§ 185.304 Navigation underway.

(a) The movement of vessel shall be under the direction and control of the master or a licensed mate at all times. The master shall operate the vessel keeping the safety of the passengers and crew foremost in mind by directing the vessel in order to prevent a casualty. Special attention should be paid to:

(1) The current(s) velocity and direction of the transiting area;
(2) Tidal state;
(3) Prevailing and forecasted visibility and environmental conditions, including wind and waves;
(4) Density of marine traffic;
(5) Potential damage caused by own wake;
(6) The danger of each closing visual or radar contact;
(7) Vessel’s handling characteristics; and
(8) Magnetic variation and deviation errors of the compass.

(b) Masters of vessels not greater than 65 ft (19.8 m) in length must have means available, satisfactory to the Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI), to obtain or monitor the latest marine broadcast in order to comply with the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section.


§ 185.315 Verification of vessel compliance with applicable stability requirements.

(a) After loading and prior to departure and at all other times necessary to assure the safety of the vessel, the master shall determine that the vessel complies with all applicable stability requirements in the vessel’s trim and stability book, stability letter, Certificate of Inspection, and Load Line Certificate, as the case may be. The vessel may not depart until it is in compliance with these requirements.

(b) In order to fulfill the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section and avoid overloading the vessel, the master must take into account the total weight of passengers, crew, and variable loads.


§ 185.320 Steering gear, controls, and communication system tests.

The master of a vessel shall have examined and tested the steering gear, signaling whistle, propulsion controls, and communication systems of the vessel prior to getting underway for a voyage, except that such examination and testing need not be conducted more than once in any 24 hour period.


§ 185.330 Hatches and other openings.

(a) Except when operating on lakes, bays, and sounds, or rivers routes in calm weather, all hatches and openings in the hull, except loading doors, of a vessel must be kept tightly closed except when being used.

(b) All watertight doors in subdivision bulkheads must be kept tightly closed.
§ 185.335 Loading doors.

(a) Except as allowed by paragraph (b) of this section, the master of a vessel fitted with loading doors shall assure that all loading doors are closed and secured during the entire voyage.

(b) Loading doors, other than bow visors, may be opened when operating in protected or partially protected waters, provided the master of the vessel determines that the safety of the vessel is not impaired.

(c) For the purpose of this section, “loading doors” include all weather-tight ramps, bow visors, and openings used to load personnel, equipment, and stores, in the collision bulkhead, the side shell, and the boundaries of enclosed superstructures that are continuous with the shell of the vessel.

§ 185.340 Vessels carrying vehicles.

(a) Automobiles or other vehicles must be stowed in such a manner as to permit both passengers and crew to get out and away from the vehicles freely in the event of fire or other disaster. The decks, where necessary, must be distinctly marked with painted lines to indicate the vehicle runways and the aisle spaces.

(b) The master shall take any necessary precautions to see that automobiles or other vehicles have their motors turned off and their emergency brakes set when the vessel is underway, and that the motors are not started until the vessel is secured to the landing. In addition, a vehicle at each end of a line of vehicles or next to a loading ramp must have its wheels securely blocked, while the vessel is being navigated.

(c) The master shall have appropriate “NO SMOKING” signs posted and shall take all necessary precautions to prevent smoking or carrying of lighted or smoldering pipes, cigars, cigarettes, or similar items in the deck area assigned to automobiles or other vehicles.

(d) The master shall, prior to getting underway, ensure that vehicles are properly distributed consistent with the guidance in the vessel’s stability letter and Certificate of Inspection, if applicable.

§ 185.350 Fueling of vessels using fuel having a flash point of 43.3 °C (110 °F) or lower (such as gasoline).

A vessel must not take on fuel having a flash point of 43.3 °C (110 °F) or lower when passengers are on board.

§ 185.352 Ventilation of gasoline machinery spaces.

The mechanical exhaust for the ventilation of a gasoline machinery space, required by §182.460(a)(1)(ii) of this chapter, must be operated prior to starting gasoline engines for the time sufficient to insure at least one complete change of air in the space served.

§ 185.356 Carriage of hazardous materials.

A vessel that transports a hazardous material, listed in 49 CFR 172.101, in commerce shall ensure the material is handled and transported in accordance with 49 CFR parts 171 and 176.

Subpart D—Crew Requirements

§ 185.402 Officers.

Each officer employed on any vessel subject to this subchapter must have his or her license or merchant mariner credential onboard and available for examination at all times when the vessel is operating.