



COOPERATIVE VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICE (CVTS)

TAMPA BAY, FLORIDA

USERS MANUAL

Oct 2010 1st Edition

**Serving the Port of Tampa, Port Manatee, Port of Saint Petersburg, and the
Waterways of Tampa Bay**

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How to Contact Us

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Tampa, Fl. 33605

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E-Mail: cvtstampa@tampaport.com

U.S. Coast Guard Desk (813) 242-1600
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Fax: 813-241-1810
VHF-FM Channel 12 (156.600) MHz
VHF-FM Channel 16 (156.800) MHz

About Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service Tampa Bay

The Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service (CVTS) is a partnership between the U.S. Coast Guard and the Tampa Port Authority with guidance and assistance provided by the Tampa Bay Harbor Safety and Security Committee. Its primary function is to coordinate safe and efficient vessel movements and to prevent marine accidents/ waterway incidents in Tampa Bay. In doing so we should realize a decline in the associated loss of life and damage to property/ environment. This is accomplished by coordinating vessel movements through the collection, verification, organization and dissemination of information.

The operational portion of the CVTS, the Vessel Traffic Center (VTC), is located at the Tampa Port Authority Security Operations Center. It is manned 24 hours a day by Coast Guard and Port Authority personnel. Their job is to accomplish the CVTS function by using a combination of a radio-telephone network, Automatic Identification System (AIS), low light closed circuit television and a close liaison with the local maritime community.

The Vessel Traffic Service Area (VTSA) is the designated area that the Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service manages.

Until rules regarding CVTS Tampa Bay are published in 33 CFR 161, participation in the CVTS is voluntary. However, participation is highly encouraged to facilitate the safe movement of all vessels.

Concept of Operations

Under normal conditions, the Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service (CVTS) will manage traffic by ADVISING mariners of expected traffic along their intended transits and MONITORING passing arrangements between vessels to ensure they are occurring, and can continue to occur, as intended. If the CVTS identifies a potentially unsafe situation, the CVTS will RECOMMEND the vessel(s) reconsider an intended course of action. This RECOMMENDATION is designed to heighten awareness and encourage the vessel(s) to review their actions in light of additional or improved information which the CVTS will provide. These RECOMMENDATIONS may also include an actual alternative course of action.

The CVTS will provide navigation assistance service if requested by a vessel operator. When providing this service, the CVTS contributes to the shipboard decision-making process by giving navigational information such as course and speed made good; position relative to the fairway axis and waypoints, ATON, or other landmarks; as well as the positions, intentions, and identities of surrounding traffic.

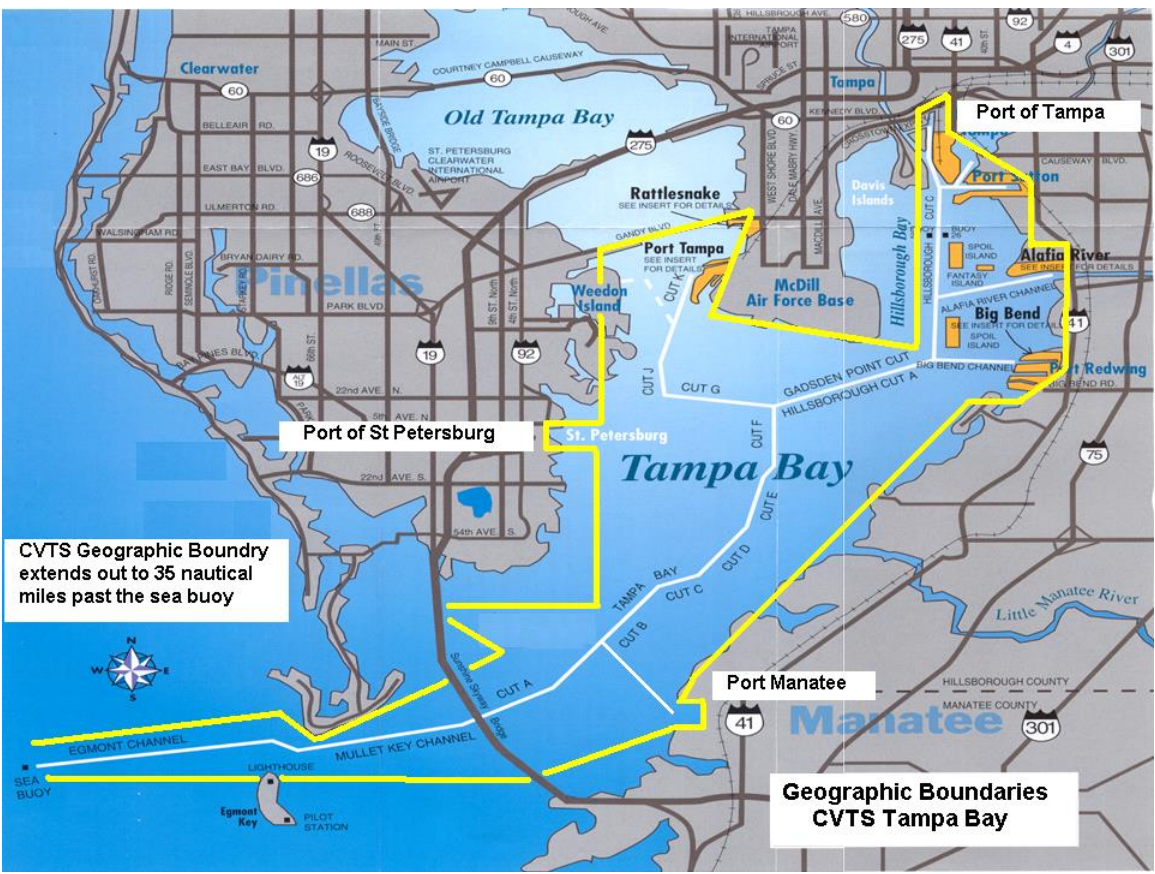
Provision of Navigation Assistance Service generally involves extracting information from the CVTS' sensors and relaying that information to the user. The CVTS operator does not apply any judgment or interpretation to the information.

If conditions dictate, the CVTS has the authority to, and may, DIRECT a vessel(s) by specifying when the vessel(s) may enter, move within or through, or depart from the Vessel Traffic Service Area. Examples include, but are not limited to, situations such as vessel congestion, availability of harbor assist tugs or rapidly deteriorating weather conditions.

It is important to note the CVTS DOES NOT DIRECT THE MANEUVERING (the ship handling required to execute the CVTS direction) of a vessel. MANEUVERING is the responsibility of the master or person in charge of a vessel.

The CVTS uses 33 CFR Part 161 as the standard for Vessel Traffic Management on the waterways of Tampa Bay and 33 CFR Part 165 to manage two Floating Safety Zones and two Regulated Navigation Areas. In addition, Port Community Information Bulletins (PCIB) have been issued by the Captain of the Port to provide mariners with additional guidelines as conditions necessitate. If, in the event, the CVTS determines an urgent navigational safety situation is developing or has the potential to develop, Coast Guard Watch Officers in the CVTS are designated as direct representatives of the Captain of the Port, and may issue a verbal Captain of the Port Order to a vessel to control the situation. The order will be followed up in writing and forwarded to the Master or Person in Charge of the vessel as soon as practicable.

Illustration of the Vessel Traffic Service Area for CVTS Tampa



Who Should Participate

1. Vessels subject to the Vessel Movement Reporting System as defined in 33 CFR 161.16.
 - Every power driven vessel of 40 meters (approximately 131 feet) or more in length, while navigating.
 - Every towing vessel of 8 meters (approximately 26 feet) or more in length, while navigating, towing alongside, astern, or pushing ahead.
 - Every vessel certificated to carry 50 or more passengers for hire, when engaged in trade.

(Continued on following page)

2. Vessels subject to the Bridge to Bridge Radiotelephone Act as defined in 33CFR 26.05.

- Every power driven vessel of 20 meters (approximately 66 feet) or more in length while navigating.
- Every vessel of 100 gross tons or more carrying 1 or more passengers for hire while navigating.
- Every towing vessel of 8 meters (approximately 26 feet) or more in length while navigating, towing alongside, astern or pushing ahead.
- Every dredge, or floating plant.

Notification Requirements Prior to Arriving/Departing Tampa Bay

All vessels shall give the Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service 24 hour and 4 hour notice prior to arrival at the sea buoy, and 4 hour and 2 hour notice prior to departure or shift from a berth, (PCIB 10-10). Notification to the CVTS can be made via telephone, fax, VHF-FM, or e-mail. The reporting form is available in Appendix I of this publication.

How to Check In

Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service, call sign “TAMPA TRAFFIC” works on Channel 12 VHF-FM and monitors channels 13 and 16 VHF-FM. Our official radio call sign, WHX362, may be used as well.

Note: All times should be local time and in the 24 hour military clock system

Initial Check-In Transiting by or Approaching Tampa Bay from Sea

When approaching a 35 nautical mile radius of the RACON “T” buoy, vessels should check-in with the Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service and report their intentions and destination. If bound for Tampa Bay, the vessel should report its estimated time of arrival (ETA) to the RACON “T” buoy or anchorage.

Check-In and Sailing Reports when Arriving/Shifting/Departing Tampa Bay

All vessels Arriving, Shifting or Departing shall provide a Sailing Plan to the CVTS as directed below. A State Piloted vessel can have the Pilot report the vessel’s Sailing Plan once on board. Under normal conditions, the Pilots Office will queue Piloted vessels for sailing order.

Sailing Plan INBOUND

Fifteen minutes from approaching the Tampa RACON “T” buoy when inbound for Tampa Bay, check in with the Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service on channel 12 and report your sailing plan with the following information:

- Vessel Name
- Current Position
- Destination
- Length/Beam
- Deepest Draft
- Estimated Time at the Sunshine Skyway Bridge
- Alongside Berth/ Anchored Time
- Tug with Tows should indicate if the barge is in the notch, on the head, or on the wire and if they will make a transition during transit.

Sailing Plan SHIFTING

15 minutes prior to getting underway from a berth to shift to another berth or Port in Tampa Bay.

- Vessel Name
- Location
- Destination
- Length/Beam
- Deepest Draft
- Alongside Berth/ Anchored Time

Sailing Plan OUTBOUND

15 minutes prior to getting underway from a berth bound for sea

- Vessel Name
- Location
- Destination
- Length/Beam
- Deepest Draft
- Estimated Time at the Sunshine Skyway Bridge
- Tug with Tows should indicate if the barge is in the notch, on the head, or on the wire and if they will make a transition during transit.
- All Clear Time Passing the Tampa “T” Buoy

The Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service may ask for additional information as required and may also ask a vessel to make additional location reports during transit for navigational safety.

Example: Vessels carrying Anhydrous Ammonia or LPG, should give their time starting safety zone and time clearing safety zone in their initial sail plan.

Post Heavy Weather and Port Closure Procedures

In the event the Tampa Bay ports and waterways have been closed due to heavy weather or other circumstances, the Port Heavy Weather Advisory Group will make recommendations to determine the priority and queue vessel movements in and out of Tampa Bay. Notification of the port's status will be broadcast VHF-FM, and hard/electronic copy will be provided to onshore facilities.

Penalty for Violation of a Captain of the Port Order

Whoever violates a Captain of the Port Order issued under the Ports and Waterways Safety Act is liable to a Civil Penalty not to exceed \$40,000. A vessel used or employed in a violation of an order is liable in rem. Each day of a continuing violation shall constitute a separate violation.

Reportable Marine Casualties

In accordance with 46 CFR Part 4, vessels shall immediately report a marine casualty as soon as it is safe enough to do so. The report can be made via channel 12 vhf-fm to the CVTS, or channel 16 to Coast Guard Sector St. Petersburg. This includes but is not limited to: any accidental grounding, or any occurrence involving a vessel which results in damage by or to the vessel, its apparel, gear, or cargo, or injury or loss of life of any person; and includes among other things, collisions, strandings, groundings, foundering, heavy weather damage, fires, explosions, failure of gear and equipment and any other damage which might affect or impair the seaworthiness of the vessel. This report does not relieve the vessel from submitting the written report required by the same regulation.

Regulated Navigation Areas in Tampa Bay

The following regulations are outlined in part to describe their requirements for vessel transits:

33 CFR 165.753 Regulated Navigation Area, Tampa Bay, FL

The master, pilot, or person in charge of any vessel of 50 meters or greater shall give a Navigational Advisory Broadcast in accordance with 47 CFR 80.331 on VHF-FM channel 13 at the following broadcast/reporting points:

- (1) prior to getting underway from any berth or anchorage;
- (2) prior to entering Egmont Channel from seaward;
- (3) prior to passing Egmont Key in any direction;
- (4) prior to transiting the Skyway Bridge in either direction;
- (5) prior to transiting the intersection of Tampa Bay Cut F Channel, Tampa Bay Cut G Channel and Gadsden Point Cut Channel;
- (6) prior to anchoring or approaching a berth for docking;
- (7) prior to tending hawser;
- (8) prior to transiting Point Pinellas Channel Light 1 in either direction.

Each Navigational Advisory required by this section shall be made in the English language and will contain the following information:

- (1) The words ``**Hello all vessels, a Navigational Advisory follows**'';
- (2) Name of vessel;
- (3) If engaged in towing, the nature of the tow;
- (4) Direction of Movement;
- (5) Present location; and,
- (6) The nature of any hazardous conditions as defined by 33 CFR 160.203.

33 CFR 165.752 Sparkman Channel Tampa, FL

(a) A regulated navigation area is established to protect vessels from limited water depth in Sparkman Channel caused by an underwater pipeline. The regulated navigation area is in Sparkman Channel between the lines connecting the following points (referenced in NAD 83):

Latitude	Longitude	Latitude	Longitude
27-56'20.5"N	082-26'42.0"W	27-56'19.3"N	82-26'37.5"W
27-55'32.0"N	082-26'54.0"W	27-55'30.9"N	82-26'49.1"W

(b) Ships requiring Federal or State pilotage shall not meet or overtake other like vessels in Sparkman Channel.

(c) Vessels having a draft of more than 35.5 feet may not transit Sparkman Channel.

(d) Vessels having a draft of 34.5 feet, but not over 35.5 feet, may transit Sparkman Channel only when the tide is at least one foot above mean low water.

(e) Vessels with a draft of 30 feet or greater shall transit as near as possible to the center of the channel.

Safety Zones in Tampa Bay

33 CFR 165.703 Safety Zone, Tampa Bay, FL

(a) A floating safety zone is established consisting of an area 1000 yards fore and aft of a loaded anhydrous ammonia vessel and the width of the channel in the following areas:

(1) For inbound tank vessels loaded with anhydrous ammonia, and bound for the NH₃ receiving terminal in Sparkman Channel or Port Sutton the safety zone starts at Tampa Bay Cut ``F" Channel from Lighted Buoys ``3F" and ``4F" and proceeds north ending at Gadsden Point Cut Lighted Buoys ``3" and ``4". The safety zone starts again at Gadsden Point Cut Lighted Buoys ``7" and ``8" and proceeds north through Hillsborough Cut ``C'.

(i) For vessels bound for R. E. Knight Pier at Hookers Point the safety zone includes, in addition to the area in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, Hillsborough Cut ``D" Channel to the southern tip of Harbor Island.

(ii) For vessels bound for the anhydrous ammonia receiving terminals to Port Sutton the safety zone includes, in addition to the area in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, Port Sutton Channel.

(2) For outbound tank vessels loaded with anhydrous ammonia the safety zone is established when the vessel departs the receiving terminal and continues through the area described in paragraph (a)(1) of this section.

(3) The floating safety zone is disestablished when the anhydrous ammonia carrier is safely moored at the anhydrous ammonia receiving facility.

(b) All vessels over 5000 gross tons intending to pass anhydrous ammonia vessels moored in Port Sutton, and all vessels intending to moor in the R. E. Knight facilities at Hookers Point while an anhydrous ammonia vessel is moored in this facility, must give 30 minutes notice to the anhydrous ammonia vessel so it may take appropriate safety precautions.

33 CFR 165.704 Safety Zone, Tampa Bay, FL

(a) A floating safety zone is established consisting of an area 1000 yards fore and aft of a loaded Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) vessel and the width of the channel in the following areas. Any vessels desiring to enter the safety zone must obtain authorization from the Captain of the Port Tampa.

(1) For vessels loaded with LPG and bound for the LPG receiving terminal in Port Sutton the safety zone starts at Tampa Bay Cut ``F" Channel from Lighted Buoys ``3F" and ``4F" and proceeds north ending at Gadsden Point Cut Lighted Buoys ``3" and ``4". The safety zone starts again at Gadsden Point Cut Lighted Buoys ``7" and ``8" and proceeds north through Hillsborough Cut ``C", Port Sutton Entrance Channel, and ends at the Port Sutton LPG facility.

(2) For vessels loaded with LPG and bound for the LPG receiving terminal in Rattlesnake the safety zone starts at Tampa Bay Cut ``J" Channel from lighted buoy ``10J" and proceeds north through Tampa Bay Cut ``K" Channel to buoy ``11K." When a loaded LPG vessel departs the marked channel at Tampa Bay Cut ``K" buoy ``11K" en route to Rattlesnake, Tampa, FL, the floating safety zone extends 500 yards in all directions surrounding the loaded LPG vessel, until it arrives at the entrance to Rattlesnake. While the loaded LPG vessel is maneuvering in the Rattlesnake slip and until it is safely moored at the LPG facility, the floating safety zone extends 150 feet fore and aft of the loaded LPG vessel and the width of the slip. Moored vessels are allowed within the parameters of the 150-foot safety zone.

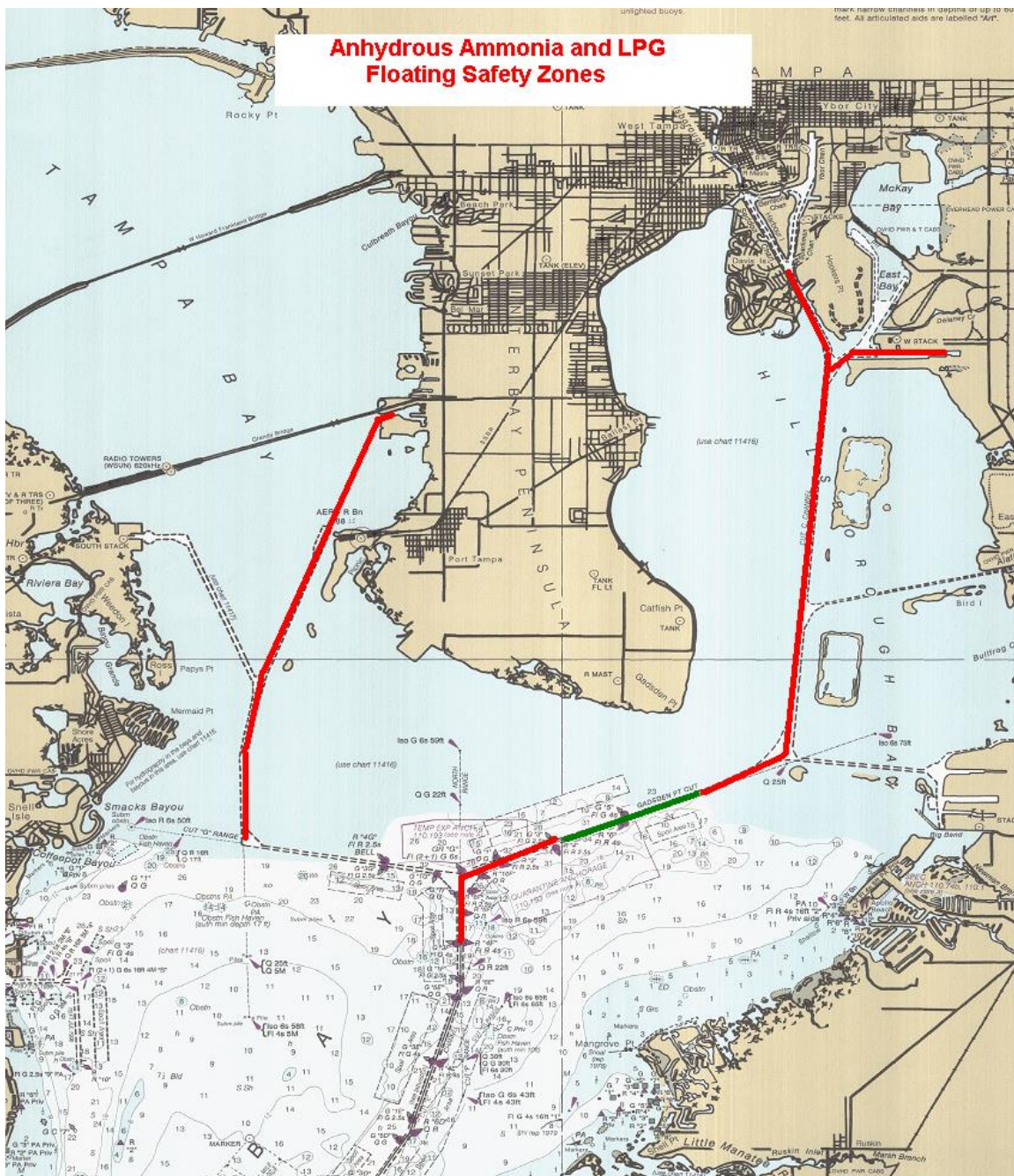
(b) The floating safety zone is disestablished when the LPG carrier is safely moored at the LPG receiving facility.

(c) For outbound tank vessels loaded with LPG, the safety zone is established when the vessel departs the terminal and continues through the area described in paragraph (a) of this section.

(d) All vessels over 5000 gross tons intending to pass LPG vessels moored in Port Sutton, and all vessels intending to pass LPG vessels moored in Rattlesnake, must give 30 minutes notice to the LPG vessel so it may take appropriate safety precautions.

(e) The general regulations governing safety zones contained in Sec. 165.23 apply.

(f) The Coast Guard Captain of the Port Tampa will notify the maritime community of periods during which these safety zones will be in effect by providing advance notice of scheduled arrivals and departures of loaded LPG vessels via a marine broadcast Notice to Mariners.



Additional Tampa Bay Navigational Guidelines

The following navigational guidelines recommended by the Tampa Bay Harbor Safety and Security Committee, have been adopted and practiced by the Captain of the Port Sector St. Petersburg, Pilots, Masters and persons in charge of vessels.

Nothing in these guidelines shall supersede or alter any applicable laws or regulations. In construing and complying with these guidelines, regard shall be had to all dangers to navigation and collisions and to any special circumstances, including the limitations of the vessels involved, which may make a departure from the guidelines necessary to avoid immediate danger.

1. Ship draft of 39'-00" (11.89M) is considered reasonable in and out of Tampa Bay at mean low low water (MLLW) and higher conditions of tide to a maximum of 41'-00" (12.50M).
2. During periods of restricted visibility, vessels should not transit the bay unless two sets of channel buoys are visible ahead. Vessels should proceed at speeds which are considered safe for existing conditions.
3. Whenever possible, vessel movement arrangements should be made via landline through the local agents. If time is of the essence, arrangements may be made via radiotelephone.
4. When arranging a movement between a vessel in port and a vessel which has not yet entered the port (at the sea buoy), a general rule of precedence is that under normal circumstances outbound vessels have priority with the following exceptions:
 - a. Within the port area, incoming and outgoing vessels restricted by tide should split time, with no more than two vessels trying to make the tide.
 - b. If a vessel having priority is unable to clear the berth or enter port within 30 minutes of the general time agreed upon, the vessel loses priority.
 - c. All meeting and passing situations should be made at the safest possible locations, with due regard to the size of the vessels, width of the channel, and existing conditions. Both vessels should adjust speed to accomplish this safely. Vessels least affected by existing conditions (current and wind) should give way to the other. Light draft vessels should give way to deep draft vessels if conditions permit.
 - d. When one vessel is underway inbound and the other vessel is safely moored at berth, the vessel at the berth should remain alongside if no safe passing area can be agreed upon.

Tampa Bay Special Navigational Requirements for Vessels of Concern (VoC)

Ref: Port Community Information Bulletin # 18-06

(Additional effective PCIB's are accessible through the CG Homeport Web site)

Classes or types of vessels, identified as a result of the Tampa Bay Pilots risk analysis, that require special handling (one way traffic) within Tampa Bay shall do so in accordance with a vessel traffic protocol developed by the Tampa Bay Harbor Safety and Security Committee and accepted by the U.S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port. This protocol addresses the arrival and departure of a single Vessel of Concern (VoC) as well as the arrival and departure of multiple VoC's on the same calendar day based on local time. This PCIB supercedes and cancels PCIB 12-06 "Vessel of Concern Traffic Protocol".

Single VoC Transits:

The VoC vessel arrives at "T" buoy at 0200 for a 0200 – 0400 start up depending on traffic with an expected docking time between 0530 and 0730.

If the VoC arrival time is changed due to some exceptional weather circumstances, the VoC will be given the opportunity to reestablish its arrival time. The VoC must notify the Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service (CVTS) no later than 1200 of the day prior to the scheduled day of arrival with its reestablished arrival time.

Any deviation more than 30 minutes from the reestablished arrival time moves the VoC in line with other traffic that has reported in to the CVTS. The departure window will be no earlier than 1600 and no later than 1730 under favorable weather conditions. The VoC must notify the CVTS no later than 1200 with a departure time for that day. Any deviation more than 30 minutes from that day's established departure time moves the VoC departure time in line with other traffic that has reported in to the CVTS. If the VoC departure time is delayed due to some exceptional weather circumstances, the VoC will be given the opportunity to reestablish its departure time. Any deviation more than 30 minutes from the reestablished departure time moves the VoC in line with other traffic that has reported in to the CVTS.

Multiple VoC Transits:

The VoC's arrive at "T" bouy at 0200 for a 0200 – 0400 startup depending on traffic with an expected docking time of 0530 – 0800. The VoC's will be expected to coordinate arrival so that they can convoy together within the protocol time frame at a distance established by the Pilots on board each vessel. If one or both of the VoC's arrival time is changed due to some exceptional weather circumstances, the VoC(s) will be given the opportunity to reestablish arrival time. The VoC(s) must notify the CVTS no later than 1200 of the day prior to the scheduled day of arrival with its reestablished arrival time(s). Any deviation more than 30 minutes from the reestablished arrival time moves the VoC(s) in line with other traffic that has reported in to the CVTS. Upon departure, the VoC's will convoy together with a departure window no earlier than 1600 and no later than 1730 under favorable weather conditions.

Vessels at berths in Ybor Channel shall depart in a “Last in, First Out” sequence which will be coordinated by the Pilots on board.

The VoC’s must notify the CVTS no later than 1200 with a departure time for that day. Any deviation more than 30 minutes by either VoC from that day’s established departure time moves the delayed VoC departure time in line with other traffic that has reported in to the CVTS. If the VoC’s departure time is delayed due to some exceptional weather circumstances, the VoC’s will be given the opportunity to reestablish their departure time within the 30 minute convoy requirement.

Any deviation more than 30 minutes from the re-established departure time moves the delayed VoC in line with other traffic that has reported in to the CVTS.

Requirements common to all VoC movements:

All vessels should give the CVTS 24 and 4 hour notice prior to arrival at the sea buoy or 4 and 2 hour notice prior to departure from a berth.

Vessel operators who foresee a conflict with scheduled VoC movement must contact the CVTS to plan movements.

All transits of the VoC’s will be one way with no meeting or passing between Mullet Key Channel buoys 23/24 and the Tampa Port Authority berth 272 unless the other vessel’s draft allows it passage outside the channel or by mutual agreement between vessel master/pilot.

The use of Gadsden Point Cut Channel may be used for a single VoC to meet opposing traffic (no hawser tows unless the tow agrees to depart the channel) when forecast sustained wind is predicted to be 15 knots or less and reasonable visibility (no fog or heavy rain) is predicted. Only one opposing vessel shall plan on meeting two VoCs in convoy at the Gadsden Point Cut Channel.

It is essential that all affected vessel traffic adhere to the vessel traffic protocol. This protocol will remain in effect until rescinded by the U.S. Coast Guard Captain of the Port or until VoCs no longer call on the Port of Tampa.

Anchorage in Tampa Bay

Mariners should remember that in accordance with 33 CFR 110.193, the only anchorages in Tampa Bay are explosive anchorages, to be used only by vessels waiting to load or unload explosives. However, vessels wanting to anchor inside Tampa Bay in the explosive, temporary explosive or Quarantine anchorages may be authorized to do so for up to 72 hours with prior approval from CVTS Tampa Bay. Vessels should be aware they may be ordered out when circumstances require. (i.e. engine/ steering casualty or a tropical storm/ hurricane is approaching).

List of Acronyms

COTP	Captain of the Port
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CVTS	Cooperative Vessel Traffic Service
ETA	Estimated Time of Arrival
VMRS	Vessel Movement Reporting System
VOC	Vessel of Concern
VTs	Vessel Traffic Services
VTSA	Vessel Traffic Service Area
VTC	Vessel Traffic Center