

What other alternatives regarding the permitting of regatta and marine parades to ensure the safety of life and protection of the environment should the Coast Guard consider?

What other factors or information should be considered in revising Coast Guard procedures for processing permit applications?

All comments received by the Coast Guard as a result of this notice will be summarized and provided to NBSAC members for their consideration and consultation. The Coast Guard will consider all relevant comments in the development of any regulatory project to revise its procedures for processing applications for approval of regattas and marine parades.

Dated: December 18, 1995.

Rudy K. Peschel,

Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard, Chief, Office of Navigation Safety and Waterway Services.
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33 CFR Part 117

[CGD13-95-051]

RIN 2115-AE47

Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Chehalis River, WA

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking.

SUMMARY: At the request of the Washington Department of Transportation, the Coast Guard is considering an amendment to the regulations governing the operation of the Union Pacific railroad drawbridge and the U.S. Route 101 bridge over the Chehalis River at Aberdeen, Washington. The proposed rule would remove the portion of the existing regulations pertaining to the Union Pacific railroad drawbridge because that bridge is no longer in operation and will be removed. The proposed rule would also require one hour notice at all times for opening the drawspan of the U.S. Route 101 bridge for the passage of vessels. Finally, the proposed rule would change the special sound signal for requesting openings of the U.S. Route 101 bridge to the standard signal of one prolonged blast followed by one short blast.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before February 26, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be mailed to Commander (oan), Thirteenth Coast Guard District, 915 Second Avenue, Seattle, Washington, 98174-1067. The comments and other

materials referenced in this notice will be available for inspection and copying at 915 Second Avenue, Room 3410, Seattle, Washington. Normal office hours are between 7:45 a.m. and 4:15 p.m., Monday through Friday, except federal holidays. Comments may also be hand-delivered to this address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

John E. Mikesell, Chief, Plans and Programs Section, Aids to Navigation and Waterways Management Branch, (Telephone: (206) 220-7270).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Request for Comments

The Coast Guard encourages interested persons to participate in this rulemaking by submitting written data, views, or arguments. Persons submitting comments should include their names and addresses, identify this rulemaking (CGD13-95-051) and the specific section of this proposal to which each comment applies, and give the reason for each comment. Please submit two copies of all comments and attachments in unbound format, no larger than 8½ by 11 inches, suitable for copying and electronic filing. Persons wanting acknowledgement of receipt of comments should enclose stamped, self-addressed postcards or envelopes.

The Coast Guard will consider all comments received during the comment period. It may change this proposal in view of the comments.

The Coast Guard plans no public hearing. Persons may request a public hearing by writing to the Commander, Thirteenth Coast Guard District at the address under **ADDRESSES**. The request should include the reasons why a hearing would be beneficial. If it determines that the opportunity for oral presentations will aid this rulemaking, the Coast Guard will hold a hearing at a time and place announced by a later notice in the Federal Register.

Drafting Information

The drafters of this notice are Austin Pratt, Project Officer, Thirteenth Coast Guard District Aids to Navigation and Waterfront Management Branch and Lieutenant Commander John C. Odell, Project Attorney, Thirteenth Coast Guard District Legal Office.

Background and Purpose

At the request of the Washington Department of Transportation, the Coast Guard is considering an amendment to the regulations governing the operation of the Union Pacific railroad drawbridge and the U.S. Route 101 bridge over the Chehalis River at Aberdeen, Washington.

The proposed rule would remove the portion of the existing regulations pertaining to the Union Pacific railroad drawbridge because that bridge is no longer in operation and will be removed.

The proposed rule would also amend the current regulations pertaining to the U.S. Route 101 bridge to require one hour notice at all times when requesting an opening drawspan for the passage of a vessel.

Current regulations require the drawspan of the U.S. Route 101 bridge to be opened on signal from one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset. The Washington State Department of Transportation operates four other drawbridges across the nearby Hoquiam and Wishkah Rivers. These other bridges are presently operated on a one-hour notice basis. In recent years, requests for openings at these bridges have decreased. If the proposed one hour notice for the U.S. Route 101 bridge over the Chehalis River at Aberdeen, Washington, were adopted in conformity with the regulations governing the other bridges in the area, the Washington Department of Transportation would be able to serve all five drawbridges with a single operator.

The U.S. Route 101 bridge over the Chehalis River at Aberdeen, Washington, opened 359 times for vessel transits in the year measured from October 1993 to October 1994. This average somewhat less than one opening per day. The number of openings for the nearby drawbridges on the Wishkah and Hoquiam Rivers averaged 0.23 per day for the same year. These figures indicate that a single operator, provided with one hour notice, could operate all five of these bridges without unreasonable delay.

Under the proposed rule, the weekday closed periods for accommodating commuter traffic on the roadway would remain unchanged, as would the exception for vessels of 5000 gross tons or more. Under the proposed rule, however, vessels of 5000 gross tons or more would be required to provided the proposed one hour notice when requesting an opening during the weekday closed periods.

Finally, under the proposed rule the special sound signal prescribed for requesting an opening at the U.S. Route 101 bridge would also be deleted in order to conform to the standard signal of one prolonged blast followed by one short blast as generally required by 33 CFR 117.15. A unique sound signal is no longer needed because the adjacent Union Pacific railroad drawbridge immediately downstream of the U.S.