



# U.S. Coast Guard District 8



The 2025 Hurricane Season extends from June 1, 2025 through November 30, 2025. Tropical storms and hurricanes often develop with little warning. Extensive damage to small craft often results in loss of life. All mariners, particularly operators of small fishing vessels, are reminded that advanced planning which might prevent loss of vessel and crew should include:

- a) Instruction of crew and passengers in location of emergency equipment and emergency procedures.
- b) Pre-sailing check of vessel, machinery, and equipment for seaworthiness.
- c) Installation of strong ground tackle.
- d) Review of storm center evacuation procedures.
- e) Knowledge of the nearest hurricane shelter or port of refuge.
- f) Constant radio watch on VHF-FM Channel 16 and frequent monitoring of VHF-FM Weather Channel for National Weather Service Broadcasts.

## **Aids to Navigation/Wrecks/Obstructions**

As a result of tropical storms and hurricanes, aids to navigation along the Gulf Coast and on structures in the Gulf of America and surrounding waters may become damaged or destroyed. Buoys may move from assigned positions, be damaged, extinguished, sunk, or otherwise made inoperative. Mariners should not solely rely upon the position or operation of an aid to navigation, but should employ such other available methods of determining position. Wrecks, submerged obstructions and pipelines may move from charted locations or become uncovered due to the force of storm surges. Storm surges and winds may also create shoals. The U.S. Aids to Navigation System marking wrecks and obstructions is intended for use with nautical charts. The exact meaning of a particular aid to navigation may not be clear to the mariner without referencing a nautical chart. Virtually all U.S. lateral marks are located in International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) Region B and follow the traditional 3R rule of red, right, returning. In U.S. waters, returning from seaward and proceeding towards the head of navigation, is generally considered as moving westerly along the Gulf Coast. Mariners should exercise caution and report aid to navigation discrepancies and hazards to navigation to the nearest U.S. Coast Guard unit.

## **Locks/Bridges/Navigation Structures**

Drawbridges, locks, and navigation structures along the coast may deviate from normal operating procedures in preparation for heavy weather events. Some structures may be unable to open because of high winds, high water levels, or to facilitate evacuation of land traffic. Mariners will be given as much notice as possible when structures are to be closed; however, these structures may close on short notice and well in advance of the storm. Mariners should anticipate these closures and are urged to seek safe harbor as soon as possible.

## **Ports/Waterways**

As tropical weather approaches the Gulf Coast, all potentially affected U.S. Coast Guard Captains of the Port (COTP) will issue a series of Port Conditions to promote the safety of life, the environment, and the viability of the Marine Transportation System. Port Conditions are issued on a set timeline prior to the arrival of gale force winds associated with a tropical activity and identify the status of the port. Timelines associated with each port condition are subject to local modifications based upon circumstances, but are most typically issued as follows:

<b>Port Condition</b>	<b>Timeline</b> (prior to the arrival of gale force winds)	<b>Port Status</b>
WHISKEY	72 hours in advance	OPEN to all commercial traffic.
X-RAY	48 hours in advance	OPEN to all commercial traffic.
YANKEE	24 hours in advance	RESTRICTED, with vessel traffic control measures in effect.
ZULU	12 hours in advance	CLOSED to all vessel traffic, except for movements or activities specifically authorized by the COTP.

Additional requirements or actions to address port-specific safety concerns will be issued by the COTP in conjunction with each Port Condition. After the passing of a hurricane, local COTPs will issue updates regarding the port status via Broadcast Notice to Mariners and MSIBs. Mariners are urged to monitor all U.S. Coast Guard and National Weather Service notices and radio traffic closely throughout the Hurricane Season.