



# Marine Safety Information Bulletin

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## SECTOR DELAWARE BAY ICE PRECAUTIONS

This bulletin addresses significant ice formation being reported throughout the entire U.S. Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay area of responsibility, including but not limited to the Port of Philadelphia, New Jersey, and the entirety of the Delaware River. Severe cold temperatures are forecasted to continue, which will lead to further ice accumulation and increasingly hazardous conditions for navigation for the foreseeable future.

The accumulation of ice in the waterways, coupled with tidal fluctuation, may drag navigation aids (buoys) off station or cause them to become submerged or extinguished. Heavy and/or thick ice floes may hamper vessel maneuverability and may cause damage to propulsion gear or a hull breach. Information on discrepant aids to navigation and current ice conditions throughout the Sector Delaware Bay area of responsibility are available on the U.S. Coast Guard Navigation Center (NAVCEN) website at <https://www.navcen.uscg.gov/port-status?zone=DELAWARE%20BAY> and through the Coast Guard's Marine Safety Information Products Website at <https://www.navcen.uscg.gov/msi>.

Mariners should prepare now to either operate cautiously in waters where ice is present or avoid navigating in those waters altogether. For mariners who must operate during this extended period of cold weather and ice, the following precautions are strongly encouraged:

1. Mariners should consider confining transits to daylight hours only, and only when visibility is at least one mile, in any waterway where ice is reported.
2. Particular caution is advised as some aids to navigation (buoys) have been reported to be extinguished, low in the water or submerged due to ice, or off station. Additional aids to navigation discrepancies are anticipated.
3. Utilize all available resources to continuously and accurately fix their vessels position using all available means, including electronic charts, visual fixes, and radar.
4. Properly operating radar should also be onboard and actively used when transiting, in addition to maintaining additional lookouts when deemed necessary by the master.
5. Prudent voyage planning should consider the characteristics of the vessel, including sufficient horsepower, to navigate safely in ice conditions.
6. Sea chest shall be checked regularly for ice build-up and mariners should take precautions to ensure they are kept clear.

Requests for ice breaking assistance by the Coast Guard should be made to the Sector Delaware Bay Command

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Center via VHF channel 16, or by phone at (833) 453-1007. Such requests will be reviewed and prioritized based on the safety of life, movement of critical commodities, and commerce facilitation. However, due to the potential severity of ice conditions and limited ice breaking resources, all mariners should plan and be prepared for delays.

For maritime emergencies during this severe weather period, or to report ice conditions affecting navigation, contact to the Sector Delaware Bay Command Center via VHF channel 16, or by phone at (833) 453-1007.

Questions regarding this Bulletin may be forwarded to the Waterways Department at U.S. Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay, 206-815-6688, option 3, or [secdelbaywwm@uscg.mil](mailto:secdelbaywwm@uscg.mil).



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