



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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Possible traffic impacts on roads near the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal

NEW ORLEANS – The Port of New Orleans, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have agreed to lift the curfew for marine traffic on the St. Claude and Claiborne Ave. bridges when necessary to allow deep-draft navigation in the canal.

Ship pilots have expressed concern over the lack of lighting in the canal and are choosing to only navigate the lock during daylight hours. The curfew will be lifted only on an as needed basis to help ships safely navigate through the canal during daylight hours until additional lighting can be installed.

“We understand the navigation industry’s concerns and are working to increase the lighting along the canal,” said New Orleans District Commander Col. Alvin Lee. “This lighting will help increase the level of safety for the crews, as well as promote more efficient navigation along this critical transportation route.”

The curfew is usually observed by the port from 6:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 – 5:45 p.m. Monday thru Friday, excluding holidays. During these peak-travel hours, the bridges have been in the down position and open to vehicle traffic only, prohibiting marine traffic from passing through the canal.

“Until the repairs are made that will alleviate the pilot’s concerns about transiting the lock at night, there may be some occasions where we have to raise the bridges when they would normally stay lowered so that we can move traffic before it gets dark. We try to make bridge operations as convenient as possible for motorists; however, special circumstances will call for us to occasionally break curfew,” said Gary LaGrange, President and CEO of the Port of New Orleans.

“DOTD will do all we can to avoid raising the Judge Seeber (Claiborne) Bridge during the established curfew hours, but due to the current navigation concerns expressed by the ship pilots and federal regulations, we may be required to do so. We expect these openings will be infrequent and plan to provide advance notice to the motoring public whenever possible prior to these openings,” said Mike Stack, Sr., DOTD District 02 administrator.

It takes a coordinated effort to move a ship through the canal. While the Corps operates the lock, the Port of New Orleans operates the St. Claude Ave. Bridge and DOTD operates the Judge William Seeber Bridge, locally known as the Claiborne Ave. Bridge. The Crescent River Port Pilots Association, shipping agents, and businesses also play an important role in ship movements along the canal.

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