

Dated: September 18, 2003.

H.E. Johnson, Jr.,

*Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard, Commander,
Seventh Coast Guard District.*

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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Coast Guard

33 CFR Part 165

[CGD09-03-241]

RIN 1625-AA11

Regulated Navigation Area; Reporting Requirements for Barges Loaded With Certain Dangerous Cargoes, Illinois Waterway System Within the Ninth Coast Guard District

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DHS.

ACTION: Interim final rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard is establishing a regulated navigation area (RNA) for all portions of the Illinois Waterway System located within the Ninth Coast Guard District. This RNA applies to towing vessel operators and fleeting area managers who are responsible for the movement of barges carrying certain dangerous cargoes on the Illinois Waterway System and requires them to report their position and other information to the Inland River Vessel Movement Center (IRVMC). This action is necessary to ensure public safety, prevent sabotage or terrorist acts, and facilitate the efforts of emergency services and law enforcement officers responding to terrorist attacks.

DATES: This rule is effective on November 1, 2003. Comments and related material must reach the Coast Guard on or before January 5, 2004.

ADDRESSES: You may mail comments and related material to Commander, Ninth Coast Guard District (m), 1240 E. Ninth Street, Cleveland, Ohio, 44199-2060. Commander, Ninth Coast Guard District (m) maintains the public docket for this rulemaking. Comments and material received from the public, as well as documents indicated in this preamble as being available in the docket, are part of docket [CGD09-03-241] and are available for inspection or copying at Commander, Ninth Coast Guard District (m), 1240 E. Ninth Street, Cleveland, Ohio, 44199-2060 between 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. You must also mail comments on collection of information to the Office of

Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, 725 17th Street NW., Washington, DC 20503, ATTN: Desk Officer, U.S. Coast Guard.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Commander Michael Gardiner or Lieutenant Matthew Colmer, Ninth Coast Guard District Marine Safety Division, at (216) 902-6045.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Regulatory Information

On May 2, 2003, the Coast Guard published a temporary final rule and request for comments entitled "Regulated Navigation Area; Reporting Requirements for Barges Loaded With Certain Dangerous Cargoes, Illinois Waterway System within the Ninth Coast Guard District" in the **Federal Register** (68 FR 23399). We did not receive any comments. However, the Eight Coast Guard District published a parallel temporary final rule on May 2, 2003 (68 FR 23393). As of July 9, 2003, the Eight Coast Guard District had received six written comments in response to their temporary final rule.

On July 30, 2003, the Coast Guard published a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) entitled "Regulated Navigation Area; Reporting Requirements for Barges Loaded With Certain Dangerous Cargoes, Illinois Waterway System located within the Ninth Coast Guard District" in the **Federal Register** (68 FR 44706). When drafting the NPRM, we considered all written comments submitted to the docket for the parallel temporary final rule issued by the Eight Coast Guard District that was published on May 2, 2003 (68 FR 23399). The Coast Guard's responses to those comments are explained under the "Discussion of Comments and Changes" section of the NPRM (68 FR 44706).

As of September 15, 2003, we have only received one written comment on the NPRM. No public meeting was requested so one was not held.

As indicated in our "Discussion of Comments and Changes" section below, we have considered this comment in this interim final rule and, where appropriate, we have made the rule less burdensome than the temporary final rule currently in effect. In issuing this interim final rule, we have allowed for an additional comment period before we impose any final rule.

Under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3), the Coast Guard finds that good cause exists for making this rule effective less than 30 days after publication in the **Federal Register**. On May 2, 2003, we published a temporary final rule (TFR) entitled "Regulated Navigation Area; Reporting

Requirements for Barges Loaded With Certain Dangerous Cargoes, Illinois Waterway System with the Ninth Coast Guard District" in the **Federal Register** (68 FR 23399) that is set to expire 11:59 p.m. EDT on October 31, 2003.

The continued threat of maritime attacks is real as evidenced by the October 2002 attack of a tank vessel off the coast of Yemen and the continuing threat to U.S. assets as described in the President's finding, found at Executive Order 13273 of August 21, 2002 (67 FR 56215, September 3, 2002) that the security of the U.S. is endangered as evidenced by the September, 11, 2001 attacks and that such disturbances continue to endanger the international relations of the United States. *See also* Continuation of the National Emergency with Respect to Certain Terrorist Attacks, (67 FR 58317, September 13, 2002); Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect To Persons Who Commit, Threaten To Commit, Or Support Terrorism, (67 FR 59447, September 20, 2002). Additionally, a Maritime Advisory was issued to: Operators of U.S. Flag and Effective U.S. controlled Vessels and other Maritime Interests, detailing the current threat of attack, MARAD 02-07 (October 10, 2002). Consequently, heightened measures have been instituted to ensure the safety of vessels, ports and waterway users. The measures contemplated by this rule are intended to prevent future terrorist attacks against individuals, vessels or facilities on the Illinois Waterway System within the Ninth Coast Guard District. Any delay in the effective date of this TFR is impractical and contrary to the public interest. The original temporary final rule was urgently required to prevent possible terrorist strikes against the United States and more specifically the people, waterways, and properties on the navigable waters of the U.S.

Request for Comments

We encourage you to participate in this rulemaking by submitting comments and related material. If you do so, please include your name and address, identify the docket number for this rulemaking [CGD09-03-241], indicate the specific section of this document to which each comment applies, and give the reason for each comment. Please submit all comments and related material in an unbound format, no larger than 8½ by 11 inches, suitable for copying. If you would like to know they reached us, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed postcard or envelope. We will consider all comments and material received during