

**2021**

**GULF COAST  
INLAND WATERWAYS  
JOINT HURRICANE RESPONSE PROTOCOL**

**Prepared by the Gulf Coast Joint Hurricane Team**

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**GULF COAST INLAND WATERWAYS  
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## **1.0 BACKGROUND / HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

During the devastating hurricane seasons of 2004 and 2005 the US Coast Guard (USCG), US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the inland barge industry worked together to bring about an unprecedented restoration of inland maritime commerce on the Intracoastal Waterway and Lower Mississippi River. That working relationship developed to further the effectiveness of a pre-existing partnership between the barge industry, USACE, and USCG in the area of waterway operations management. Early in 2006, these partners formally agreed to work together to more fully develop lessons learned from the past hurricane seasons and waterways management practices, with the goal of implementing an effective, consistent, safe, and expeditious restoration of Gulf Coast maritime commerce following future storms. Specifically, a Memorandum of Understanding, referencing cooperative hurricane response efforts between USACE, USCG, and the inland barge industry, via the Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association (GICA) and American Waterways Operators (AWO) documents the joint agreement.

As a result of that formal agreement, the Gulf Coast Inland Waterways Joint Hurricane Team (JHT) was formed. The primary objective of this team was to develop a document that captured the essence of what had worked well in the past storm seasons' partnering efforts on hurricane response. A secondary objective was to continue to function in future years to continuously improve the original plan, based on lessons learned from each year's response activities. The plan would be referred to as the Gulf Coast Inland Waterways Joint Hurricane Response Protocol. Specifically, the Protocol is intended to address the commercially navigable waters of the Lower Mississippi River below Baton Rouge, the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, and its tributaries. It would be revised, under the auspices of the Joint Hurricane Team, at least annually.

As the inland barge industry's primary waterways management representative for the Gulf Coast, GICA maintains the Protocol. Applicable portions of the Protocol may be included in hurricane plans maintained by Federal, state and local partners.

The President of GICA serves as Chair of the Joint Hurricane Team, and Co-Chairs are an Eighth Coast Guard District representative and a representative from each of the Gulf coast USACE Districts.

A list of other industry, USACE, and USCG personnel needing to be kept apprised of the team's activities is maintained by the Chairman. Members may suggest the addition of others to this list as appropriate. Ultimate approval of who receives information from this team will rest with the USACE and USCG representatives.

The Protocol is intended to focus on the working relationships, roles, and responsibilities, of the USCG, USACE, NOAA, states and Inland Barge Industry, partnering together, to effectively and expeditiously secure the waterways prior to storm landfall and restore them afterward. It is not the intent of this Protocol to repeat or supplant specifics of existing USCG and USACE hurricane response plans.

## **2.0 GULF COAST INLAND WATERWAYS JOINT HURRICANE TEAM**

### **2.1 MEMBER POSITIONS**

Members of the Gulf Coast Inland Waterways Joint Hurricane Team are defined by the following positions:

#### **USCG:**

Eighth Coast Guard District Staff Representative

*For all Sectors: Waterways Management Person or Commander's Designee*

Sector Mobile

Sector New Orleans, VTS New Orleans

Captain of the Port of Houma, VTS Berwick Bay

Sector Houston-Galveston, VTS Houston

Captain of the Port of Port Arthur, VTS Port Arthur

Sector Corpus Christi

#### **USACE:**

Mobile District, Waterways Manager

New Orleans District, GIWW Project Manager, Mississippi River Project Manager

Galveston District, Waterways Manager

#### **NOAA:**

Gulf Coast Regional Navigation Managers and NOAA Team Members

#### **STATE PARTNERS:**

Appropriate Transportation Departments, Waterways Officials, Port Authorities

(e.g. TXDOT, LADOTD, MSDOT, ALDOT, FDOT) and others

#### **TOWING AND MARITIME INDUSTRY:**

GICA Industry Response Team, Representatives from: GNOBFA, LAMA, Big River Coalition, AWO, Bar Pilots' Rep from each Gulf Coast Port or Pilot Organizations.

## **2.2 TEAM FUNCTION**

The Gulf Coast Inland Waterways Joint Hurricane Team (JHT) will be chaired by the GICA President. All members will have at least one designated backup person to serve on the team in their absence. Members are expected to represent their various agency departments/divisions or constituents' interests on the JHT. It is expected that members will be empowered to make agreements and develop protocol practices on behalf of their constituents where appropriate and within existing rules and regulations. Each member is expected to review the proceedings and work product of the JHT with their respective senior management to ensure understanding and agreement.

The team will convene at least once annually to review the need for revisions or changes to the Gulf Coast Inland Waterways Joint Hurricane Response Protocol document. Members are encouraged to raise any issue that appears pertinent to the team's purpose at any time. All members are encouraged to voice opinions on all issues at any time. The objective of this team is to continuously improve the collective response to storm events that impact the waterway.

Recognizing that this team of individuals is also uniquely qualified to address other forms of waterway traffic interruption, when and where appropriate, the team may consider developing collective responses to other disruptive waterway events.

## **3.0 PARTNERS' RESPONSE ROLES**

Relative to their hurricane preparation and response roles, the JHT recognizes the following team expectations of each partner:

### **USACE**

- Leads the Waterway Restoration Conference Calls.
- Responsible for assessing and verifying channel physical conditions relative to depth and obstructions. Assigns and submits survey area requests to NOAA, US Navy, GICA and other survey assets.
- Reports channel condition and results of surveys and channel assessments to USCG. Develops, maintains and publishes a Project Condition Spreadsheet, which depicts channel condition and open/closed/restricted status.
- Advises USCG on open/closed and restriction status of waterways. Coordinates operations of lock structures before and after the storm and communicates plans for shutdown and startup via conference calls and email distribution.
- Communicates with Industry Logistics Support Center regarding equipment and service needs. Although not a requirement, if possible, each District will provide Intracoastal Waterway Centerline Alignment Files to the Industry Waterway Response Team that is compatible with onboard positioning equipment. This can facilitate more accurate channel assessment and reporting of problem spots.
- Issues emergency contracts for the clearing of shoaled areas and channel obstructions.

## USCG

- Coordinates and communicates the implementation of the four port readiness states (Whiskey, X-ray, Yankee, and Zulu) ahead of the storm.
- Prior to landfall, discusses upcoming plans for waterway closures with the barge and deep draft industry and considers industry input when appropriate.
- Makes ultimate judgments on waterway open/closed status and communicates this to the USACE and industry.
- Requests industry participation as appropriate in initial over-flight information-gathering for determining waterway status and initial channel assessment plans for deploying survey assets.
- Coordinates post storm channel ATON surveys including industry supplied assets, and supplies USCG personnel to accompany aboard industry waterway assessment vessels.
- Communicates with Industry Logistics Support Center regarding equipment and service needs.
- Maintains list of critical aids to navigation within D8.
- Informs industry on status of bridges that impact navigation.
- Stands up the Marine Transportation System Recovery Unit (MTSRU) in order to maintain situational awareness for status of the MTS and reports via the Common Assessment and Reporting Tool (CART).

## NOAA

- Participates on pre-storm teleconferences providing expert advice and weather forecasting services to participants.
- Provides additional survey assets as available and upon request from the JHT and the Incident Commander.
- Maintains and publishes Captain of the Port guide to NOAA Emergency Hydrographic Survey. This guide is created to help the United States Coast Guard (USCG) Captain of the Port (COTP) understand the full scope of support services available to them through NOAA's Office of Coast Survey (OCS).  
Link: <https://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/customer-service/docs/navigation-response/a-cotp's-guide-to-noaa-nrt-response-final.pdf>

## STATE PARTNERS

- Through appropriate offices having waterways and transportation responsibility, coordinate state inputs to pre and post storm planning.
- Provides critical information on evacuation planning and execution and bridge operations.

## **GICA**

- Serves as the barge industry representative for the USACE and USCG to assist them in fulfilling their respective roles relative to waterway management. Serves as the Chair of the Gulf Coast JHT and convenes meetings as necessary.
- Upon request, marshals additional resources and personnel as needed and available to ensure adequate support for the USACE or USCG relative to storm response and waterway restoration missions.
- Serves as a single point of contact for two-way information flow, between the inland barge industry and government agencies.
- Maintains database of industry contact lists for dissemination of warning, preparation and recovery information. The industry contact list will be open for listing of anyone who requests notification, regardless of affiliation with any trade organization.
- Maintains a group of qualified industry personnel to serve in specified hurricane response roles as defined in the Gulf Coast Joint Hurricane Response Protocol.
- Provides assets, services, material, and supplies as requested and as available, to expedite waterway restoration efforts. These include, but are not limited to:
  - Acceptable Channel Survey Vessels and Qualified Operating Personnel for waterway assessments and ATON surveys.
  - Lists of Critical Aids to Navigation that must be in place for safe inland barge navigation on the Intracoastal Waterway and tributaries.
  - Industry Logistics Support Center and staffing to assist the USACE and USCG in locating equipment, services, material, and supplies.
  - Incident Command Representatives located in appropriate USCG Command Centers to facilitate information flow to and from industry stakeholders, provide information on critical cargo shipments, help prioritize waterway re-openings, and coordinate industry assets assisting in restoration efforts.
  - Securing assets, as requested and as available, to safely and efficiently shut down the waterway system before the storm and expedite restoration of inland waterborne commerce after the storm.
  - Implementing the barge industry's Self Help Plan (see Section 4.2) as appropriate to expedite traffic.

### **4.0 GICA INDUSTRY RESPONSE TEAMS**

GICA will coordinate the activities of the barge industry response teams involved with the joint hurricane response effort. At least one meeting of all industry teams will be held prior to hurricane season annually. All members of the Industry Response Team will also be members of the JHT. GICA will ensure that four response team functions are maintained and staffed to assist USACE and USCG:

#### **4.1 Incident Command Team**

The GICA Incident Command Team will include individuals experienced in the operations and logistics elements of the inland barge industry on the Gulf Coast. Others will be recruited from within the barge industry's ranks as needed. Members of this team will deploy to appropriate USCG Sectors upon request, prior to storm landfall. They will serve as primary liaisons between the USCG, USACE and barge industry. Those members designated as Primary Command Reps will be the first to deploy, with those members designated as Secondary serving in a backup, or relief capacity. The GICA President will serve as the leader of the GICA Incident Command Team.

#### **Incident Command Team Function**

The GICA President will discuss Incident Command Team deployment with the appropriate Sector Commanders, or their designated reps, at least 96 hours prior to projected storm landfall and at subsequent times, as the landfall point becomes better defined. The GICA President will convene a conference call with all members of the GICA Incident Command Team at least 96 hours prior to landfall, and as necessary after that point, to establish deployment plans and individual assignments for the storm response.

The GICA Industry Command Center Rep, and the GICA Industry Survey Vessel Team, may deploy ahead of projected landfall, to the USCG Sector most likely to sustain heaviest waterway damage. Additional deployments to other USCG Sectors may occur per agreements with Sector Commanders as noted above. This will be coordinated within the GICA Incident Command Team, through the pre-storm planning conference calls.

In addition, a barge industry representative may be present within the USCG Eighth District MTSRU, a component of the Eighth Coast Guard District's Crisis Action Team (CAT), ahead of storm landfall.

Industry will not normally plan to maintain a presence within the USACE Command Center, unless requested. The Waterways Restoration Conference Calls, as well as continuous email/phone contact, will provide adequate communication in most instances. GICA will maintain an additional email-based communications link with industry and waterways stakeholders and disseminate USACE information via this link.

A GICA presence on USCG initial post storm over-flights of the waterway has proven valuable in establishing the need for further waterway assessments (channel condition and ATON), or even reopening immediately in some cases. GICA will make available an experienced industry representative for this flight at the USCG's request. Industry may also be able to provide aircraft for over-flights for waterway restoration purposes, at the request of the USCG or USACE. This is normally a first step in the waterway restoration effort, with information used to plan the deployment of survey vessels and assess ability to reopen certain waterway reaches.

A key piece of information for both pre- and post-storm planning is information from fuel terminals. In the past, this information has been provided by GICA via its contacts with shippers and barge carriers. It has proven valuable to the USCG as they inform government officials of supply and delivery status for these critical products. Pre-storm planning of loading



and staging of barges carrying these products has also proven to be most valuable in quickly restoring supplies to storm-stricken regions. The status of fuel terminals after storm passage is also an important factor in planning of waterway restoration efforts. This communication and concept will be encouraged by the inland barge industry among all who are on the industry contact lists. It will be the responsibility of the GICA Incident Command Team to insure this information is obtained and communicated appropriately to the USCG, both pre and post-storm.

After an initial seven-day response period, or if it is deemed necessary to deploy Industry Reps to other Sectors, evaluation of need for backup deployment will be made. It is envisioned that the backups will only be needed for up to a maximum of three days, in order for the primary to have a brief break or attend to personal issues.

Primary responsibilities of the Incident Command Rep will be:

- Gather from the industry all appropriate information that may assist USACE and USCG in mounting an effective hurricane preparation and response.
- Disseminate information to the barge industry on storm preparation and response, including waterway status, to the inland barge industry interests, via GICA database lists.
- Consult with USACE and USCG personnel on waterway management issues relative to inland barge operations.
- Serve as a single point of contact for inland barge industry members on special issues needing resolution.
- Identify the need to activate the Industry Self Help Plan at locks, bridges, or other points of traffic restriction as appropriate. In coordination with the USCG and USACE, contact the Industry Self Help Coordinator and begin implementation of the plan as appropriate.

#### **4.2 Self Help Plan Team**

GICA has developed the concept of towing vessels assisting one another during times of traffic restriction on the waterway. This concept has proven most effective at expediting traffic during these periods. Volunteers, experienced in towing vessel operations, are placed on the scene and help serve as Vessel Traffic Coordinators. They request certain actions on the part of towing vessel operators with regard to sequencing of traffic flow, serving as assist vessels, tripping vessels, holding tow for others, or helping make or break tow.

The GICA Incident Command Team will include a position for a Self Help Team Leader, who will set up and monitor any barge industry Self Help operations that may be required in conjunction with the hurricane response.

#### **Self Help Plan Team Function**

The Self Help Team Leader may be activated, after discussion with the barge industry Incident Command Rep. The Self Help Team Leader will maintain a list of potential Vessel Traffic Coordinators (VTC's) that have indicated their possible availability to serve as a VTC after the storm. Barge industry members are expected to offer available personnel and vessels to serve as VTC's and Assist Vessels during times of need. The implementation of the Self Help Plan will be coordinated by the Self Help Team Leader.

### **4.3 Waterway Assessment Team**

A team of individuals along with trailerable waterway assessment vessels can be made available to assist the USCG and USACE with post-storm waterway assessments, which will include Aid-to-Navigation (ATON) and waterway depth. These vessels will be available for waterway restoration assistance, provided they are not needed for owners' emergency response. The Waterway Assessment Team will have a designated leader who is a currently licensed Master of Towing Vessels (MTV), at a minimum, and has experience on the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway handling tows of 600 feet or more in length. The Team Leader will coordinate the status of the Ready Fleet during hurricane season and insure a pool of qualified vessel operators is maintained, including all contact information. While conducting waterway assessments, each Waterway Assessment Team vessel will have on board, as a minimum, one USCG representative, and one individual currently licensed and experienced with towing vessel operation in the region.

#### **Waterway Assessment Team Function**

A waterway assessment vessel and operator will deploy with the Incident Command Rep to the appropriate USCG Sector or in safe proximity to the waterway prior to storm landfall. The Incident Command Rep at the Sector will direct the efforts of the Waterway Assessment Vessel. Each Waterway Assessment Vessel will have cell phone, VHF radio communication, and Emergency Position Indicating Beacon (EPIRB) capability. Pre-determined check-in times will be established prior to the vessel departing the dock. If appropriate, each Waterway Assessment Vessel will be equipped with an operating satellite phone. Plans for survey of the waterway for depth and ATONs will be developed with USACE and USCG, via the Waterways Restoration Conference Calls and other communications.

Each vessel will have adequate fuel onboard to complete the day's mission, plus sufficient reserve to remain underway for one hour. Emergency water, food, and other safety provisions will be onboard to sustain an overnight stay. Barge industry towing vessels in the region will be expected to assist as appropriate, with berthing, fuel, water, or other necessary items if requested by Waterway Assessment Vessels.

The Waterway Assessment Vessel will have onboard an approved list of critical ATONs for the region being assessed. A complete list of discrepancies, noting which are critical and which are non-critical to establishing towing operations, will be furnished to the USCG ATON Supervisor upon returning from each mission.

Waterway Assessment Vessels will run a center-line depth verification only for the Intracoastal Waterway, unless otherwise instructed by USACE. The tide stage at the time of assessment will be noted. A summary of findings will be reported to the USCG Waterways Management Officer and USACE Waterways Contact at the end of the mission. Identification of surface-visible waterway obstructions is also a mission component of the Waterway Assessment Vessels. Any areas of interest will be noted listing the appropriate GIWW Mile Board.

Waterway Assessment Vessels may also be used to assist in transporting and repositioning of ATONs as requested by the USCG. In some cases, industry towing vessels and barges may be used for transporting ATON equipment to remote locations at the request of the USCG.

#### **4.4 Logistics Support Center Team**

Experience from past hurricane responses has indicated that the inland barge industry is uniquely positioned to use its industry-wide contact network to locate various materials, services, and equipment that may be needed in the storm response effort. In an effort to support USACE and USCG logistics units, the inland barge industry, via the River Industry Executive Task Force (RIETF), a committee with the American Waterway Operators Association, will stand up a Logistics Support Center immediately after storm landfall. The operation of this center will be directed by the Logistics Support Center Team Leader.

#### **Logistics Support Center Team Function**

The Logistics Support Center will be operated as a reach back resource, available to receive requests for specific items from the USACE and USCG, to locate potential suppliers for the item, and put the requestor and supplier in contact with each other. The Logistics Support Center operates as a “clearing house” only. Its purpose is not to contract or enter into any form of obligation. Its purpose is to expedite the location of items for USACE and USCG through its unique network. Typical items that the Logistics Support Center may locate are:

Towing Services, Barge Transportation, Water Barges, Fuel Barges, Fuel in all quantities, including truck, tote tank, barge, etc., specialized marine equipment, crane barges, spud barges, quarters barges, salvage equipment, and other items. Members of the industry also own aircraft that may be available for the response effort for various purposes.

**Contact information for center will be 800-791-1073.**

#### **4.5 GICA Response Team Communications**

The Industry Response Team will rely on email communications as its primary method of contact, with secondary communications being land phone line, followed by cell phone. Waterways Assessment Teams will rely on cell phone as primary, followed by satellite phone, and finally VHF radio.

The Industry Teams will be communicating via email. GICA will use the following Subject Lines for all storm related email messages from the team will begin with the following:

**GICA STORM ALERT...**Will refer to an unplanned or last-minute Tropical Storm or Hurricane related event that will definitely impact tow movements. These messages will normally be of high priority and critical to tow operations. This information will be distributed to all inland barge industry members with email addresses in the GICA database, whether they are GICA or AWO members in good standing or not.

**GICA RESPONSE ALERT....**Same as above but will relate to post-storm events.

**GICA STORM INFO...**Will refer to planned or foreseen events related to Tropical Storms or Hurricanes that will likely impact tow movements. This information will be distributed to all inland barge industry members with email addresses in the GICA database, whether they are GICA or AWO members in good standing or not.

**GICA RESPONSE INFO**....Same as above but will relate to post-storm events.

Phone communications will also be used when appropriate.

The GICA Industry Response Team serves as a single point of contact for information from the barge industry to the USACE and USCG relative to hurricane issues, both before and after the storm. Barge industry members are expected to use this channel of communication for resolving issues and obtaining any additional information not furnished in email notices. It is expected that all USCG and USACE notices, requests for information, or other issues relative to the inland barge industry would be channeled via the GICA Industry Response Team.

Specifically, all Port Condition Notifications, storm related MSIB's, etc., will be communicated, via email (alternatively, by phone) to the GICA contact, in addition to any other distributions in effect. The GICA Industry Response Team will expect to be notified of all changes in contact information or command center location in advance.

## **5.0 BARGE INDUSTRY MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES**

The USACE and USCG are certainly not required to partner with the inland barge industry in order to fulfill their missions. However, the barge industry can bring unique value to these missions by virtue of its expert knowledge of the industry and waterways, as well as its communications network. In order to make the partnership effective for all, the barge industry must fulfill certain obligations. Below are a few of the specific obligations expected of the inland barge industry members:

- Respect the “Single Point of Contact” concept regarding USCG and USACE. Route all requests through the GICA Incident Command Rep if possible. The GICA office will fulfill this role until deployment of the teams to the USCG Sectors. Industry members are encouraged to contact the GICA RESPONSE TEAM via [jstark@gicaonline.com](mailto:jstark@gicaonline.com)
- Monitor email communications, especially those with the GICA STORM OR RESPONSE subject titles.
- Bring forth any items of concern during the pre-storm preparation phases, so that they can be brought to the USCG or Corps for resolution.
- Provide feedback on this entire process so that it can be improved.
- Solicit from customers and supply critical cargo or vessel operation information to GICA that could bear on prioritization of shutdown and startup of the waterways. For example, cargos of direct impact on the public such as fuel delivery or coal supply planning can be of value in prioritizing waterway segment restoration. Inventory status from customers can play an important role in establishing priority of waterway restoration and calming concerns of governmental entities not familiar with the role that barge transportation may play in their recovery plans. Consider discussing pre-storm strategy for maintaining inventories of critical maritime-transported products or loading and positioning of equipment for immediate movement after the storm.

- Supply Vessel Traffic Coordinators and Towing Assist Vessels as needed to mount an effective Self Help Plan if needed.
- Supply Waterways Assessment Vessels and qualified operating personnel as needed to expedite waterway restoration. Provide notice of ability to help well ahead of a storm.
- Provide status reports for vessels secured along the waterway prior to the storm, including position, personnel onboard, barges in tow, product, and destination.
- Begin vessel relocations to safe harbor as necessary, and communicate to GICA any potential problems with getting vessels to safe harbor before condition Zulu or the closure of critical bridges or locks as soon as possible. Specific areas of concern are New Orleans Inner Harbor Navigation, Harvey, Algiers Canal RNA, Morgan City Bridges, all GIWW lock structures, and Galveston Causeway Railroad Bridge.
- Encourage and forward any vessel observations such as weather/tide, obstructions, or other observations that may be helpful in assessing waterway damage and the need to deploy assets to the area after the storm.
- Self-police, to the extent practical, other barge operators, ensuring that those who may be unaware of waterway restrictions are apprised of current conditions.
- Encourage others who may need to be on the industry distribution lists to submit their information to GICA.
- Help reduce the number of individual contacts by establishing a single company email address that can be internally distributed within the company.
- Assist as needed with supplying emergency berthing, fuel, water, and supplies to waterway assessment teams or other Corps, USCG, or NOAA assets. This is intended to supply emergency needs to keep teams effective on their mission of restoring commerce quickly. It is envisioned that these items might be supplied from vessels along the waterway in remote locations. The barge industry may also be asked to provide emergency generator fuel for generators at lock structures.

## **6.0 CONFERENCE CALLS**

### **6.1 Port Coordination Teams, Stakeholders, and Harbor Safety Committee Calls**

There are at least two distinct functions that must be covered in port area storm management. The first is that of communicating with a wide variety of port stakeholders to discern plans and problems involved with shutting down and starting up traffic in the Captain of the Port's Area of Responsibility (AOR). This process of communication yields priorities for addressing special needs. Every port area already has a system for completing this assessment. Usually this is done via conference calls, in the form of a Port Emergency Action Team, Port Coordination Team, Harbor Safety Committee, or Waterways Advisory Committee. The second, separate, and distinct function is that of preparing for and conducting waterway restoration efforts. These are two separate and distinct needs, and to try to force them to be handled with a single conference call in all instances may not be the most effective course, especially in the case of a larger port area or USCG Sector Command.

## **6.2 Waterways Restoration Conference Call**

As a minimum, a once daily conference call will be instituted for the purpose of preparing for the storm and conducting waterways restoration efforts immediately afterward. Ideally, the Waterways Restoration Call process contemplates that only those entities directly involved with surveying and assessing the waterways and deep draft channels will be members of this call. Results of the existing port stakeholder calls might be used to guide the priority of the waterway restoration efforts, and this information will be fed into the waterways restoration process via the USCG representative who will be present on both calls. The Waterway Restoration Conference Call will be led by the USACE Operations and Maintenance team member, with members on the call being USCG Waterways Management Personnel for the Sectors covered by the USACE District, NOAA, and GICA. Others may be present at the direction of the USCG or USACE. Note that the structure and conduct of these calls is at the discretion of the USACE District and appropriate USCG Sector personnel, and some may decide to hold the Waterway Restoration Calls concurrently with the Port Stakeholders' Call, or Port Coordination Team Call.

Waterways Restoration Conference Calls will originate with each of the three Gulf Coast USACE Districts, specifically the Operations and Maintenance Waterways Project Manager. The first Waterways Restoration Conference Call will be held at the 96 hour point, before projected arrival of gale force winds. The USACE will lead the conference call, specify the time, and publish the contact number ONLY to those who will be participating in the Waterways Restoration Conference Call process. Attendance on this call will be controlled by the USACE and USCG Waterways Management personnel. The effectiveness of the waterways restoration process depends upon an efficiently administered information and planning network that is fed by the port stakeholder input process. This may occur outside the Waterways Restoration Conference Call process.

A TEST CONFERENCE CALL in each of the three Gulf Coast USACE Districts will be conducted prior to June 1 each year.

Key information communicated during the Waterway Restoration Conference Calls will be:

### **Pre-Storm Call:**

- Plans for relocation of Sector and Corps Command Posts, including contact information.
- Waterway, Lock, and Bridge shutdown plans, if known at the time.
- Plans for deploying assets and personnel from the Industry Response Team.
- Confirmation of critical contact information among the call participants.
- Time for next Waterways Restoration Conference Call.

### **Post-Storm Call:**

Plans for assessing waterways for depth and aids to navigation status would be developed based on initial over-flight information. GICA Waterways Assessment Teams may be deployed as required. The USACE will maintain a Project Status Spreadsheet, showing the current operational condition of each project channel, and brief the call participants on the status of each project channel. At least once daily until the waterways are restored to normal operation, or at the conclusion of each Waterways Restoration Conference Call, this

spreadsheet will be distributed to members on the call as well as stakeholders, via the GICA distribution lists and other distributions as appropriate. USACE will issue recommendations on proposed waterway status, including “Open, Remain Closed, or Open with Restrictions”. The USCG will issue final determinations on operational status for each project, including draft, daylight-only, one-way, or other appropriate restrictions.

Of special note in the post-storm call will be determining plans for resuming lock and bridge operations that impact waterway navigation. To that end the USCG Eighth District Bridge Administration Office should participate on the call. The Eighth District Bridge Office will maintain a “Bridge Status Spreadsheet” describing the location, contact information, and current operational status of all navigation critical bridges on the waterway segments covered by the Protocol. It will be issued as changes to present status are received.

The presence of downed power lines, obstructions, or other issues identified during over-flights or from vessel reports will be noted and plans for removing them tracked by this group.

### **TYPICAL USACE DISTRICT WATERWAY RESTORATION CONFERENCE CALL PARTICIPANTS**

#### **MOBILE**

USACE Mobile Waterways Project Manager  
USACE Survey Team Leaders  
Sector Mobile Waterways Branch  
Sector ATON Team Leaders  
USCG District Bridge Branch  
NOAA  
GICA  
WTWA  
Deep Draft Rep  
Alabama State Port Authority  
Others determined by Corps and USCG

#### **NEW ORLEANS**

USACE New Orleans Waterways Project Manager  
USACE Survey Team Leaders  
Sector New Orleans Waterways Branch  
Sector ATON Team Leaders  
COTP Houma  
COTP Port Arthur  
USCG District Bridge Branch  
NOAA  
GICA  
LAMA  
GNOBFA  
RIETF/AWO

Bar and River Pilots' Representatives  
SELFPA East and West / CPRA  
Others determined by Corps and USCG

**GALVESTON**

USACE Galveston Waterways Project Manager  
USACE Survey Team Leaders  
Sector Houston Waterways Branch  
VTS Port Arthur  
VTS Houston/Galveston  
Sector ATON Team Leaders  
COTP Port Arthur  
Sector Corpus Christi Waterways Branch  
USCG District Bridge Branch  
NOAA  
GICA  
Bar Pilots' Representatives from all Deep Draft Ports Affected  
Others determined by Corps and USCG

**7.0 COMMUNICATIONS**

Email notifications to and from all four partners, NOAA, USACE, USCG, and GICA, is the preferred method of communication. Land phone, followed by cell phone is the next preferred method.

GICA will maintain an all-inclusive email distribution database containing all industry email contacts which it receives, regardless of affiliation. In addition, GICA will maintain a number of selective notification lists for specific audiences. This system is located remote from any coastal area, and it will be accessible by all on the GICA Industry Response Team.

The barge industry may be capable of supplying portable command centers complete with AIS capability and satellite communications as requested by the USCG or USACE, subject to the emergency response needs of the owners.

In fulfilling its responsibility as the single point of contact for the barge industry to both receive and provide information relative to hurricane response, GICA will strive to issue complete email information on waterway status and any special requirements on an "as it happens" basis. It may also convene barge industry member conference calls as appropriate to disseminate and collect information important to the industry.



## **8.0 INCIDENT COMMAND CENTERS**

### **8.1 Staffing of Command Centers**

The barge industry may staff USCG Sector Command Centers with a GICA Industry Command Representative when appropriate and after consultation with the Sector Commanding Officers. After seven days on duty, a relief industry rep will take over until the primary rep can return.

Additionally, a GICA Waterways Assessment Team may accompany each industry command rep to the Sector. The need for this will be established during the GICA Industry Response Team pre-storm conference calls, and it will be cleared with the Sector Commander.

The industry teams will be on-site with the Sector prior to storm landfall.

A barge industry representative will also be present in the USCG District 8 Incident Management Team, deploying as appropriate before the storm.

### **8.2 Relocations of Command Centers**

Critical to the effective function of this partnership is knowing when and where Corps and USCG command centers will be during and after the storm, what industry's plans are for accompanying in the USCG command centers and contact information for key waterway restoration team members.

During the pre-storm Waterways Restoration Conference Call, relocation plans and contact information will be confirmed among all participants. Industry does not anticipate the need to have a presence in the USACE Command Structure; however, if the need for this becomes apparent, from any partner's perspective, industry will designate a team member to join USACE command center.

## **9.0 PRE-STORM PREPARATIONS**

The inland barge industry's plans for moving vessels to safe harbor are subject to waterway open/closed status, lock operational status, lock open/closed status upon shutdown of operations, certain floodgates status, and operational status of certain moveable rail and highway bridges. The issuance of local "Mandatory Evacuation Orders" has the potential for significantly impacting the inland barge industry's ability to move vessels and dangerous cargos to safe harbor. These orders must not be allowed to impact the operation of locks, bridges, and other structures critical to the movement of marine vessels to safe harbor. The protocol addresses these issues with the following:

- The USCG Captain of the Port or Sector Commander will notify GICA and local maritime organizations of his intent to close a major artery of marine commerce 24 hours in advance of closure, if possible. The industry will evaluate the evacuation status of vessels immediately and respond to the Captain of the Port with any issues that need to be discussed.

- GICA will assist in this effort by disseminating information to inland waterways industry contacts and bringing industry responses and issues needing additional resolution or discussion back to the COTP.

### **9.1 Locks and Bridges**

Locks, moveable bridges, and other such structures located on the inland waterways present unique challenges to the safe shutdown of maritime commerce before storms and its efficient restoration afterward. Vessel personnel and hazardous cargos can be forced to weather the storm in unsafe locations if a structure is prematurely closed to marine traffic ahead of expectations, contrary to published plans, or prior to the arrival of unsafe weather conditions. The interpretation of local Mandatory Evacuation orders has further complicated this challenge for both structure and vessel personnel alike. Very often, because of the unpredictable nature of Gulf hurricanes, vessels are forced to flee forecast landfall points with very short notice. This is especially true in the case of a continuously moving forecast landfall location as seen with Hurricane Rita. In many cases, these vessels may be transporting hazardous cargos that could present significant added risk if the vessel is negatively impacted by the storm in remote areas where mitigation measures could be days away. It is generally expected by the barge industry that locks and bridges will make arrangements for their personnel to be on duty until weather conditions no longer allow marine traffic to safely pass through the facility or the weather conditions imminently threaten to cut off evacuation routes of facility personnel.

The startup of these structures after storm passage also presents significant challenges. In the case of structures being left in the closed-to-marine-traffic position, it is often a difficult matter of physically moving the bridge or lock gate in the presence of debris and no electrical power, in order to re-establish maritime traffic. There are significant consequences on both sides of the issue of what position in which to leave a structure that has direct impact on waterborne commerce, but all must be weighed carefully, including the presence of alternate landside routes. Locating structure operating personnel and assessing operational ability of the structure, followed by communicating the results to industry can become critical bottlenecks to restoring maritime traffic on the waterway.

- The USCG Captain of the Port or Sector Commander maintains approved copies of appropriate rail and highway bridge hurricane plans, which include pre-storm shutdown and post-storm startup plans and contact numbers, are on file. Access credentialing, which will allow critical personnel to pass checkpoints and gain entry to their facilities after the storm must also be addressed in these plans. In keeping with those plans, the USCG will notify GICA of anticipated plans for shutting down bridge operations 24 hours in advance of closure, if possible. This requirement should be reflected in the structure's approved plan before USCG approval. The USCG will notify GICA of any known deviations from the approved plan as soon as possible to avoid having personnel, vessels, and hazardous cargos trapped in unsafe areas.
- The USACE will provide notification to GICA, 12 hours in advance of anticipated shutdown of operations of any Intracoastal Waterway lock structure and indicate the final position of the lock gates, being open or closed to marine traffic.
- The USCG will serve as the GICA's point of contact relative to rail or highway bridge operational issues.

- Lock and Floodgate structures in Texas will remain in the Open-to-Marine Traffic positions when abandoned prior to storm landfall.

## **10.0 USCG PORT CONDITIONS**

The inland barge industry recognizes and responds to USCG Port Conditions Whiskey, X-ray, Yankee, and Zulu. It is not the intent of this protocol to discuss the detailed requirements of these conditions, but rather to address how these conditions are communicated outward to the industry. The most effective method of notifying industry of Port Condition changes is via email distribution. Each USCG Captain of the Port or Sector Commander will include GICA on an email distribution announcing changes in Port Condition status. In the instance of port closure, which is condition Zulu, 24 hour advance notice of intent to close the port or a major waterway will be made if at all possible.

GICA will, in turn, issue these communications, via its industry email distribution list, to all industry contacts.

## **11.0 POST-STORM RESPONSE ACTIONS**

In addition to those actions described earlier, the following are actions expected to be taken by the barge industry, USACE, NOAA, and USCG after storm passage:

- An over-flight assessment of waterway condition, including ATON and visible obstructions, will be completed, forming the basis of a surface waterway assessment plan. Industry Command Reps may accompany on this flight as requested by the USCG. Additionally, industry may be able to supply aircraft to assist in waterway assessments as requested by the USCG.
- Industry Waterway Assessment Teams will position for immediate departure after the initial post-storm Waterway Restoration Conference Call.
- Port Coordination Teams, Stakeholder, and Harbor Safety Committees may convene conference calls to establish overall condition of port stakeholders and set waterway priorities.
- The Waterway Restoration Conference Call will be initiated by the appropriate Corp of Engineers Districts. Some inter-communication may be helpful here to avoid overlapping where certain USCG individuals must be present on both calls. Input from the Port Coordination Team, Stakeholder, and Harbor Safety Committee Conference Calls will be used to establish priorities for reopening waterways.
- Initial waterway assessments will begin, and findings reported by the waterway assessment teams as possible during the day, but at the end of every day as a minimum.
- The USCG will determine operational status of appropriate bridges as soon as possible and convey to the waterways restoration team. The USCG will issue via email to the industry and update as necessary via the existing USCG District 8 Bridge Status Spreadsheet.

- USACE will determine the operational status of appropriate locks and convey to the team as soon as possible. Daily updates will be issued via email, as appropriate, until locks are fully functional.
- As special logistical needs are identified by the USCG or Corps, the Industry Command Rep will ensure that the Logistics Support Center is informed if he/she is aware of the need.
- The Industry Response Team will assist USACE and USCG in any way possible to ensure an effective hurricane response.
- When necessary, the USCG will assist in securing access through controlled-entry points for essential industry operational personnel for purposes of providing relief, provisions, supplies or storm response. Vessel crews who have endured the sustained stress of storm conditions may need to be relieved of duty soon after conditions permit to ensure continued operational safety.
- When resumption of cargo transfer operations at terminals and dock facilities can take place is often a question after storm passage. The USCG will communicate any special instructions in this regard to the barge industry and via GICA and Port Coordination Team networks as soon as possible after the storm.

## **12.0 SALVAGE**

In the event of significant vessel casualties, the Industry Response Team may identify a Salvage Team Coordinator, who will join the USCG Salvage Unit and coordinate with vessel owners to furnish appropriate data regarding vessel ownership, salvage plans, and updates on progress.

## **13.0 EXERCISES / REVIEWS**

Annually, each USACE District will initiate a TEST WATERWAYS RESTORATION CONFERENCE CALL for the purpose of verifying phone numbers and personnel. This test call will be conducted every 30 days, or as deemed appropriate by USACE District administering the call and USCG Sectors involved, during the hurricane season and revisions documented by the appropriate Corps District.

The tenets of the Gulf Coast Joint Hurricane Response Protocol will be incorporated to the degree possible in all Industry, USACE, NOAA, and USCG hurricane exercises.

The Joint Hurricane Team will convene at least once after each hurricane season for the purpose of incorporating lessons learned, updating contact information, and making any other revisions necessary.

## APPENDICES

Rather than include specific contact information that is likely to change throughout this document, that information is included in this APPENDIX section for ease of location and revision.

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## **APPENDIX 2. Waterways Restoration Conference Call Contacts**

To best manage participation on the Waterways Restoration Conference Call, call in numbers will be established and issued by the appropriate USACE or USCG personnel whose contact information is listed below:

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LCDR Thao Nguyen –504-365-2231 / cell 504-270-4275

LCDR Michael Stewart incoming

MSU /COTP Houma - CAPT Russell 985-850-6415

LCDR Anthony Romero - 985-380-6471 / cell 985-397-3266

MSU Morgan City - CDR Ben Russell 985-380-5375

LT Hayley Gipson 985-380-5334

### **HOUSTON GALVESTON**

USACE Galveston Corps District – Belynda Kinman - 409-766-6323/ cell 409-739-0542

Karl Brown – 409-766-3069

USCG Sector Houston - VTS Director, Brian Smith - 281-464-4826 / cell 832-236-5819

USCG Sector /Airsta Corpus Christi - LCDR Margaret Brown – 361-438-3650

MST1 Kevin Kyles - 361-888-3162 ext 305

### **PORT ARTHUR**

VTS Director, Scott Whalen – 409-719-5080 / cell 409-460-0435

### **APPENDIX 3. USCG Contacts**

#### **CCGDEIGHT**

Primary District Eighth District Incident Command Center –504-589-6225  
Relocation to St. Louis, Mo. – 314-269-2300

#### **COTP Mobile**

Primary Sector Mobile Command Center – 251-441-5508/5976  
Relocation to Aviation Training Center – 251-441-5080  
LCDR Dan Kilcullen - 251-441-6512  
LT Andy Anderson - 251-441-5940 / 251-382-8653

#### **COTP New Orleans**

Primary Sector New Orleans Command Center – 504-365-2533/2545  
In the event of a Category 3 or higher hurricane, the Incident Command Post (ICP) for Sector New Orleans will be relocated Kiln, MS.

In the event of a Category 2 or lower, the ICP location will be at the office in Algiers, La.

Waterways / VTS Director – LCDR Thao Nguyen – 504-365-2231 / cell 504-270-4275  
VTS–George Petras – 504-365-2234 / cell 985-707-4776  
VTS Watch Supervisor – 504-365-2230/504-628-0948

#### **COTP Morgan City**

Command Center -985-380-5320  
Waterways/VTS – LT Hayley Gipson - 985-380-5334 / cell 843-714-5403

#### **COTP Port Arthur**

Commanding Officer CAPT Molly Wike - 409-723-6513 / cell 409-719-1607  
VTS Supervisor, Scott Whalen 409-719-5080 / cell 409-460-0435  
VTS Watch Supervisor, 409-719-5070

#### **COTP Houston Galveston**

Sector Houston-Galveston Command Center- 281-464-4855  
Sector WWM LCDR Sarah Rosseau – 281-464-4736 / 713-398-5823  
VTS Houston/Galveston Director Brian Smith - 281-464-4826 / cell 832-236-5819  
VTS Houston/Galveston Watch Supervisor - 281.464.4837

#### **COTP Corpus Christi**

Sector Corpus Christi Command Center, 361-939-6393  
Sector WWM – LCDR Margaret Brown, 361-939-5130 / 361-244-4784  
Prevention Chief – CDR Doug Salik – 361-438-3650  
MST1 Kevin Kyles - 361-888-3162 ext 538

#### **APPENDIX 4. USACE Contact Information**

##### **Mobile District Command Center, 251-690-2495**

Relocation to Irvington, 251-957-6019

Nate Lovelace 251-694-3713 / cell 251-802-2010

Ashley Kleinschrodt 251-694-3726 / cell 251-533-2302

##### **New Orleans District Command Center**

Relocation to Vicksburg, MS

Steve Patorno – 504- 862-2333

Karl Clark - 504-862-1935 / cell 985-774-1270

Michelle Kornick – 504-862-1842

Vic Landry – 504-862-2470

Michelle Daigle – 504-862-2731

##### **Galveston District Command Center, 409-762-6300**

Relocation to Addicks Barker, TX 281-497-0740

Belynda Kinman - 409-766-6323/ cell 409-739-0542

Christopher Frabotta – 409-766-3071 / cell 910-228-4509

Karl Brown – 409-766-3069 / cell 409-370-8457

## APPENDIX 5. NOAA Contact Information

### NAVIGATION

#### **Central and Eastern Gulf - Port of Lake Charles East including AL, MS and Western FL**

Tim Osborn- Navigation Manager, Central Gulf  
office 337-291-2111, cell 337-254-5933, [tim.osborn@noaa.gov](mailto:tim.osborn@noaa.gov)

#### **Western Gulf - Sabine West to South Texas**

Quentin Stubbs – Acting Navigation Manager- Western Gulf office  
202-253-9180 / 678-469-6078; [quentin.Stubbs@noaa.gov](mailto:quentin.Stubbs@noaa.gov)

#### **Atlantic - Key West, South FL including Puerto Rico and USVI**

Navigation Manager, Eastern Gulf  
[florida.navmanager@noaa.gov](mailto:florida.navmanager@noaa.gov)

#### **Up Chain - Office of Coast Survey Navigation Services Division in Silver Spring, MD**

Julia Powell - Chief, Navigation Services Division  
office 240-847-8226, cell 301-806-1220, [Julia.powell@noaa.gov](mailto:Julia.powell@noaa.gov)

#### **LCDR Megan Guberski, Chief, Navigation Response Branch**

office 240-533-0056, cell 202-641-1801, [chief.nrb.ocs@noaa.gov](mailto:chief.nrb.ocs@noaa.gov)

#### **Lucy Hick – Acting Chief, Customer Affairs Branch**

office (240) 533-0066, cell 850-207-1287, [lucy.hick@noaa.gov](mailto:lucy.hick@noaa.gov)

#### **Captain of the Port guide to NOAA Emergency Hydrographic Survey:**

<https://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/customer-service/docs/navigation-response/a-cotp's-guide-to-noaa-nrt-response-final.pdf>

### NATIONAL WEATHER

#### **National Weather Service**

#### **Corpus Christi, TX**

John Metz - Warning Coordination Meteorologist 361-289-0959, [John.Metz@noaa-sr-crp.all@noaa.gov](mailto:John.Metz@noaa-sr-crp.all@noaa.gov); [sr-crp.awareness@noaa.gov](mailto:sr-crp.awareness@noaa.gov)

#### **OFFICE OF RESPONSE AND RESTORATION (OR&R)**

Bradford Benggio – Scientific Support Coordinator, USCG Sectors Charleston, Jacksonville, Miami, Key West, St. Petersburg, San Juan  
office (305) 530-7925, cell (954) 684-8486 [brad.benggio@noaa.gov](mailto:brad.benggio@noaa.gov)

Adam Davis – Scientific Support Coordinator, USCG Sectors Upper Mississippi, Lower Mississippi, Ohio Valley, Mobile

## **APPENDIX 6. GICA Industry Response Team Contact Information**

GICA President, Industry Team Leader – Jim Stark 901-490-3312

Todd Behlke, Asst. Team Leader –713-435-1653 / cell 713-476-8123

Kelly Teichman, Admin, Backup Command Rep – cell 409-770-7633

Mario Munoz, Team Leader –cell 504-920-2884

Logistics Support Center – 800-791-1073

TEXAS Industry Command Reps

Nate Hough 832-808-2749

Jim Reardon 832-470-5838

LOUISIANA Industry Command Reps

Matt Lagarde 504-615-2102

David Abney 504-736-1284 / cell 985-960-1440

EAST CANAL Industry Command Reps

Chas Haun 205-391-1129 / cell 205-394-1611

George Nelson 251- 402-3196

Zach McGavitt, Waterway Assessment Team Lead – 713-435-1670 / Cell 713-248-4576

Jerry Duvall, Waterway Assessment Team – 504-560-5001 / cell 504-621-1158

Tracy Cheramie, Texas Area Waterway Assessment Team – cell 713-582-1706

Cherrie Felder, Backup Command Rep – 504-371-5964 / cell 504-915-4752

Mark Wright, Backup Command Rep – cell 985-222-5230

Matt Woodruff, Backup Command Rep – 713-435-1497 / cell 713-542-6275

Lynn Muench, Industry to RIETF Rep – 314-446-6474 / cell 314-308-0378

James Prazak, Chemical Shippers Rep – 979-230-6785

## APPENDIX 7. Pilots' Contact Information

### TEXAS

**Houston Pilots** 713-645-9620 / cell 281-635-7444

**Galveston Pilots** Capt. Christos Sotirelis 409-949-9558

**Aransas-Corpus Christi Pilots** Capt Kevin Monaco: 361-888-6230 / cell 361-815-7388  
[po@accpilots.com](mailto:po@accpilots.com)

**Sabine Pilots** Capt. Charles Tweedel, 409-722-1141 [president@sabinepilots.com](mailto:president@sabinepilots.com)

**Brazos (Freeport) Pilots** Capt. Billy Burns, 979-233-1120, [office@brazospilots.com](mailto:office@brazospilots.com)

**Matagorda Bay Pilots** Capt. Steve Gibson, 361-552-9988

**Brazos Santiago (Brownsville) Pilots** Capt. Gene Tuttle, 956-943-3680

### LOUISIANA

**Louisiana Bar Pilots Association** Capt. Michael Miller, 504-458-5197,  
[michael.miller@barpilot.com](mailto:michael.miller@barpilot.com)

**Lake Charles Pilots** Captain Brett Palmer [bpalmer@lakecharlespilots.com](mailto:bpalmer@lakecharlespilots.com),

**New Orleans, Baton Rouge Pilots-** Capt. Steve Hathorn, Vice President,  
504-915-0195 [hathornsh@nobrapilots.com](mailto:hathornsh@nobrapilots.com)

**Crescent Pilots** Capt. Michael Bopp 504-812-2069, [embopp@hotmail.com](mailto:embopp@hotmail.com)

**Federal Pilots** Capt. Greg Bush, cell 504-416-6727, [president@federalpilots.com](mailto:president@federalpilots.com)

### MISSISSIPPI

**Pascagoula Bar Pilots Association** Capt. Michael Torjusen, 228-762-1151

### ALABAMA

**Mobile, AL State Docks** 251-441-7777 24 hr Port Police

Mobile Bar Pilots, LLC 251-432-2639/cell 251-680-9228

Mobile Harbor Master- Terry Gilbreath 251-441-7074/cell 251-510-7399

### FLORIDA

**Pensacola Bay Pilots, Inc.** Capt. Brian F. McGee, 850-434-8163

**St. Andrew Bay Pilots Association** (Panama City, FL) Capt. Rick Frudaker  
850-785-2524 / cell 850-832-7418; Capt. Zach Condon 781-738-1825 (Cell)