



## Marine Safety Information Bulletin

36-25

### Hurricane Preparedness

Date Issued: May 21, 2025

The 2025 Hurricane Season commences June 1<sup>st</sup> and continues through November 30<sup>th</sup>. While it is not possible to control the path of these storms, diligent planning and preparations can lessen the burden on the nation's vital Marine Transportation System. To this end, please take a critical look at your organization's preparedness and readiness before the start of the Hurricane Season.

All facilities, vessels, service companies, and organizations in the Corpus Christi Captain of the Port (COTP) Zone should have severe weather procedures established in advance. Offshore oil and gas platforms, facilities and supply vessels should review their Emergency Evacuation Plans and verify all information is accurate and up to date. Some important items to consider:

1. Preparation should include a review of disaster/contingency plans and personnel briefing on evacuation routes, pre-storm precautions, safe havens and recovery processes.
2. Storm avoidance is always the preferred action for vessels. All vessels capable of sailing away from an approaching storm should do so.
3. Ocean-going vessels 500 gross tons or larger not capable of sailing away must provide a "Remaining In Port Checklist" to my office for approval at least 48-hours prior to arrival of gale force winds.
4. Facility operators are reminded to keep all containment tanks and berms promptly pumped out during this period to prevent spills as a result of heavy rain.
5. The National Weather Service maintains a local page that details severe weather:  
<https://www.weather.gov/crp/>

Please familiarize yourself with this bulletin's enclosures. Enclosure (1) explains the different port conditions that the COTP will set ahead of the approaching hurricane. Enclosures (2), (3), and (4) are checklists to help you with hurricane preparedness. Enclosure (5) **MUST** be completed and returned to the Coast Guard (24 hours after Port Condition Whiskey is set) by certain vessels requesting to remain in port during a storm.

T. H. Bertheau  
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard  
Captain of the Port

- Enclosure: (1) COTP Maritime Hurricane Contingency Port Plan  
(2) Storm Preparation Checklist – Vessels  
(3) Recommended Storm Preparations Checklist – Vessels and Barges  
(4) Storm Preparation Checklist – Waterfront Facilities  
(5) Request to Remain in Port Checklist

# **U.S. Coast Guard Sector Corpus Christi**

## **COTP Maritime Hurricane Contingency Port Plan**

### **COTP ACTIONS AND DECISIONS**

Port Conditions are set by the COTP of Corpus Christi in advance of arriving tropical storms and are based on the predicted arrival of hurricane force winds in South Texas. The COTP will normally seek input from Port Authorities, Harbor Masters and Pilots prior to setting and/or changing Port Conditions. Due to the large area of responsibility (AOR), the COTP may set different Port Conditions at different ports within the AOR. Tropical storm predictions are based on information obtained from the National Weather Service. The intent of setting Port Conditions is to provide the marine community with sufficient time to make preparations to minimize damage from a tropical storm.

#### **Port Conditions**

The four Port Conditions are:

- **WHISKEY:** Gale force winds associated with tropical cyclone activity are expected to arrive at the port within 72 hours.
- **X-RAY:** Gale force winds associated with tropical cyclone activity are expected to arrive at the port within 48 hours.
- **YANKEE:** Gale force winds from a hurricane force storm are expected to arrive at the port within 24 hours.
- **ZULU:** Gale force winds from a hurricane force storm are expected to arrive at the port within 12 hours.

#### **Information Sources and Communications**

The COTP will make information about changes in Port Conditions available to the port community in the following ways:

- Broadcast Notice to Mariners (BNTM) on Channel 16 VHF-FM.
- Direct telephone calls to respective Port Authorities, Harbor Masters and Pilot Associations.
- Port Coordination Team teleconferences.
- Internet site. <https://navcen.uscg.gov/port-status> (Select Corpus Christi from the Port Directory).
- Sector Corpus Christi port stakeholders with questions about Port Conditions can contact the Sector Command Center at 1-800-874-2143.

#### **Specific Pre-Storm Actions**

**Seasonal Alert:** The alert condition is automatically set annually on June 1<sup>st</sup> and remains in effect through November 30<sup>th</sup>, unless otherwise established.

- Review individual storm and heavy weather plans, training, and materiel condition.
- Ensure vessels under construction, repair or otherwise in lay-up status are prepared to withstand hurricane conditions.

**WHISKEY (72 hours):**

- Port Status: Open to all commercial traffic.
- COTP will require all ocean-going vessels 500 GT or larger (including ocean-going barges and their supporting tugs) to report their intentions to depart or remain in port to the COTP. Any vessel requesting to remain in port must complete a REMAINING IN PORT CHECKLIST and submit it to the COTP within 24 hours for approval. Vessels desiring to remain in port must coordinate their request to remain in port with the facility at which they intend to moor. Facilities need to recognize that one of the natural consequences of their decision to engage in commerce during the hurricane season, especially with tug and barge units, may be that a vessel may remain moored to their facility during the tropical storm. Facility operators are advised that the COTP will not order vessels to depart the facility if doing so would unduly hazard the vessel, and that the COTP will not order out barges and their tugs or prevent them from seeking a harbor of safe refuge. Normally, deep draft commercial vessels 500 GT or larger will leave the port unless they have received the COTP's permission to remain. The COTP will not arbitrate disputes between facilities and vessels regarding mooring arrangements.
- Commence increased harbor patrols and advise vessel and facility operators of any conditions that require correction.
- Depending on storm conditions and predictions, the COTP may rescind all over-size tow permits.
- Advise port stakeholders of intentions for setting next condition (X-RAY).

**X-RAY (48 hours):**

- Port Status: Open to all commercial traffic.
- Individually assess REMAINING IN PORT CHECKLISTS from vessels desiring to remain in port and the facilities they will be moored to issue COTP Orders as appropriate.
- Contact deep-draft vessels at anchor to determine their intentions.
- Inspect wharf and pier areas with waterfront facility representatives during harbor patrols.
- Spot-check marinas and waterways to determine the status of hurricane preparations.
- Depending on storm conditions and predictions, the COTP may rescind all over-size tow permits.
- Depending on storm conditions and predictions, the COTP may order vessels to cease cargo operations, and direct vessels to break away and make heavy weather preparations.
- Advise port stakeholders of intentions for setting next condition (YANKEE) including degree of vessel control.

**YANKEE (24 hours):**

- Port Status: Vessel traffic control measures in effect.
- Determine the need for a Safety Zone controlling vessel movements and activities as appropriate.
- Approve or direct, as necessary, final mooring arrangements for all commercial vessels remaining in port.
- Port will be closed to all inbound commercial vessel traffic; the decision to close the port will be made after consultation with Port Authorities, Harbor Masters and Pilots.
- The COTP may approve requests for inbound transits if vessels are capable of completing the load/discharge cycle in less than 12 hours.
- All oversize tow permits are rescinded.
- All offshore lightering is to cease, and vessels are to break away and make heavy weather preparations.



### **ZULU (12 hours):**

- Port Status: Closed to all vessel traffic (including vessel transits within the port). Vessels and facilities requesting a vessel movement must request prior approval from the COTP. The approval will only be granted if the movement can be made safely, and a mooring location has been identified; or if the vessel is departing to sea and can reach safe water prior to encountering winds from a hurricane force storm.
- Suspend all cargo operations, unless individual approval is received from the COTP.

### **Post Storm Recovery Actions**

As soon as it is practicable following the passage of the storm, the COTP will:

- Except for search and rescue and environmental response, focus all resources on restoration of commercial operations.
- Determine the priority for reopening channels and waterways.
- Coordinate completion of channel surveys with USACE, Port Authorities, Harbor Masters, and Pilots.
- Conduct maritime damage and risk assessment emphasizing bridges, wharves, piers, channels, and anchorage.
- If the hurricane bypassed the port area, causing no damage to the waterway, facilities, vessels, or Aids to Navigation the COTP will determine the port to be Open and inform the public using a BNM, MSIB, and Port Coordination Team teleconference.
- If the COTP assessment concludes damage to the MTS, port recovery protocols will be implemented, and the port will be declared Closed or Open with Restriction as determined by the COTP. The COTP will inform the public using a BNM, MSIB, and Port Coordination Team teleconference.

### **Recommended Storm Preparations**

Vessels and facilities that choose to operate and/or engage in commerce during the hurricane season must recognize and prepare for the associated risk. Vessels and facilities shall take precautionary measures to reduce the potential for loss of life, injury, or property damage from a hurricane. The safety precautions addressed in this bulletin are not the only precautions that may be necessary to fully prepare a vessel or facility for a tropical storm. The unique characteristics of the vessel or facility, and the unique attributes of the storm may dictate the need for additional measures and/or modifications to the measures contained in these recommendations.

The COTP will continuously review the status of all hurricane preparations (vessel and facility) and direct the correction of dangerous conditions. The COTP will issue orders only to those vessels or facilities that fail to initiate timely and appropriate action.

Nothing in these recommendations shall be construed as relieving the masters, owners, operators, and agents of vessels or the owners, operators, and persons-in-charge of waterfront facilities from their primary responsibility for the safety of such vessels or waterfront facilities during a hurricane.

### **VESSELS**

When gale force winds associated with tropical cyclone activity and severe storm surge threaten the port, the recommended course of action for all seaworthy vessels is evasion at sea. Departure to sea should commence well before the expected arrival of hurricane force winds to allow for safely riding out the storm at sea or having adequate time to reach a harbor

of safe refuge. Late departure could endanger personnel, the port, or the environment, and may not be allowed by the COTP. Vessels will not be permitted to move (including shifting berthing) during the 12-hour period immediately prior to the predicted arrival of gale force winds (i.e. during Port Condition ZULU) without the prior approval of the COTP. The decision to approve a vessel movement during Port Condition ZULU will be made in consultation with the respective Port Authority, Harbor Master and Pilots.

All vessels, which intend to remain in port should consider the appropriateness of taking on additional ballast or cargo as a special precaution to ensure their safety and the overall safety of the port, because vessels in a fully loaded condition normally fare better than light vessels in hurricanes. The COTP will not arbitrate disputes between facilities and vessels regarding mooring arrangements. The COTP will continuously review the status of all hurricane preparations (vessel and facility) and direct the correction of dangerous conditions. The COTP will issue orders only to those vessels that fail to initiate timely and appropriate action.

### **WATERFRONT FACILITIES**

Waterfront facilities should secure hazards and halt cargo operations in advance of the storm's arrival to prevent unnecessary damage to life, property or the environment. When Port Condition ZULU is set, the COTP will suspend all cargo operations, unless specific approval is granted. The COTP may also suspend operations when weather conditions threaten to reduce safety to an unacceptable level and/or the facility does not voluntarily suspend cargo operations. Facilities that do not desire to have vessels remain moored at their facility during the storm must provide sufficient notice to the vessel to allow time for the vessel to move to a safe mooring, a hurricane anchorage, or sea. The owner, operator and/or person-in-charge of a facility and the masters, owners, operators, and/or agents of a vessel are primarily responsible for the safety and security of their facilities and vessels. The COTP will not arbitrate disputes between facilities and vessels regarding mooring arrangements. The COTP will continuously review the status of all hurricane preparations (vessel and facility) and direct the correction of dangerous conditions. The COTP will issue orders only to those facilities that fail to initiate timely and appropriate action.

### **WATERFRONT FACILITIES: Shipyards / Fabrication Facilities**

Shipyards should secure or remove missile hazards, such as scaffolding, equipment, and scrap metal, and halt construction/repair operations in advance of the storm's arrival to prevent unnecessary damage to life, property or the environment. Fabrication facilities with floating construction projects shall also submit a remaining in-port checklist to the COTP, specifically addressing mooring arrangements. When Port Condition ZULU is set, the COTP will suspend all construction/repair operations, unless specific approval is granted. The COTP may also suspend construction/repair operations when weather conditions threaten to reduce safety to an unacceptable level and/or the shipyard does not voluntarily suspend operations. Shipyards must ensure that vessels at drydock are secured or repaired in sufficient time to allow the vessel to move to a safe mooring, hurricane anchorage, or to sea. The COTP will issue orders only to those shipyards that fail to initiate timely and appropriate action.

# **U.S. Coast Guard Sector Corpus Christi**

## **Corpus Christi, Texas**

### **Storm Preparation Checklist for Vessels**

This checklist contains precautionary measures appropriate to ships and barges, which intend to remain in port.

#### **I. PORT CONDITION WHISKEY**

##### **72 HOURS BEFORE ANTICIPATED GALE FORCE WINDS ASSOCIATED W/ TROPICAL CYCLONE**

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|---|
| (a) Review vessel's operational schedule.   |
| (b) Review vessel heavy weather plans and take appropriate action.  |
| (c) If unable to get underway, evaluate the safety of the present berth. If necessary, develop plans to shift to an alternate location or berth. The plans should include the number and source of tugs, the permits required and the agency responsible for approving them, and safety/security arrangements appropriate to the new mooring/berth.<br>Note: Vessels to which this recommendation might apply are vessels at local repair facilities and lay berth vessels either at anchor or moored to a wharf or pier. |
| (d) Inform COTP of intentions, submit Remaining in Port Checklist. (Ocean-going vessels 500 GT or larger)   |
| (e) Set a continuous Channel 16 VHF-FM radio watch.   |

#### **II. PORT CONDITION X-RAY**

##### **48 HOURS BEFORE ANTICIPATED GALE FORCE WINDS ASSOCIATED W/ TROPICAL CYCLONE**

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| (a) Ocean-going vessels 500 GT or larger (including ocean-going barges and their supporting tugs) intending to remain at their moorings during the hurricane should obtain permission from the COTP, and coordinate with owner, operator, or person-in-charge of the waterfront facility and determine the conditions the facility will require. |
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#### **III. PORT CONDITION YANKEE**

##### **24 HOURS BEFORE ANTICIPATED GALE FORCE WINDS ASSOCIATED W/ TROPICAL CYCLONE**

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| (a) Vessels intending to weather the hurricane at sea should prepare to depart the port prior to port closure. |
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#### **IV. PORT CONDITION ZULU**

##### **12 HOURS BEFORE ANTICIPATED GALE FORCE WINDS ASSOCIATED W/ TROPICAL CYCLONE**

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| (a) Ensure the vessel is securely moored or anchored and prepared for hurricane conditions.    |
| (b) Suspend cargo transfer operations as required by weather conditions or the COTP.           |
| (c) Discontinue all transits of the port as required by the COTP.                              |
| (d) Immediately report any hazardous conditions or breakaways of vessels directly to the COTP. |

# U.S. Coast Guard Sector Corpus Christi

## Corpus Christi, Texas

### Recommended Storm Preparations

#### VESSELS

<b>Moored</b>	<b>Anchored</b>		
X		1.	Mooring lines doubled up with due consideration given to the effects of predicted storm surge.
X		2.	Outboard anchor rigged at short stay.
X	X	3.	Sufficient number of officers and crew onboard to tend mooring lines, and/or get underway.
X	X	4.	Ballast vessel to ensure maximum safety.
X	X	5.	All side ports, hatches, portholes, and other openings are closed and secured.
X	X	6.	Bilge pumps and manifolds are ready for immediate use.
X	X	7.	All firefighting equipment is ready for immediate use.
X	X	8.	At least one (1) pilot ladder is rigged on each side of the vessel.
X		9.	A gangway, or other suitable means of accessing the vessel from the pier, is rigged.
X	X	10.	At least one (1) fire warp is rigged on the bow and another on the stern. In order to expedite the establishment of an emergency tow, a portion of each fire warp should be draped overboard and allowed to hang no more than six (6) feet above the waterline.
X	X	11.	Spare mooring lines and/or wires should be readily available.
X	X	12.	A continuous radio watch should be maintained on Channel 16 VHF-FM (156.8 MHZ) by a person who speaks English fluently.
	X	13.	At least two anchors should be set.
	X	14.	Vessel should remain ready to get underway in 15 minutes.

#### BARGES

<b>Moored</b>	<b>Anchored</b>		
	X	1.	All available anchors are deployed.
X		2.	Mooring lines doubled up with due consideration given to the effects of predicted storm surge. Special attention should be paid to barges moored in the proximity of bridges.
X		3.	Sufficient personnel are available ashore to respond to emergencies. Note: In no way should this recommendation be understood as the COTP advocating personnel being placed in life threatening situations.
X	X	4.	All hatches, portholes and other openings are closed and secured.
X		5.	Firefighting equipment is available and ready for immediate use.
	X	6.	At least one (1) fire warp is rigged on the bow and another on the stern. In order to expedite the establishment of an emergency tow, a portion of each fire warp should be draped overboard and allowed to hang no more than six (6) feet above the waterline.
X	X	7.	Spare mooring lines and/or wires should be readily available.

# **U.S. Coast Guard Sector Corpus Christi**

## **Corpus Christi, Texas**

### **Storm Preparation Checklists (For Facilities)**

#### **I. PORT CONDITION WHISKEY**

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| (a) Review facility contingency plans. The contingency plans for barge fleeting facilities should contain procedures for recovering breakaway barges and specifically include the location or availability of tugs/towboats. Barge fleeting facilities should also evaluate measures to reduce the size of their fleets.<br>Note: Plans to nest barges with other vessels must be approved by the COTP. |
| (b) Review vessel arrival schedule.   |
| (c) Review operational schedules to identify shipments of Cargoes of Particular Hazard, Hazardous Material, and/or Dangerous Cargoes arriving via highway or rail vehicles.   |

#### **II. PORT CONDITION X-RAY**

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| (a) Determine the special needs and intentions of vessels moored at the facility. Note: The COTP may direct the vessel or facility to take certain precautions to correct conditions, which threaten the port or the environment.  |
| (b) Set a time for the voluntary suspension of cargo handling operations. In doing so, ensure that vessels have ample time to hire and schedule labor, arrange pilots, contract tugs/towboats, and safely complete the transit to sea or a hurricane anchorage prior to the setting of Port Condition ZULU. Notify the COTP of the time established. |

#### **III. PORT CONDITION YANKEE**

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|---|
| (a) Secure missile hazards and clear nonessential equipment and loose gear from all wharves and piers.  |
| (b) Secure or move hazardous material and dangerous cargo to a safe location.   |
| (c) Advise the COTP of any dangerous cargo that cannot be secured or moved to a safe location.  |
| (d) Prepare to secure cargo operations in advance of the COTP setting Port Condition Zulu, unless permission is requested, and an approval is received from the COTP. Operations involving Cargoes of Particular Hazard will be secured without exception at Port Condition Zulu. |
| (e) Ensure cargo operations are secured in adequate time to allow vessels desiring to depart port have ample time to make the necessary arrangements and complete the transit to sea.   |

#### **IV. PORT CONDITION ZULU**

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| (a) Secure cargo operations involving liquid bulk dangerous cargoes, unless permission is granted, and verification is received from the COTP. Cargoes of Particular Hazard will be secured in all cases. |
| (b) Oil transfer terminals should drain all loading arms and transfer hoses of product, blank off hoses, empty and clean small discharge containment.   |
| (c) All small crafts owned by the facility that can be hauled out should be removed from the water and secured well away from the effects of possible storm surge and high winds.                         |



**U.S. Coast Guard Sector Corpus Christi  
Corpus Christi, Texas  
Request to Remain in Port**

The person in charge of the ocean-going vessels 500 GT or larger (including ocean-going barges and their supporting tugs) must submit this checklist to the COTP within 24 hours after Port Condition WHISKEY is set.

<b>1) Vessel Name:</b>
<b>2) Official Number:</b>
<b>3) Call Sign:</b>
<b>4) Flag of Vessel:</b>
<b>5) Length:</b>
<b>6) Width:</b>
<b>7) Draft:</b>
<b>8) Gross Tonnage:</b>
<b>9) Hull Type:</b>
<b>10) Horsepower:</b>
<b>11) Name of Berth, Location and Depth of Water at Mean Low Water:</b>
<b>12) 24 Hr. Contact Phone Number / Email for Vessel:</b>
<b>13) Master's Name &amp; Signature:</b>
<b>14) Name, Address, and 24 hr. Phone number of Owner:</b>
<b>15) Name of Facility and POC with 24hr. Phone number.</b>
<b>16) Has Master verified vessel has attained all recommended storm preparations? Y N</b> <b>If not, include which recommendations have not been met.</b>
<b>17) Name, Address, and 24 hr. Phone number of Charter Point of Contact:</b>
<b>18) Name, Address, and 24 hr. Phone number of Agent:</b>

**19) Why are you requesting to remain in port? What are your specific preparations for remaining in port and how are you going to achieve them if your request is granted. Requests to remain in port will only be granted in extreme cases.**

**20) 24-Hour contact number for Qualified individuals who are empowered in writing by the owners to make on-site decisions and authorize expenditures of any required pollution response or salvage.**

**21) Amount of ballast the vessel may hold and estimated draft with the vessel in ballast:**

**22) Amount of bunkers, lube oil, and diesel oil on board:**

**23) Amount and types of cargo on board:**

**24) Persons remaining on board, 24 Phone number (if available), and their qualifications:**

**Attach the following items:**

- A) Full vessel characteristics that would be needed to effect salvage.**
- B) Full stowage plan and manifest. Include SDS for any hazmat.**
- C) Full insurance coverage disclosure to the Captain of the Port and if moored to a facility, to the facility.**
- D) Describe how the vessel will be secured to the berth. Submit a diagram showing the mooring arrangements with the size, length and lead of mooring lines or wire.**
- E) Operational status of machinery on board the vessel (i.e. availability of main propulsion, engines, generators, firefighting pumps, bilge pumps, anchors and number of anchors, mooring machinery, etc.)**
- F) Any unusual conditions affecting the vessel's seaworthiness.**
- G) Crew Manifest if applicable.**
- H) Certification/Documentation attesting to the strength of the dock, preferably by a Professional Engineer, and/or original manufacturer specifications.**

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