Coast Guard, DHS § 164.80

(1) The material and size of the terminal gear are appropriate for the strength and anticipated loading of the towline and for the environment;
(2) Each connection is secured by at least one nut with at least one cotter pin or other means of preventing its failure;
(3) The lead of the towline is appropriate to prevent sharp bends in the towline from fairlead blocks, chocks, or tackle;
(4) There is provided a method, whether mechanical or non-mechanical, that does not endanger operating personnel but that easily releases the towline;
(5) The towline is protected from abrasion or chafing by chafing gear, lagging, or other means;
(6) Except on board a vessel towing in ice on Western Rivers or one using a towline of synthetic or natural fiber, there is fitted a winch that evenly spools and tightly winds the towline; and
(7) If a winch is fitted, there is attached to the main drum a brake that has holding power appropriate for the horsepower or bollard pull of the vessel and can be operated without power to the winch.

§ 164.76 Towline and terminal gear for towing alongside and pushing ahead.

The owner, master, or operator of each vessel towing alongside or pushing ahead shall ensure that the face wires, spring lines, and push gear used—
(a) Are appropriate for the vessel’s horsepower;
(b) Are appropriate for the arrangement of the tow;
(c) Are frequently inspected; and
(d) Remain serviceable.

§ 164.78 Navigation under way: Towing vessels.

(a) The owner, master, or operator of each vessel towing shall ensure that each person directing and controlling the movement of the vessel—
(1) Understands the arrangement of the tow and the effects of maneuvering on the vessel towing and on the vessel, barge, or object being towed;
(2) Can fix the position of the vessel using installed navigational equipment, aids to navigation, geographic reference-points, and hydrographic contours;
(3) Does not fix the position of the vessel using buoys alone (Buoys are aids to navigation placed in approximate positions either to alert mariners to hazards to navigation or to indicate the orientation of a channel. They may not maintain exact charted positions, because strong or varying currents, heavy seas, ice, and collisions with vessels can move or sink them or set them adrift. Although they may corroborate a position fixed by other means, they cannot fix a position; however, if no other aids are available, buoys alone may establish an estimated position.);
(4) Evaluates the danger of each closing visual or radar contact;
(5) Knows and applies the variation and deviation, where a magnetic compass is fitted and where charts or maps have enough detail to enable this type of correction;
(6) Knows the speed and direction of the current, and the set, drift, and tidal state for the area to be transited;
(7) Proceeds at a safe speed taking into account the weather, visibility, density of traffic, draft of tow, possibility of wake damage, speed and direction of the current, and local speed-limits; and
(8) Monitors the voyage plan required by § 164.80.

(b) The owner, master, or operator of each vessel towing shall ensure that the tests and inspections required by § 164.80 are conducted and that the results are entered in the log or other record carried on board.

§ 164.80 Tests, inspections, and voyage planning.

(a) The owner, master, or operator of each towing vessel of less than 1,600 GT shall ensure that the following tests
§ 164.80

and inspections of gear occur before
the vessel embarks on a voyage of more
than 24 hours or when each new master
or operator assumes command:

(1) Steering-systems. A test of the
steering-gear-control system; a test of
the main steering gear from the alter-
native power supply, if installed; a
verification of the rudder-angle indi-
cator relative to the actual position of
the rudder; and a visual inspection of
the steering gear and its linkage.

(2) Navigational equipment. A test of
all installed navigational equipment.

(3) Communications. Operation of all
internal vessel control communications
and vessel-control alarms, if in-
stalled.

(4) Lights. Operation of all naviga-
tional lights and all searchlights.

(5) Terminal gear. Visual inspection of
tackle; of connections of bridle and
towing pendant, if applicable; of chaf-
ing gear; and of the winch brake, if in-
stalled.

(6) Propulsion systems. Visual inspec-
tion of the spaces for main propulsion
machinery, of machinery, and of de-
vices for monitoring machinery.

(b) The owner, master, or operator of
each towing vessel of 1,600 GT or more
shall ensure that the following tests of
equipment occur at the frequency re-
quired by § 164.25 and that the following
inspections of gear occur before the
vessel embarks on a voyage of more
than 24 hours or when each new master
or operator assumes command:

(1) Navigational equipment. Tests of
onboard equipment as required by
§ 164.25.

(2) Terminal gear. Visual inspection of
tackle; of connections of bridle and
towing pendant, if applicable; of chaf-
ing gear; and of the winch brake, if in-
stalled.

(c)(1) The voyage-planning require-
ments outlined in this section do not
apply to you if your towing vessel is—

(i) Used solely for any of the fol-
lowing services or any combination
of these services—

(A) Within a limited geographic area,
such as a fleeting-area for barges or a
commercial facility, and used for re-
stricted service, such as making up or
breaking up larger tows;

(B) For harbor-assist;

(C) For assistance towing as defined
by 46 CFR 10.103;

(D) For response to emergency or pol-
lution;

(ii) A public vessel that is both
owned, or demise chartered, and oper-
ated by the United States Government
or by a government of a foreign coun-
try; and that is not engaged in com-
mercial service;

(iii) A foreign vessel engaged in inno-
cent passage; or

(iv) Exempted by the Captain of the
Port (COTP).

(2) If you think your towing vessel
should be exempt from these voyage
planning requirements for a specified
route, you should submit a written re-
quest to the appropriate COTP. The
COTP will provide you with a written
response granting or denying your re-
quest.

(3) If any part of a towing vessel’s in-
tended voyage is seaward of the base-
line (i.e., the shoreward boundary) of
the territorial sea of the U.S., then the
owner, master, or operator of the ves-
sel, employed to tow a barge or barges,
must ensure that the voyage with the
barge or barges is planned, taking into
account all pertinent information be-
fore the vessel embarks on the voyage.

The master must check the planned
route for proximity to hazards before
the voyage begins. During a voyage, if
a decision is made to deviate substan-
tially from the planned route, then the
master or mate must plan the new
route before deviating from the
planned route. The voyage plan must
follow company policy and consider the
following (related requirements noted
in parentheses):

(i) Applicable information from nau-
tical charts and publications (also see
paragraph (b) of section 164.72), includ-
ing Coast Pilot, Coast Guard Light
List, and Coast Guard Local Notice to
Mariners for the port of departure, all
ports of call, and the destination;

(ii) Current and forecast weather, in-
cluding visibility, wind, and sea state
for the port of departure, all ports of
call, and the destination (also see para-
graphs (a)(7) of section 164.78 and (b) of
section 164.82);

(iii) Data on tides and currents for
the port of departure, all ports of call,
and the destination, and the river stages and forecast, if appropriate;
(iv) Forward and after drafts of the barge or barges and under-keel and vertical clearances (air-gaps) for all bridges, ports, and berthing areas;
(v) Pre-departure checklists;
(vi) Calculated speed and estimated time of arrival at proposed waypoints;
(vii) Communication contacts at any Vessel Traffic Services, bridges, and facilities, and any port-specific requirements for VHF radio;
(viii) Any master's or operator's standing orders detailing closest points of approach, special conditions, and critical maneuvers; and
(ix) Whether the towing vessel has sufficient power to control the tow under all foreseeable circumstances.


§164.82 Maintenance, failure, and reporting.

(a) Maintenance. The owner, master, or operator of each towing vessel shall maintain operative the navigational-safety equipment required by §164.72.

(b) Failure. If any of the navigational-safety equipment required by §164.72 fails during a voyage, the owner, master, or operator of the towing vessel shall exercise due diligence to repair it at the earliest practicable time. He or she shall enter its failure in the log or other record carried on board. The failure of equipment, in itself, does not constitute a violation of this rule; nor does it constitute unseaworthiness; nor does it obligate an owner, master, or operator to moor or anchor the vessel. However, the owner, master, or operator shall consider the state of the equipment—along with such factors as weather, visibility, traffic, and the dictates of good seamanship—in deciding whether it is safe for the vessel to proceed.

(c) Reporting. The owner, master, or operator of each towing vessel whose equipment is inoperative or otherwise impaired while the vessel is operating within a Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) Area shall report the fact as required by 33 CFR 161.124. (33 CFR 161.124 requires that each user of a VTS report to the Vessel Traffic Center as soon as practicable:
1. Any absence or malfunction of vessel-operating equipment for navigational safety, such as propulsion machinery, steering gear, radar, gyrocompass, echo depth-sounding or other sounding device, automatic dependent surveillance—equipment, or navigational lighting;
2. Any condition on board the vessel likely to impair navigation, such as shortage of personnel or lack of current nautical charts or maps, or publications; and
3. Any characteristics of the vessel that affect or restrict the maneuverability of the vessel, such as arrangement of cargo, trim, loaded condition, under-keel clearance, and speed.)

(d) Deviation and authorization. The owner, master, or operator of each towing vessel unable to repair within 96 hours an inoperative marine radar required by §164.72 shall so notify the Captain of the Port (COTP) and shall seek from the COTP both a deviation from the requirements of this section and an authorization for continued operation in the area to be transited. Failure of redundant navigational-safety equipment, including but not limited to failure of one of two installed radars, where each satisfies §164.72(a), does not necessitate either a deviation or an authorization.

1. The initial notice and request for a deviation and an authorization may be spoken, but the request must also be written. The written request must explain why immediate repair is impracticable, and state when and by whom the repair will be made.

2. The COTP, upon receiving even a spoken request, may grant a deviation and an authorization from any of the provisions of §§164.70 through 164.82 for a specified time if he or she decides that they would not impair the safe navigation of the vessel under anticipated conditions.