

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Coast Guard

33 CFR Part 117

[Docket No. USCG–2017–0273]

Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, West Palm Beach, FL

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DHS.

ACTION: Notice of temporary deviation from regulations; request for comments, extension.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard has issued a temporary deviation from the operating schedule that governs the Flagler Memorial (SR A1A) Bridge, mile 1021.8, the Royal Park (SR 704) Bridge, mile 1022.6, and the Southern Boulevard (SR 700/80) Bridge, mile 1024.7, across the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, at West Palm Beach, Florida. This deviation will extend the test to change the drawbridge operation schedules to determine whether permanent changes to the schedules are needed. This deviation allows the Flagler Memorial, Royal Park and Southern Boulevard Bridges to operate on alternative schedules when the President of the United States, members of the First Family, or other persons under the protection of the Secret Service visit Mar-a-Lago. This deviation is necessary to accommodate the increase in vehicular traffic when the presidential motorcade is in transit.

DATES: This deviation is effective without actual notice from March 6, 2018 to 11:59 p.m. on May 31, 2018. For purposes of enforcement, this deviation is effective from 8 a.m. on February 27, 2018 to March 6, 2018.

Comments and related material must reach the Coast Guard on or before May 7, 2018.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by docket number USCG–2017–0273 using Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

See the “Public Participation and Request for Comments” portion of the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section below for instructions on submitting comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: If you have questions on this test deviation, call or email LT Ruth Sadowitz, Coast Guard Sector Miami, FL, Waterways Management Division, telephone 305–535–4307, email ruth.a.sadowitz@uscg.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background, Purpose and Legal Basis

On August 17, 2017, the Coast Guard published a notice of deviation from drawbridge regulation with request for comments in the **Federal Register** (82 FR 39019) to test proposed changes. Three comments were received, which were in favor of the regulation changes. Due to unanticipated delays in processing this proposed regulatory change, the Coast Guard finds it necessary to extend the test deviation to allow additional time for public comment. The changes to the operating schedules proposed in this deviation will coincide with the establishment of the proposed Presidential Security Zone (see 82 FR 28036).

When the President of the United States, members of the First Family, or other persons under the protection of the Secret Service visit Mar-a-Lago, drawbridge openings have caused traffic backups in the West Palm Beach area. The increase in traffic congestion occurs when the presidential motorcade is in transit, which closes the Southern Boulevard Bridge to vehicle and vessel traffic. This action requires through traffic to use the Flagler Memorial and Royal Park Bridges. The Mayor of Palm Beach has asked the Coast Guard and the bridge owner, Florida Department of Transportation, to test a change to the operating regulations of those bridges.

During this temporary deviation, the Flagler Memorial Bridge is allowed to remain closed to navigation from 2:15 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. with the exception of a once an hour opening at 2:15 p.m., 3:15 p.m., 4:15 p.m. and 5:15 p.m., weekdays only, if vessels are requesting an opening. The Royal Park Bridge is allowed to remain closed to navigation from 2:15 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. with the exception of a once an hour opening at 2:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m., weekdays only, if vessels are requesting an opening. At all other times the bridges will operate per their normal schedules, published in 33 CFR 117.261(u) and (v), respectively.

The operating schedule of the Southern Boulevard Bridge, which is closest to Mar-a-Lago, will be allowed to remain closed to navigation whenever the presidential motorcade is in transit. At all other times the bridge shall operate under the normal operating schedule, published in 33 CFR 117.261(w).

This test deviation will have an impact on marine traffic while alleviating some vehicle traffic backups. Tugs with tows are not exempt from this regulation. Vessels able to pass through the Flagler Memorial and Royal Park Bridges in the closed position may do so

at any time. The bridges will be able to open for emergencies. The Southern Boulevard Bridge will be under the control of the on-scene designated representative.

The Coast Guard will also inform the users of the waterways through our Local and Broadcast Notices to Mariners of the change in operating schedule for the bridge so that vessel operators can arrange their transits to minimize any impact caused by the temporary deviation.

In accordance with 33 CFR 117.35(e), the drawbridges must return to their regular operating schedules immediately at the end of the effective period of this temporary deviation. This deviation from the operating regulations is authorized under 33 CFR 117.35.

II. Public Participation and Request for Comments

We view public participation as essential to effective rulemaking, and will consider all comments and material received during the comment period. Your comment can help shape the outcome of this rulemaking. If you submit a comment, please include the docket number for this rulemaking, indicate the specific section of this document to which each comment applies, and provide a reason for each suggestion or recommendation.

We encourage you to submit comments through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>. If your material cannot be submitted using <http://www.regulations.gov>, contact the person in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section of this document for alternate instructions.

We accept anonymous comments. All comments received will be posted without change to <http://www.regulations.gov> and will include any personal information you have provided. For more about privacy and the docket, visit <http://www.regulations.gov/privacynotice>.

Documents mentioned in this notice as being available in this docket and all public comments, will be in our online docket at <http://www.regulations.gov> and can be viewed by following that website’s instructions. Additionally, if you go to the online docket and sign up for email alerts, you will be notified when comments are posted or a final rule is published.

Dated: March 1, 2018.

Barry L. Dragon,

Director, Bridge Branch, Seventh Coast Guard District.

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