



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
GALVESTON DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
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CESWG-DE

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
GULF INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY NAVIGATION SYSTEM  
HIGH WATER OPERATIONS POLICY  
BRAZOS RIVER FLOODGATES  
COLORADO RIVER LOCKS

1. Purpose. This policy is to establish guidance for the implementation and execution of navigation restrictions for the locks and gates on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW), Galveston District
2. Background. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) navigation mission is to provide safe, reliable, efficient, effective and environmentally sustainable waterborne transportation systems for movement of commerce, national security needs, and recreation. These facilities provide for safe and efficient traffic management across the Brazos River and Colorado River crossings. During flood and high river flow events, a hazard exists for all traffic necessitating the need to provide increased traffic management. In the past, industry has self-imposed restrictions by individual company on how and when they transit during high flows.
3. Applicability. This policy applies to locks in the following waterways: the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, Galveston District, Brazos River Flood Gates and Colorado River Locks.
4. Authority. The use, administration, and navigation of the structures to which this section applies shall be under the direction of the officers of the Army Corps of Engineers, detailed in charge of the respective districts, and their authorized assistants. The cities in which these district engineers are located and the limits of their jurisdictions are as follows: District Engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineer District, Galveston, Texas.
  - a. Application: The regulations in this section shall apply to the operation of the Brazos River Flood Gates and the Colorado River Locks at Mile 400.8 and 441.5, respectively, west of the Harvey Lock, Louisiana, on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, and navigation of the tributary Colorado River Channel in the vicinity of said locks, 33 CFR 207.187.

## CESWG-DE

### Gulf Intracoastal Waterway Navigation System High Water Operations Policy, Brazos River Flood Gates and Colorado River Locks

b. The lock master shall be charged with the immediate control and management of the lock and of the area set aside as the lock area, 33 CFR 207.275(c).

c. The term “project” or “water resources development project” refers to the water areas of any water resources development project administered by the Chief of Engineers, without regard to ownership of underlying land, to all lands owned in fee by the Federal Government and to all facilities therein or thereon of any such water resources development project 36 CFR 327.1(c).

#### 4. References.

a. 33 CFR 207.187 – Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, TX: special flood gate, lock and navigation regulations. The foregoing regulations are supplementary to the regulations in 33 CFR 207.180.

b. 36 CFR 327 – Rules and Regulations, dated: May 2000.

5. Objective. The intent of this policy is to provide guidance on the conditions and procedures that will be enacted at each project during high water flows on these river systems.

#### 6. Procedures.

##### a. Brazos River Flood Gates

(1) Unless otherwise directed by the lockmaster, no restrictions will be enacted when river flows are measured at less than 2.0 mph, as measured by the project.

(2) When river flows are equal to or greater than 2.0 mph, as measured by the project or if there is a height differential between 0.7 feet to 1.8 feet, as measured by the project at any gate, the lockmaster shall restrict commercial traffic passage to one loaded or two empty barges. This condition will exist throughout the 24-hour day.

## CESWG-DE

### Gulf Intracoastal Waterway Navigation System High Water Operations Policy, Brazos River Flood Gates and Colorado River Locks

(3) When river flows are equal to or greater than 5.0 mph and less than 7.0 mph, as measured by the project, the lockmaster shall restrict commercial traffic passage to one loaded or one empty barge. This condition will exist during daylight hours. During nighttime hours, all traffic will be stopped.

(4) When river flows are equal to or greater than 7.0 mph, as measured by the project, all traffic will be stopped.

(5) If at any time the height differential is greater than 1.8 feet, as measured by the project at any gate, all traffic will be stopped.

#### b. Colorado River Locks

(1) Unless otherwise directed by the lockmaster, no restrictions will be enacted when river flows are measured at less than 2.0 mph, as measured by the project.

(2) When flows are equal to or greater than 2.0 mph, as measured by the project, the lockmaster shall restrict commercial traffic passage to one loaded or two empty barges. This condition will exist throughout the 24-hour day.

(3) When flows are equal to or greater than 5.0 mph and less than 7.0 mph, as measured by the project, the lockmaster shall restrict commercial traffic passage to one loaded or one empty barge. This condition will exist during daylight hours. During nighttime hours, all traffic will be stopped.

(4) When flows are equal to or greater than 7.0 mph, as measured by the project, all traffic will be stopped.

(5) If at any time the height differential is greater than 1.8 feet, as measured by the project at any gate, all traffic will be stopped. This condition will only exist if the facility is unable to lock.

#### c. Traffic Management Assistance

(1) When the lockmaster at either the Colorado River Locks or the Brazos River Flood Gates restricts commercial traffic passage, the lockmaster shall contact the user's representative for assistance with traffic management, queuing of vessels, tow assistance, and other navigational assistance.

## CESWG-DE

### Gulf Intracoastal Waterway Navigation System High Water Operations Policy, Brazos River Flood Gates and Colorado River Locks

(2) Upon notification by a lockmaster, the user's representative shall dispatch one to three persons knowledgeable in traffic management to the requesting facility for the following conditions:

(a) When queued vessels exceed 20 barges at either facility.

(b) When river flows are equal to or greater than 5.0 mph and less than 7.0 mph, as measured by the project at either facility.

(c) When traffic conditions warrant a need for traffic assistance when in consultation with the user's representative.

#### d. Traffic Resumption:

(1) After conditions occur that caused traffic to stop, the following will regulate an order of precedence for resumption of traffic.

(2) All tows with one barge to proceed with passage in the order they occurred on the queue.

(3) All tows having multiple barges split between both sides of a river crossing to proceed with passage next.

(4) All other tows proceed with passage in their respective queue until the queue is cleared.

## 7. Enforcement

a. Failure to comply with directions given by the lockmaster pursuant to the regulations in this section may result in refusal of lockage.

b. Texas boating laws are in effect and are enforceable by Texas Parks and Wildlife Officers. USACE Regulations are also in effect and can be enforced by USACE Park Rangers.

CESWG-DE

Gulf Intracoastal Waterway Navigation System High Water Operations Policy, Brazos River Flood Gates and Colorado River Locks

9. Responsibilities. This high water policy is to be communicated to the public, commercial tow industry, private and state stakeholders to maintain an open forum on this policy's guidelines, through respective communications plans developed by Galveston District Public Affairs Office.

Enclosure

LARS N ZETTERSTROM  
Colonel, EN  
Commanding

## **River Rise Instructions to Lock & Dam Operators**

1. River rise restrictions will be enacted when river flows are equal to or greater than 2.0 mph as measured by the project. The East Gate or Lock operator on duty will announce restrictions to commercial barge traffic of one loaded barge or two empty barges to all local traffic on VHF radio channel 13.
  - a. If/when, flows are equal to or greater than 5.0 mph and less than 7.0 mph as measured by the facility, the East Gate or Lock operator on duty will announce over VHF radio channel 13, restrictions to commercial barge traffic of one barge, loaded or empty, during daylight hours. During nighttime hours, all traffic will be stopped.
  - b. If/When, flows are equal to or greater than 7.0 mph as measured by the project, the East Gate or Lock operator on duty will announce over VHF radio channel 13, that all traffic will be stopped.
  - c. As flows decrease below the above levels as measured by the project, restrictions will be reduced as directed by the Lockmaster or Assistant Lockmaster.
2. At approximately 0800 and 1500 hours each day, manual river speed readings will be performed by boat or other means to ensure the accuracy of the U.S. Geological Survey flow meters at the facilities. Operators may be involved in this practice.
3. The Queue sheet will be utilized to maintain arrival times of vessels as they arrive at the check-in points at each facility. These check-in points will move further away as vessels arrive at the end of the queue awaiting mooring space for tripping.
4. When possible, every effort should be made to run tows in the order in which they arrived; however, this can be a constantly changing variable with the increased number of tows with multiple cuts. Single cut tows should be called ahead of multi-cut tows that are waiting on mooring space. Using their experience and judgment, Lock and Dam Operators should keep the traffic moving as safely and efficiently as possible.
5. When locking at the Colorado River Locks, operators will attempt to utilize the chambers in each lock to the safest extent possible, to efficiently move a maximum the amount of traffic with each locking. The main focus is to keep traffic moving safely.
6. River rise restrictions will be lifted by the Lockmaster or his Assistant when river flows fall below 2.0 mph as measured by the project.