

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard is delaying the effective date of the interim rule on regatta and marine parades published in the **Federal Register** on June 26, 1996. The interim rule more precisely identifies those marine events that require a permit, those that require only written notice to the Coast Guard, and those that require neither. A change in the effective date from January 1, 1999, to January 2, 2000, is necessary to allow additional time to further assess the potential impact, if any, of the interim rule on the environment.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The interim rule published on June 26, 1996 (61 FR 33027), and delayed by documents published on November 26, 1996 (61 FR 60027), and December 29, 1997 (62 FR 67507), is effective on January 2, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Carlton Perry, Project Manager, Office of Boating Safety, Program Management Division, 202-267-0979. You may obtain a copy of the interim rule and subsequent notices by calling the U.S. Coast Guard Infoline at 1-800-368-5647 or read it on the Internet at the Web Site for the Office of Boating Safety at URL address <http://www.uscgboating.org>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On June 26, 1996, the Coast Guard published an interim rule and notice of availability of environmental assessment (CGD 95-054) entitled "Regattas and Marine Parades" in the **Federal Register** (61 FR 33027). The interim rule revised the Coast Guard's marine event regulations to eliminate unnecessary requirements while continuing to protect the safety of life. The rule more precisely identifies those events that require a permit, those that require only written notice to the Coast Guard, and those that require neither. The environmental assessment and proposed finding of no significant impact that support this rulemaking were made available to the public.

Approximately 85 comments were received in response to the interim rule and notice of availability of the environmental assessment and to the Coast Guard's previous requests for comments. Many of these comments raised concerns regarding the reporting requirements placed on the marine event sponsors and the potential environmental effects associated with changing the current regulations on regatta and marine parade permitting procedures. In addition, several comments received in response to a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) entitled "U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Protected Living Marine Resources Initiative" reiterated concerns raised by the comments on the interim rule. Based on these comments and on

the concerns raised during the ongoing consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the Coast Guard delayed the effective date of the interim rule. Because the Coast Guard has not yet completed its consultation with the FWS and NMFS or the required environmental documentation, the Coast Guard is delaying the effective date to January 2, 2000.

Accordingly, in FR Doc. 96-16319 published in the **Federal Register** on June 26, 1996, at 61 FR 33027, as amended by notices of delay of effective date published on November 26, 1996, at 61 FR 60027 and December 29, 1997, at 62 FR 67570, the effective date for the referenced interim rule is changed from January 1, 1999, to January 2, 2000.

Dated: December 21, 1998.

Ernest R. Riutta,

Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard, Assistant Commandant for Operations.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Coast Guard

33 CFR Part 117

[CGD08-98-080]

Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Upper Mississippi River

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of temporary deviation from regulations.

SUMMARY: The Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District has issued a temporary deviation from the regulations governing the operation of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific railroad bridge at Mile 1.0, Black River, at La Crosse, Wisconsin. This deviation amends the federal drawbridge operation regulations allowing the bridge owner to close the drawbridge from 12:01 a.m. on January 4, 1999, through 11:59 p.m. on February 4, 1999. This deviation is issued to allow for the removal of mechanical devices for rebuilding to avoid problems during the summer of 1999.

DATES: The deviation is effective from 12:01 a.m. on January 4, 1999, through 11:59 p.m. on February 4, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Roger K. Wiebusch, Bridge Administrator, Director, Western Rivers Operations, Eighth Coast Guard District, Bridge Branch, 1222 Spruce Street, St. Louis, MO 63103-2832; telephone: (314) 539-3900, extension 378.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific railroad bridge has a vertical clearance of 17.0 feet above low water and 4.0 feet above high water in the closed to navigation position. Navigation on the waterway consists primarily of commercial tows. This deviation has been coordinated with the commercial waterway industry, who do not object. The Canadian Pacific Railway has requested a temporary deviation from the normal operation of the bridge to remove the mechanical devices for rebuilding. This work is essential for the continued operation of the drawbridge and to avoid problems in the summer of 1999.

This deviation is for the period of 12:01 a.m. on January 4, 1999, through 11:59 p.m. on February 4, 1999. This temporary deviation allows the draw of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific railroad to remain closed to navigation. The drawbridge operation regulations, when not amended by a deviation, require that the drawbridge open on signal if at least two hours notice is given.

Dated: December 16, 1998.

Paul J. Pluta,

Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard Commander, Eighth Coast Guard District.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Coast Guard

33 CFR Part 155

46 CFR Part 32

[USCG 1998-4443]

RIN 2115-AF65

Emergency Control Measures for Tank Barges

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DOT.

ACTION: Interim rule with request for comments.

SUMMARY: This interim rule implements measures for maintaining or regaining control of a tank barge that will reduce the likelihood of a tank barge's grounding and spilling its cargo. These measures are necessary because without them a tug that loses its tow lacks ready means for regaining control of it.

DATES: This interim rule is effective March 30, 1999 except for 33 CFR 155.230(b)(1) and 46 CFR 32.15-15(e), which are effective on December 11, 2000. The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the rule is