



# MARINE SAFETY AND SECURITY INFORMATION BULLETIN (MSIB) 09-01



9 February 2009

Coast Guard Sector San Francisco  
Department of Homeland Security

## Guidelines for Navigating in Reduced Visibility

This Marine Information Safety Bulletin (MSIB) contains the guidelines for navigation in reduced visibility for vessels 1600 gross tons or greater. These guidelines acknowledge that **Large Vessels** are not as maneuverable as smaller vessels and therefore define **Large Vessels** as power driven vessels of 1600 gross tons or more, and tugs with barges of 1600 gross tons or more. These guidelines have been adopted by the Harbor Safety Committee as navigation best practices and will be enforced by the VTS. They are to be used by the mariner when planning, initiating or navigating a transit in the Bay during periods of reduced visibility. Mariners are at all times to comply with the requirement of the International Regulations for Avoiding Collisions at Sea, or COLREGS.

1. **Critical Maneuvering Areas (CMAs):** There are areas within the bay where additional standards of care are required due to the restrictive nature of the channel, proximity of hazards, or the prevalence of adverse currents. Large vessels should not transit through CMAs when visibility is less than 0.5 nautical miles. Locations within the Bay identified as Critical Maneuvering Areas are:


- a. Redwood Creek
- b. San Mateo-Hayward Bridge
- c. Oakland Bar Channel\*
- d. Islais Creek Channel
- e. Richmond Inner Harbor
- f. Richmond -San Rafael Bridge, East Span
- g. Union Pacific Bridge
- h. New York Slough, up-bound
- i. Rio Vista Lift Bridge

\*Note: the Oakland Bar Channel is identified due to cross currents and its proximity to the Bay Bridge and Yerba Buena Island.

2. **Vessels docked:** Large vessels at a dock within the Bay should not commence a movement if visibility is less than 0.5 nautical miles at the dock.

3. **Vessels proceeding to dock:** Large vessels proceeding to a dock should anchor if visibility at the dock is known to be less than 0.5 nautical miles, unless, under all circumstances, proceeding to the dock is the safest option. Note: Vessel pilots or operators should notify VTS upon determination that a scheduled movement will be delayed or cancelled. If underway, they shall make a sailing plan deviation report per VTS regulations.

For questions and guidance contact Mr. Sean Kelley at the Vessel Traffic Service at (415) 399-7402 or [Sean.E.Kelley@uscg.mil](mailto:Sean.E.Kelley@uscg.mil).

  
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