



US Army Corps of Engineers®

NOTICE TO NAVIGATION INTERESTS

HUNTINGTON DISTRICT

ATTN: CELRH-DE

502 8TH STREET

HUNTINGTON WV 25701-2070

HTTP://WWW.LRH.USACE.ARMY.MIL/

DATE: 01/27/2026

POC:

Christopher B. Chadwick

Christopher.B.Chadwick@usace.army.mil

(304) 399-5083

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WATERWAY(S): Huntington
District

EFFECTIVE: 01/01/2026 00:00 -
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REVIEW OF REGULATIONS AND GENERAL SAFETY PRACTICES

Notice is given that the Huntington District Corps of Engineers is requesting that all towing companies and other waterway users review their operating procedures to ensure that their personnel are complying with all regulations and general safety practices.

Regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Army to govern the use, administration, and navigation for the Ohio River, Mississippi River above Cairo, Illinois, and their tributaries are contained in the "Blue Book" (33 CFR 207.300). It is required that a copy of these regulations be kept at all times on board each vessel regularly engaged in navigating the rivers to which these regulations apply.

In the interest of safety to personnel and property, it is essential that the following procedures be reviewed by your operating vessel personnel in order that they may have a comprehensive understanding of the rules for vessels in the locking process, including the act of approaching or departing a lock:

- a. All deck hands working outside areas not having bulwarks or handrails shall wear a USCG approved work vest which shall be fastened as designed for use.
- b. Smoking, open flames, chipping or other spark-producing activities are not permitted during the locking cycle on or inside barges, on outside areas of the towboat, or on the lock walls, except in designated areas.
- c. Vessels with flammable or hazardous cargo barges, loaded or empty, are required to use spark-proof protective rubbing fenders, "possums". All vessels should utilize "possums" to help alleviate damages that are occurring to lock structures. Repairs necessitated by these damages require closure of the chambers and are expensive.

d. Vessels shall be moored with bow and stern lines leading in opposite directions to prevent the vessel from "running the lock whenever possible. Floating mooring bitts cannot be used for "checking", nor shall the pilot engage movement of propellers once the tow is secured to the floating mooring bitts, except for an emergency or when directed by the lockmaster.

e. Tow boat operators shall not use the walls of the lock to push off to gain thrust. This technique is also known as "heeling" and is not permitted.

The observance of safe locking procedures leads to a safer and more efficient locking process both for the navigation industry and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Thank you for your help and participation.

//signed//
Browning, Kent C,
Chief of Operations Division