



U.S. Army
Corps of Engineers
Chicago District

NEWS RELEASE

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Barrier navigation safety tests complete, limited vessel traffic to resume

CHICAGO – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has completed initial safety testing for navigation on the electric Aquatic Nuisance Species Dispersal Barrier in coordination with the U.S. Coast Guard. The barrier went to full time operation at 8:00 a.m. Monday at the higher operating parameters of two volts per inch, 15 Hertz frequency and 6.5 milliseconds pulse rate. Navigation safety testing began shortly thereafter and concluded Tuesday evening.

Though more analysis is still needed, based upon the initial results from U.S. Army Corps testing the U.S. Coast Guard intends to permit certain tugs and barges to transit the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal safety zone in accordance with the current Temporary Final Rule. The safety zone extends from mile marker 296.0 to mile marker 296.7.

Starting at approximately 7:45 p.m. (EST) on Aug. 19, 2009, certain vessels with prior approval from the Captain of the Port's Representative will be allowed to transit the area with increased safety measures. This request can be made via VHF Channel 16 or by calling (630) 336-0296. At this time, the only vessels that will be considered for passage will be commercial tugs and barges not carrying flammable or combustible liquid cargo. The Corps of Engineers will work closely with the Coast Guard to assist in developing safety procedures for flammable cargo as quickly as possible.

"Until the results of the testing completed by the Army Corps of Engineers can be analyzed and reviewed by their experts as well as Coast Guard engineers, safety of those vessels and persons in the area remains a paramount concern to the Coast Guard. In that regard, we will continue to enforce the safety zone until we can determine the safety for all recreational vessels and other commercial vessels until further notice" said Capt. Luann Barndt, Commander of U.S. Coast Guard Sector Lake Michigan.

"These are interim measures, while we work longer term solutions," said Col. Vincent Quarles, commander of the Corps of Engineers Chicago District office. "The Corps of Engineers is continuing to work with the Coast Guard to analyze the results of this recent safety testing. We appreciate the patience and understanding of the navigation industry while we have transitioned to higher operating parameters."

For information on waterway closures and safety zone enforcement, visit the following website:

<http://www.uscg.fishbarrierinfo.com>

For information on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Aquatic Nuisance Species Dispersal Barriers, visit:

http://www.lrc.usace.army.mil/projects/fish_barrier/index.html

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For further information about Coast Guard Operations, contact the Sector Lake Michigan Public Affairs Office at (414) 349-5109.