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(04/2025)

GUIDELINES FOR NAVIGATION UNDER THE CONFEDERATION BRIDGE

REVISION 5
APRIL 2025



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Last Review				
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Revision No.	Date of Issue	Affected Pages	Author(s)	Brief Description of Change
1	December 2009	All	MM	Change in template
2	January 2011	5-6	Natalia Bass	Subsection 8.1 "Regional Director, Marine" was changed to "Regional Director, Marine Safety" (two occurrences) Subsection 8.2 "Regional Director, Marine" was changed to "Regional Director, Marine Safety" and "Regional Director, Marine Security" was changed to "Regional Director, Marine Safety".
3	2022	All	Paul Merriam	Many revisions throughout the document Section 8 deleted
4	November 2024	All	AMSE HQ	Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated TP template and format applied to document. • Update document information section page i • Add <i>General Pilotage Regulations</i> to page 1, section 1.4 • Overall review of the document
5	April 2025	All	AMSE HQ	Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update Section 5.3 • Add Section 5.4 • Update document format

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Confederation Bridge (the Bridge) provides a road transportation link between Canada's mainland and the island province of Prince Edward Island pursuant to the *Prince Edward Island Terms of Union*. The Northumberland Strait (the Strait) is a navigable body of water. The Bridge was built in accordance with permits issued pursuant to provisions of the [Canadian Navigable Waters Act](#). This act preserves the navigational rights of vessels that have traditionally used these waters.
- 1.2 Vessels of over 1,500 Gross Tonnage (GT) are required to utilize the central navigation channel (as defined in 3.1 below). Local vessels (as defined in 3.3 below) 1,500 GT and under, that are engaged in local traffic (as defined in 3.3 below), may utilize the designated "near shore" navigation channels (as defined in 3.2 below) located on either side of the Strait.
- 1.3 The Bridge has been designed to meet a government prescribed Safety Index of 4.25 - this is also known as the Beta (β) factor. The Safety Index is affected by the frequency, speed and displacement of the vessels that use the Strait.
- 1.4 The central navigation channel is within the Confederation Bridge Compulsory Pilotage Area established in the [General Pilotage Regulations](#) (made under the [Pilotage Act](#)). Canadian vessels over 1,500 GT and foreign vessels, are subject to compulsory pilotage in the Confederation Bridge Compulsory Pilotage Area.
- 1.5 The Strait is a body of water that is subject to seasonal ice conditions. Transport Canada (TC) and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans through the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) may declare the Strait an active ice control zone and when conditions warrant, prohibit entry of vessels into the Strait pending the arrival of an icebreaker escort. During this period, and because of the presence of the Bridge, vessels are not able to utilize the "shore leads" (as defined in 3.7) within 10 nautical miles on each side of the Bridge. When the "shore leads" are not able to be utilized, vessels should use the central navigation channel to protect both the vessels and the pier(s) from damage due to allisions. Vessels intending to use the central navigation channel and transit under the Bridge will require icebreaker support 10 nautical miles on each side of the Bridge.
- 1.6 Vessels over 20 meters or more in length transiting the Strait in the central navigation channel and in the "near shore" navigation channels are regulated by the [Vessel Traffic Services Zones Regulations](#).
- 1.7 When the Strait is declared an active ice zone and ice is present in the central navigation channel, the transiting vessel must be escorted by an icebreaker.

1.8 Any inquiries or comments on these Guidelines should be addressed to:

Executive Director, Navigation Safety and Oversight Standards (AMSE)
 Transport Canada Marine Safety and Security
 Tower C, 330 Sparks Street
 9th Floor Ottawa,
 Ontario K1A 0N8

2.0 SHORT TITLE

These Guidelines may be cited by the short title “The Confederation Bridge Navigation Guidelines”.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.1 For the purpose of these Guidelines:

“**Central navigation channel**” is located between pier P21 located at position 46° 12’ 38.99” N, 63° 45’ 04.02” W and pier P22 located at position 46° 12’ 32.85” N, 63° 45’ 11.62” W. These piers are identified on each side by fairway buoys, RACONs, day beacons, red and green pier lights, center span lights and sector lights. For additional details, see the Annex of these Guidelines, CCG publication *List of Lights, Buoys and Fog Signals* and on Canadian chart number 4406.

3.2 The “near shore” navigation channels are designated between piers P3 and P4, P4 and P5, P42 and P43, P43 and P44. Piers are located as follows:

P3) 46° 14’ 33.29” N, 63° 42’ 53.76” W
 P4) 46° 14’ 26.92” N, 63° 43’ 00.96” W
 P5) 46° 14’ 20.54” N, 63° 43’ 08.16” W

P42) 46° 10’ 36.07” N, 63° 47’ 53.11” W
 P43) 46° 10’ 30.16” N, 63° 48’ 01.09” W
 P44) 46° 10’ 24.23” N, 63° 48’ 09.02” W

3.3 “**Local traffic**” and “**local vessels**” refer to any vessels under 1,500 GT operating from ports located in the Strait.

3.4 “**Dead ship**” includes a vessel which is unable to proceed under its own power, to maneuver with its own steering gear, to work its own anchors, has any part of the hull structure removed or under repair which may affect the watertight integrity of the ship.

3.5 “**Condition of class**” are the requirements of the vessel to the effect that specific measures, repairs, surveys etc. are to be carried out within a specific time limit in order to retain Classification.

3.6 “**Escort tug**” is a tug built specifically for the purpose of escorting vessels and has

sufficient bollard pull. Able to apply emergency steering or braking forces to an attended vessel at speeds more than 6 knots in confined channels or similar restricted spaces.

3.7 “**Shore leads**” means a lead between ice and the shore or between ice and an ice front.

4.0 APPLICATION

4.1 These Guidelines apply to all vessels intending to transit under the Bridge or navigating in its proximity.

4.2 These Guidelines are not intended to replace any applicable regulations pursuant to the [Canada Shipping Act, 2001](#) or the [Pilotage Act](#). They are intended to provide specific recommendations promoting increased safety of shipping and protection of life, property, and the marine environment.

4.3 The effective date for implementation of the Guidelines is December 2003

5.0 GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL VESSELS

5.1 Pilotage is mandatory on all vessels over 1500 GT, and in the case of a tug and tow, a combination of the Gross Tonnage of the tug and tow is used.

5.2 No vessel should transit in the central navigation channel or “near shore” navigation channels in inclement weather or ice conditions, which may hinder its navigability to such an extent that it is unable to fully control and maintain its course, speed, and directional stability during the transit.

Factors to take into consideration before and during transit in the Strait:

1. Ice.

- When the Strait is declared to be an active ice control zone by TC/CCG. All vessels seeking transit under the Bridge when ice is present in Northumberland Strait should check with CCG Ice Operations by contacting Northumberland Traffic or ECARREG Canada.
- When the Strait is declared an active ice control zone and ice is present in the central navigation channel, the vessel must be escorted by an icebreaker for the transit under the Bridge which includes 10 nautical miles on either side of the Bridge.

2. Wind

- When winds are prevailing or forecasted, ships are permitted to transit in accordance with Master or Pilot discretion, which takes into consideration the following elements: wind velocity and direction, ship draft and exposed "sail area", maximum displacement at time of transit, maximum air draft (higher high water, large tides), and maximum speed as established in this document.

3. Visibility

- Visibility not less than 1.0 nautical mile.
- 5.3 Anchoring is prohibited at all times within the following boundaries beginning at a point on the high-water mark at Cape Bruin, New Brunswick, located at latitude 46°10'58"N., longitude 63°58'42"W., as shown on Canadian Hydro-graphic Service Chart 4406, edition dated July 12, 1985; thence in a straight line to a point on the high-water mark at Fernwood, P.E.I., latitude 46°19'15"N., longitude 63°48'55"W.; thence following the high-water mark in a southerly and easterly direction to a point on the shore at latitude 46°18'30"N., longitude 63°46'09"W.; thence in a straight line to a point on the high-water mark at Botsford, N.B., latitude 46°10'01"N., longitude 63°56'00"W.; thence following the high-water mark in a northwesterly direction to the point of beginning.
- 5.4 A number of submarine cables cross Northumberland Strait close SE of the Confederation Bridge. These extend from the New Brunswick shore around Cape Tormentine to land near Port Borden, P.E.I.; some also land along the shore close west of Bells Point and caution is advised. See [Sailing Directions ALT 108 Chapter 3 Northumberland Strait, item 4](#). For information on Submarine cables see [Annual Edition of Notices to Mariners, Notice 16](#).
- 5.5 No person should navigate or operate any vessel in a manner that is dangerous to any person, property, that vessel, or any other vessel, having regard to all circumstances, including nature and condition of the waters being navigated, and use that is or might reasonably be expected to be made in those waters.
- 5.6 Vessels over 500 GT, solely propelled by sail, shall not transit the Bridge.
- 5.7 All vessels over 20 metres or more in length must comply with the [Vessel Traffic Services Zones Regulations](#).
- 5.8 All vessels of 20 metres or more in length must maintain a continuous listening watch on channel 16 and channel 12 VHF between East Point and West Point, Prince Edward Island.
- 5.9 Reports made pursuant to the [Vessel Traffic Services Zones Regulations](#), and vessels subject to the [Vessel Traffic Services Zones Regulations](#) must, when intending to proceed within 5 nautical miles of the Bridge, also report to Northumberland Traffic:
- ETA fairway buoy and confirm that Pilot has been ordered and ETA to the Pilot Station, when vessel is subject to compulsory pilotage.
 - Draft, displacement in tons, air draft and name of local agent if not registered in Canada.
 - When the vessel has a **condition of class**, accident or a malfunction of its machinery, equipment or a deficiency in its crewing that may impair its safe navigation.
 - Where an obstruction or other hazard is identified in the central navigation channel or "near shore" navigation channels.
 - In the case of a towing vessel, where the towing vessel is having or anticipating difficulty in controlling its tow.

5.10 Towing vessels:

- Must not drop anchor or anchor its tows in such a manner that they may swing across the central navigation channel.
- Only one vessel or barge must be towed under the bridge per tug.
- Must not, when engaged in arranging its tow, obstruct the navigation of other vessels.
- Must shorten its towing arrangement to the shortest extent possible without compromising safety. When the towline exceeds 75 metres, a suitably sized tug should be secured to the stern of the tow.
- **Dead ship** being towed are not permitted to transit under the Bridge.

6.0 NAVIGATION GUIDELINES FOR VESSELS OVER 1,500 GT

6.1 The navigation route for vessels over 1,500 GT transiting under the Bridge is through the “**central navigation channel**”.

6.2 Vessels should approach and follow the course line extending between the two Strait Crossing fairway buoys (private) light list numbers 1017.7 and 1017.75.

6.3 The waters 5 nautical miles either side of the Bridge are designated as an area of alternating one way traffic for vessels having a tonnage more than 1,500 GT. Except in emergencies or if required during ice breaking operations no such vessel should overtake another such vessel, meet such another vessel, “come about” or within one quarter (1/4) mile either side of the centerline of the central navigation channel.

6.4 Restrictions for vessels transiting the central navigation channel:

6.4.1 Maximum Displacement at Time of Transit

Passenger vessels : 34,000 Metric tonnes

Cargo vessels: 47,700 Metric tonnes

Vessels exceeding the above maximum displacements need to submit a risk assessment that will include the use of an **escort tug**, as defined.

If the vessel is 20% greater than the maximum displacement, then **2 such escort tugs** need to be included in the risk assessment.

The risk assessment should be submitted to the Atlantic Regional Transport Canada Marine Safety and Security Office¹ and the Atlantic Pilotage Authority **15 business days prior to transit.**

¹ Transport Canada Marine Safety and Security Atlantic Regional Office (Charlottetown, PE)
Jean Canfield Building
191 Great George Street
Charlottetown, PE

6.4.2 Maximum Speed

Passenger vessels: 11 knots over the ground within 2 nautical miles of the Bridge

Cargo vessels: 8 knots over the ground within 2 nautical miles of the Bridge

The speed of a vessel transiting may be increased when circumstances demand, and to keep the vessel on track. Speed limits are subject to enforcement actions.

6.4.3 Maximum air draft (higher high water, large tides) - 48 metres

7.0 NAVIGATION GUIDELINES FOR VESSELS 1,500 GT AND UNDER – TRANSITING THE “NEAR SHORE” NAVIGATION CHANNELS

7.1 Local vessels 1,500 GT and under, that are engaged in local traffic, may utilize the designated “**near shore**” navigation channels located on either side of the Strait.

7.2 The “**near shore**” navigation channels are designated between piers P3 and P4, P4 and P5, P42 and P43, P43 and P44. Piers are located as follows:

P3) 46° 14' 33.29" N, 63° 42' 53.76" W

P4) 46° 14' 26.92" N, 63° 43' 00.96" W

P5) 46° 14' 20.54" N, 63° 43' 08.16" W

P42) 46° 10' 36.07" N, 63° 47' 53.11" W

P43) 46° 10' 30.16" N, 63° 48' 01.09" W

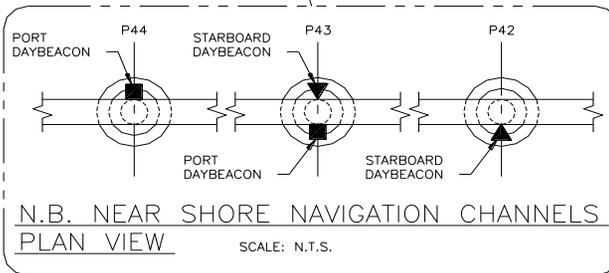
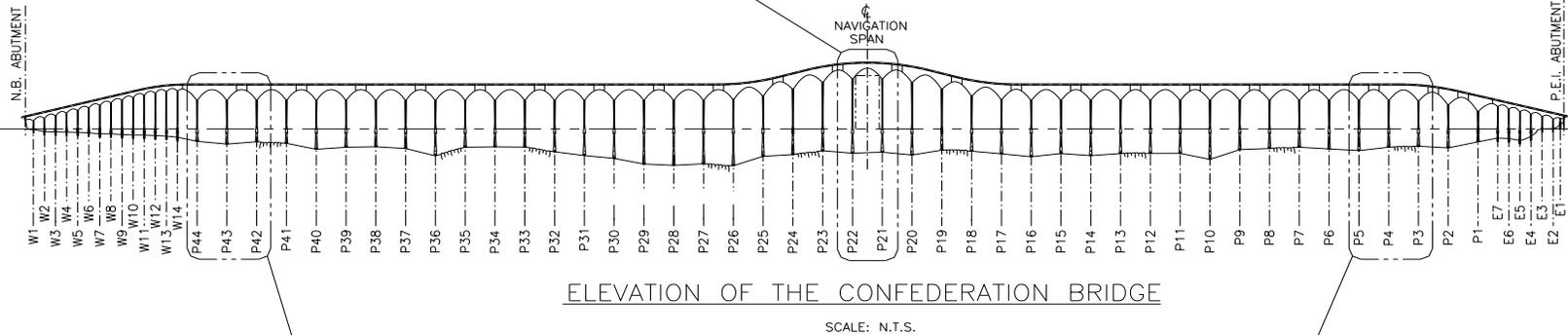
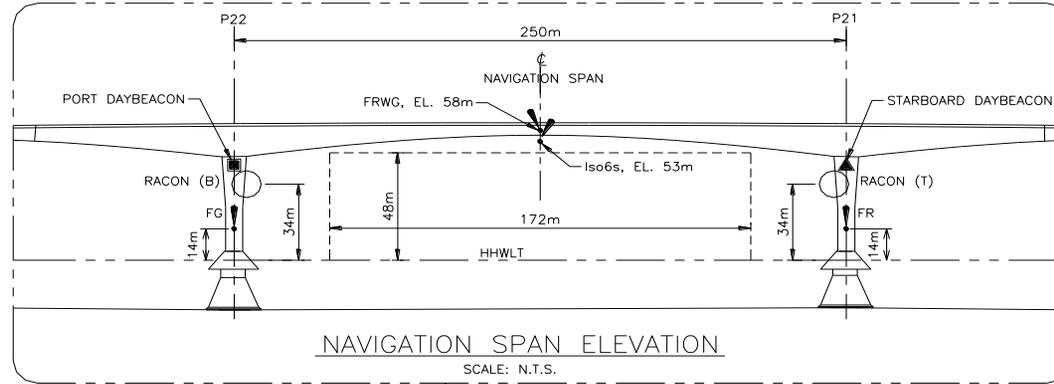
P44) 46° 10' 24.23" N, 63° 48' 09.02" W

7.3 **Restriction for vessels transiting the near shore channels:**

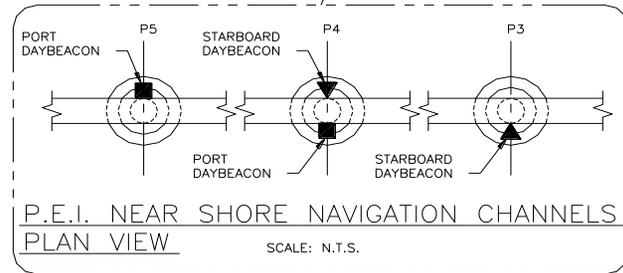
7.3.1 Maximum Speed over ground - **11 knots**

7.3.2 Maximum air draft (higher high water, large tides) - **28 metres**

ANNEX – DIAGRAM OF THE CONFEDERATION BRIDGE



PIER COORDINATES		
PIER NO.	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
P3	46° 14' 33.29" N	63° 42' 53.76" W
P4	46° 14' 26.92" N	63° 43' 00.96" W
P5	46° 14' 20.54" N	63° 43' 08.16" W
P21	46° 12' 38.99" N	63° 45' 04.02" W
P22	46° 12' 32.85" N	63° 45' 11.62" W
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ANNEX 1