



**MARINE SAFETY AND SECURITY
INFORMATION BULLETIN
(MSIB) 15-02**



February 13, 2015

U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Coast Guard Sector San Francisco

Harbor Safety Committee Guidelines for Navigating in Reduced Visibility

This bulletin promulgates updated Harbor Safety Committee Guidelines for Navigating in Reduced Visibility (enclosure 1). All Harbor Safety Committee Guidelines and associated Critical Maneuvering Areas (CMAs) will be monitored and enforced by Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) San Francisco. This bulletin cancels and supersedes Sector San Francisco MSIB 09-01 and MSIB 13-02.

The Harbor Safety Committee Guidelines for Navigating in Reduced Visibility provide guidance for vessels planning or executing a voyage in the San Francisco Bay and Delta Region during periods of reduced visibility. The Guidelines identify 10 CMAs within the Bay in which specific restrictions apply. A CMA is defined as a location within the San Francisco Bay and Delta Region where additional standards of care are required due to the restrictive nature of the channel, proximity of hazards, or the prevalence of adverse currents. The dynamic and unpredictable nature of visibility conditions in the San Francisco Bay can introduce uncertainty and additional risk when transiting these areas. All mariners should refer to enclosure 1 for specific guidance.

Mariners are to comply at all times with the International Regulations for Avoiding Collisions at Sea (COLREGS) and all applicable VTS regulations (33 CFR 161). For additional information or guidance please contact the Sector San Francisco Chief of Waterways Management at (415) 399-7401.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "G. G. Stump", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

G. G. STUMP
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Captain of the Port San Francisco

Enclosure: (1) Harbor Safety Committee Guidelines for Navigating in Reduced Visibility

Harbor Safety Committee Guidelines for Navigating in Reduced Visibility

General Guidelines for All Vessels

These guidelines should be used by the mariner when planning, initiating and transiting on the navigable waters of the San Francisco Bay and Delta Region. Nothing in this guidance precludes vessel Masters, Pilots, and operators from taking proactive measures to ensure the safety of their vessel at all times.

Mariners are to comply with the requirements of the International Regulations for Avoiding Collisions at Sea (COLREGS) at all times.

Critical Maneuvering Areas (CMA): Critical Maneuvering Areas (CMA) are locations within the San Francisco Bay and Delta Region where additional standards of care are required due to the restrictive nature of the channel, proximity of hazards, or the prevalence of adverse currents. The dynamic and unpredictable nature of visibility conditions in the San Francisco Bay can introduce uncertainty and additional risk when transiting these areas.

Guidelines for Large Vessels, Tugs with Tows > 1600 GT, and all Tugs with Tows in Petroleum Service Navigating in Reduced Visibility

Applicability: These guidelines apply to the following:

- Large Vessels (power driven vessels of 1600 gross tons or more)
- Tugs with tows of 1600 gross tons or more
- **All tugs with tows in petroleum service.**

Vessels to which this guidance applies should comply with the following visibility-related guidelines when operating in the San Francisco Bay and Delta Region (the Bay):

1. Vessel Masters, Pilots and operators should at all times use proactive voyage planning to attempt to avoid CMAs during periods of reduced visibility.
2. Vessels should not transit within a CMA when visibility is less than 0.5 nautical mile and should comply with the applicable CMA guidelines listed below.
3. Vessels should expect delays at berth, anchor or sea if visibility in a CMA along their planned voyage is less than 0.5 nautical mile.
4. Vessels should make visibility reports as part of their underway report to the VTS and at any point in their transit when visibility conditions change substantially and navigation safety allows the report to be made.
5. Vessel masters, pilots or operators should notify VTS upon determination that a scheduled transit will be delayed or cancelled. If underway, they shall make a sailing plan deviation report per VTS regulations. Should a CMA-related delay introduce additional risks threatening the overall safety of the vessel or the port, then vessel Masters, Pilots, and

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operators are expected to proactively mitigate these risks through appropriate action and associated communication with VTS.

6. All vessels which encounter unexpected visibility of less than 0.5 nautical mile within a CMA are advised to exercise extreme caution during the transit.
7. **Vessels docked:** Vessels at a dock within the Bay should not commence a transit if visibility is less than 0.5 nautical mile at the dock.
8. **Vessels at anchor:** Vessels at anchor within the Bay should remain at anchor when visibility is less than 0.5 nautical mile at anchorage.
9. **Vessels proceeding to dock:** Vessels proceeding to a dock should anchor if visibility at the dock is known to be less than 0.5 nautical mile, unless, under all circumstances, proceeding to the dock is the safest option.

The following ten locations within the San Francisco Bay and Delta Region are identified by the Harbor Safety Committee as Critical Maneuvering Areas; the specific guidelines listed below apply to vessels operating in each CMA:

1. **Redwood Creek** :
 - Vessels should not transit through Redwood Creek when visibility is less than 0.5 nautical mile.
2. **San Mateo-Hayward Bridge:**
 - Vessels should not proceed southbound past San Bruno Shoal Channel Light 1 and Lighted Buoy 2 if the visibility is known to be less than 0.5 nautical mile at the San Mateo-Hayward Bridge.
 - Northbound vessels should not transit through the San Mateo – Hayward Bridge if visibility is less than 0.5 nautical mile.
3. **Islais Creek Channel** (inland from Lash Terminal Approach Lighted Buoy 2 and Lash Terminal Lighted Approach Buoy 5):
 - Vessels should not transit Islais Creek Channel when visibility is less than 0.5 nautical mile.
4. **Oakland Harbor Regulated Navigation Area (RNA):**
 - Vessels should not transit within the Oakland Harbor RNA (33CFR165.1181) when visibility is less than 0.5 nautical mile.
5. **The San-Francisco Oakland Bay Bridge (West of Treasure Island):**
 - Outbound/northbound vessels should not transit the San-Francisco Oakland Bay Bridge (West of Yerba Buena Island) when visibility is less than 0.5 nautical mile.
 - Vessels transiting the Bay Bridge CMA in any condition of reduced visibility should generally do so via the A-B or D-E span unless vessel traffic, environmental or other safety factors dictate otherwise.

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6. **Richmond Inner Harbor (inland from Lighted Buoy 2):**
 - Vessels should not transit within Richmond Inner Harbor when visibility is less than 0.5 nautical mile.

7. **Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, East Span:**
 - Southbound vessels should not proceed past Point San Pablo if visibility is known to be less than less than 0.5 nautical mile at the East Span of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.
 - Northbound vessels should not enter Southampton Shoal Channel if visibility is known to be less than less than 0.5 nautical mile at the East Span of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.

8. **Union Pacific Bridge (Benicia-Martinez Railroad Draw-Bridge):**
 - Large vessels must comply with the applicable regulations for the Benicia-Martinez Railroad Draw-bridge and RNA (33CFR165.1181e3).
 - Eastbound tugs and tows < 1600GT in petroleum service should not enter the Benicia-Martinez RNA if visibility is less than 0.5 nautical mile. If visibility reduces to less than 0.5 nautical mile at the UP Bridge after entering the RNA, vessels should not transit the bridge.
 - Westbound tugs and tows < 1600 GT in petroleum service should not proceed past Suisun Bay Channel Lighted Buoy 7 if visibility at the UP Bridge is less than 0.5 nautical mile.

9. **New York Slough, up-bound:**
 - Vessels should not proceed past the “NY” buoy marking the entrance to New York Slough when visibility is less than 0.5 nautical mile.

10. **Rio Vista Lift Bridge:**
 - Vessels should not transit the Rio Vista Lift Bridge when visibility is less than 0.5 nautical mile.

Guidelines for Tugs with Tows < 1600 GT Not in Petroleum Service Navigating in Reduced Visibility

Applicability:

These guidelines apply to Tugs with Tows < 1600GT **not in petroleum service**. (For Tugs with Tows < 1600GT in petroleum service, reference the Guidelines for Navigating in Reduced Visibility for Large Vessels, Tugs with Tows > 1600GT and all Tugs with Tows in Petroleum Service.)

Tugs with Tows < 1600 GT should comply with the following visibility-related guidelines when operating in the San Francisco Bay and Delta Region (the Bay):

1. Vessel Masters, Pilots and operators should at all times use proactive voyage planning to attempt to avoid CMAs during periods of reduced visibility.
2. Vessels should comply with the applicable CMA guidelines listed below.
3. Vessels should expect delays at berth, anchor or sea if visibility in a CMA along their planned voyage is less than 0.25 nautical mile.
4. Vessels should make visibility reports as part of their underway report to the VTS and at any point in their transit when visibility conditions change substantially and navigation safety allows the report to be made.
5. Vessel masters, pilots or operators should notify VTS upon determination that a scheduled transit will be delayed or cancelled. If underway, they shall make a sailing plan deviation report per VTS regulations. Should a CMA-related delay introduce additional risks threatening the overall safety of the vessel or the port, then vessel Masters, Pilots, and operators are expected to proactively mitigate these risks through appropriate action and associated communication with VTS.
6. All vessels which encounter unexpected visibility of less than 0.25 nautical mile within a CMA are advised to exercise extreme caution during the transit.
7. **Vessels docked:** Tugs with Tows < 1600 GT at a dock within the Bay should not commence a transit if visibility is less than 0.25 nautical mile at the dock.
8. **Vessels at Anchor:** Tugs with Tows < 1600 GT at anchor within the Bay should remain at anchor when visibility is less than 0.25 nautical mile at anchorage.
9. **Vessels proceeding to dock:** Tugs with Tows < 1600 GT proceeding to a dock should anchor if visibility at the dock is known to be less than 0.25 nautical mile, unless, under all circumstances, proceeding to the dock is the safest option.

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The following ten locations within the San Francisco Bay and Delta Region are identified by the Harbor Safety Committee as Critical Maneuvering Areas; the specific guidelines listed below apply to all Tugs with Tows < 1600 GT operating in each CMA:

1. **Redwood Creek :**
 - Tugs with Tows < 1600 GT should not transit through Redwood Creek when visibility is less than 0.25 nautical mile.
2. **San Mateo-Hayward Bridge:**
 - Tugs with Tows < 1600 GT should not proceed southbound past San Bruno Shoal Channel Light 1 and Lighted Buoy 2 if the visibility is known to be less than 0.25 nautical mile at the San Mateo-Hayward Bridge.
 - Outbound Tugs with Tows < 1600 GT should not transit through the San Mateo – Hayward Bridge if visibility is less than 0.25 nautical mile.
3. **Islais Creek Channel (inland from Lash Terminal Approach Lighted Buoy 2 and Lash Terminal Lighted Approach Buoy 5):**
 - Tugs with Tows < 1600 GT should not transit Islais Creek Channel when visibility is less than 0.25 nautical mile.
4. **Oakland Harbor Regulated Navigation Area (RNA):**
 - Tugs with Tows < 1600 GT should not transit within the Oakland Harbor RNA (33CFR165.1181) when visibility is less than 0.25 nautical mile.
5. **The San-Francisco Oakland Bay Bridge (West of Treasure Island):**
 - Outbound/northbound Tugs with Tows < 1600 GT should not transit the San-Francisco Oakland Bay Bridge (West of Yerba Buena Island) when visibility is less than 0.25 nautical mile.
 - Tugs with Tows < 1600 GT transiting the Bay Bridge CMA in any condition of reduced visibility should generally do so via the A-B or D-E span unless vessel traffic, environmental or other safety factors dictate otherwise.
6. **Richmond Inner Harbor (inland from Lighted Buoy 2):**
 - Tugs with Tows < 1600 GT should not transit within Richmond Inner Harbor when visibility is less than 0.25 nautical mile.
7. **Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, East Span:**
 - Southbound Tugs with Tows < 1600 GT should not proceed past Point San Pablo if visibility is known to be less than less than 0.25 nautical mile at the East Span of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.
 - Northbound Tugs with Tows < 1600 GT should not enter Southampton Shoal Channel if visibility is known to be less than less than 0.25 nautical mile at the East Span of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.
8. **Union Pacific Bridge ((Benicia-Martinez Railroad Draw-Bridge):**
 - Tugs with Tows < 1600GT not in petroleum service should not transit the Union Pacific bridge if visibility is less than 0.25 nautical mile.

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9. **New York Slough, up-bound:**

- Tugs with Tows < 1600 GT should not proceed past the “NY” buoy marking the entrance to New York Slough when visibility is less than 0.25 nautical mile.

10. **Rio Vista Lift Bridge:**

- Tugs with Tows < 1600 GT should not transit the Rio Vista Lift Bridge when visibility is less than 0.25 nautical mile.