCs in convoy.

All vessels should give the Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service (CVTS), 24- and 4- hour notices prior to arrival at the sea buoy and 4- and 2- hour notices prior to departure from berth. Vessel operators who foresee a conflict with scheduled movements must contact the CVTS.

Especially Hazardous Cargos:

The Owner, master, agent, or person in charge of a vessel or barge, loaded with EHCs, shall report the following information to CVTS Tampa Bay at least twenty-four hours before entering Tampa Bay or its approaches, shifting, or departing Tampa Bay:

a. Name and country of registry of the vessel or barge;

b. The name of the port or place of departure;

c. The name of the port or place of destination;

d. The estimated time that the vessel is expected at Egmont Channel Lighted Buoys "9" and "10" to begin its transit of Tampa Bay (moving security zones and procedures are established for all waters, from surface to bottom, within a 500-yard radius);

e. The cargo carried and amount.

Cruise Ships:

The following applies to cruise ships measuring 855' LOA, 106' Beam, and 70,000 GRT or greater:

a. Single Cruise Ship:

1. Cruise ships that meet the aforementioned criteria shall arrive at the "T" Buoy at 0300 for a 0300-0500 start-up window depending on traffic, with an expected docking time between 0630 and 0830. Start-up for the cruise ship shall be adjusted, within the window, to allow for movement of other commercial vessels that are restricted in sailing by tide or current, as long as such movement does not cause the cruise ship to deviate the window. If the arrival time is changed due to exceptional circumstances, the cruise ship will be allowed to reestablish its arrival time. The cruise ship must notify CVTS no later than 1200 the day prior to the scheduled arrival date with its reestablished arrival time. Any deviation greater than 30 minutes from the reestablished arrival time will move the cruise ship in line with other traffic that has reported to the CVTS.

2. The departure window will be no earlier than 1530 and no later than 1730 under favorable weather conditions. The cruise ship must notify the CVTS no later than 1200 with a departure time for that day. Any deviation greater than 30 minutes from that day's established departure time will move the cruise ship departure time in line with other traffic that has reported to the CVTS. If the departure time is delayed due to exceptional circumstances, the cruise ship will be allowed to reestablish its departure time. Any deviation greater than 30 minutes from the reestablished departure time will move the cruise ship in line with other traffic that has reported to the CVTS.

b. Multiple Cruise Ships:

1. The cruise ships arrive at the "T" Buoy at 0300 for a 0300-0500 start-up window depending on traffic, with an expected docking time of 0630-0830. The cruise ships will be expected to coordinate arrival so that they can convoy together, within the window, at a distance established by the pilots on each vessel. Start-up for the cruise ships shall be adjusted, within the window, to allow for movement of other commercial vessels that are restricted in sailing by tide or current, as long as such

movement does not cause the cruise ships to deviate the window. If one or more of the cruise ships' arrival times are changed due to exceptional circumstances, the cruise ships will be given the opportunity to reestablish an arrival time. The cruise ships must notify CVTS no later than 1200 the day prior to the scheduled arrival date with their reestablished arrival times. Any deviation greater than 30 minutes from the reestablished arrival time will move the cruise ships in line with other traffic that has reported to the CVTS.

2. Upon departure, the cruise ships will convoy together during a departure window no earlier than 1530 and no later than 1730 under favorable weather conditions. The cruise ships must notify the CVTS no later than 1200 with a departure time for that day. Any deviation greater than 30 minutes by any cruise ship from its established departure time will move the cruise ship in line with other traffic that has reported to the CVTS. If the cruise ship's departure time is delayed due to exceptional circumstances, the cruise ship will be allowed to reestablish its departure time within the 30-minute convoy requirement. Any deviation greater than 30 minutes from the reestablished departure time will move the delayed cruise ship in line with other traffic that has reported to the CVTS.

3. Vessels at berths in Ybor Channel shall enter and depart in a sequence coordinated by the pilots onboard.

c. Additional Requirements for Cruise Ships Measuring 900' LOA, 106' Beam, and 85,000 GRT or Greater:

The requirements in this section are in addition to the requirements listed above for all cruise ships.

1. During sustained winds of 20 knots or less, as measured at Terminal 2, Seabulk Towing, or Peter O. knight Airport, the vessel may transit Sparkman Channel.

2. During Sustained winds of 21 to 25 knots, as measured at Terminal 2, Seabulk Towing, or Peter O. knight Airport, the vessel may transit Sparkman Channel with the mutual agreement of the master and pilot taking into consideration variables, such as wind direction, tug availability, vessels at berth along Sparkman Channel, etc.

3. During Sustained winds of 26 to 30 knots, as measured at Terminal 2, Seabulk Towing, or Peter O. knight Airport, the vessel may transit from the "T" Buoy to East Bay only.

An alternative berth will be identified and communicated to the pilot and master of the vessel prior to the inbound transit.