

MARINE SAFETY/SECURITY
INFORMATION BULLETIN (MSIB) 18-02



September 24, 2018

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



Air Draft Situational Awareness

U.S. Coast Guard Sector San Francisco has observed a recent trend of marine casualties involving vessel allisions with overhead power lines. The Captain of the Port is releasing this bulletin as a reminder of the importance of mariners maintaining situational awareness of their vessel's air draft, including that of movable equipment onboard. Staying vigilant of overhead obstructions crossing waterways in relation to your vessel's air draft is essential to navigational safety.

Air draft (draught) is a term used to describe the distance from the top of a vessel's highest point to its waterline. Vertical clearance is the distance in excess of the air draft that allows a vessel to pass safely under a bridge or overhead obstruction. **The consequences of failing to consider air draft and to properly calculate a vessel's vertical clearance under bridges, power lines, and other obstructions encountered during a passage can be catastrophic.**

U.S. Coast Guard Sector San Francisco recommends that all vessel operators remain cognizant of their air draft at all times. More precisely, the calculation from both the vessel's highest fixed point and highest movable point to safely clear all overhead obstructions encountered while maneuvering in the San Francisco Bay Area is of paramount importance.

Additionally, it is recommended that vessel operators ensure they have the most current nautical charts and publications onboard. A link to these publications, which include authorized overhead clearances, can be found at <http://www.charts.noaa.gov/InteractiveCatalog/nrnc/shtml>.

For additional information regarding this bulletin, please contact the U.S. Coast Guard Sector San Francisco Investigations Division at SectorSF.Investigations@uscg.mil / (510) 813-9636, the Domestic Vessel Inspections Branch at SectorSF.Domestic.Insp@uscg.mil / (510)-207-1495, or the Waterways Management Division at SFWaterways@uscg.mil / (415) 871-9051.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A. J. Ceraolo".

A. J. CERAOLO
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Captain of the Port of San Francisco & Northern California
U.S. Coast Guard Sector San Francisco