

For more information on how to Stay Safe on the water, check on the following websites.

Boaters Guide to the Federal Requirements for Recreational Boats  
[www.uscgboating.org](http://www.uscgboating.org)

Boating Regulations Louisiana  
Department of Wildlife & Fisheries  
[www.wlf.louisiana.gov](http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov)

Handbook of Louisiana Boating Laws & Responsibilities  
[www.assets.kalkome.com](http://www.assets.kalkome.com)

Louisiana Boating Laws & Regulations  
[www.boat-ed.com](http://www.boat-ed.com)

A Guide to Louisiana Boating Laws & Regulations  
[www.boatsmartexam.com](http://www.boatsmartexam.com)

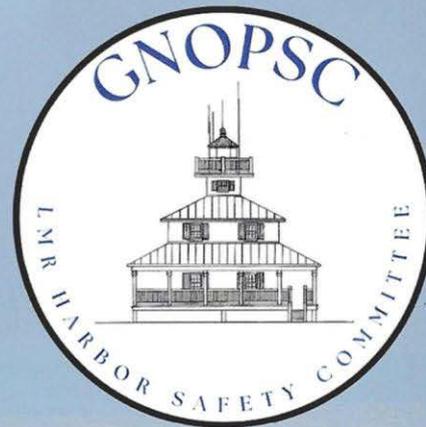


USCG Sector New Orleans  
[504.365.2200](tel:504.365.2200)

Associated Branch Pilots, Venice  
[504.524.3474](tel:504.524.3474)

Associated Federal Pilots & Docking Masters of Louisiana  
[985.898.1949](tel:985.898.1949)

GNOPSC HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE  
[gnopsc.org](http://gnopsc.org)



# STAY SAFE ON THE Mississippi River Delta



GNOPSC HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEE  
[gnopsc.org](http://gnopsc.org)



# Gulf of America

◆ SOUTHWEST PASS ENTRANCE LIGHT

# MISSISSIPPI RIVER

The Mississippi River Delta is home to some the best hunting and fishing in America. It is also essential for U.S. commerce as a vital artery for shipping, agriculture, petroleum, and industrial cargoes. It connects the nations heartland to global markets.

Here are some tips to stay safe while sharing this waterway with some of the worlds largest ships.

## Always listen to VHF/FM channel 67.

This is the designated channel for river traffic from large ships to smaller fishing and recreation vessels.

Be aware of your location in relation to prominent points of interest, such as Venice, Fort Jackson, Pilottown, SW Pass, etc.



**LINE OF VISIBILITY**

**BLIND SECTOR**

# SAFE DISTANCE

As ships move, they displace, or move, thousands of tons of water. This creates enormous rushing and pulling forces all around the vessel. Operating too close to a moving ship can cause small boats to lose control, resulting in collisions, flooding, and even capsizing.



Because ships are very large, it is easy to underestimate their speed. Avoid crossing ahead of a moving ship. Instead, cross astern, or behind the ship, at a safe distance.



If you cannot see the Pilothouse windows of a ship, her crew cannot see you. You are too close should move further away immediately.



# STAY VIGILANT

Mariners should stay vigilant and exercise extreme caution to avoid operating near a ship's wake.



**A SHIP'S WAKE**

Southwest Pass is a much narrower channel which limits how far away a small vessel can go to avoid the forces created by a passing ship. As stated before, ships displace a tremendous amount of water. It causes the water near the bank to be pulled out and is followed by a surge of water filling back in.



This is a particularly hazardous situation, especially near wing dams, jetties, and navigational structures. It can cause a small vessel to capsize or be pushed toward, or even on top of, the rock jettie.



Never cross between a tug boat and her tow.



# FOG OR LIMITED VISIBILITY

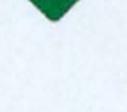
Operating small vessels in limited or zero visibility is extremely dangerous. During these conditions, ships are safely navigated by radar alone. Fiberglass boats make poor radar targets and may not pick up on the ships radar. In poor visibility situations, the safest place to be is moored to a dock at your marina.



# Recreational Boating Safety

## DO'S & DON'TS X

### *On the Lower Mississippi River and in the Southwest Pass area*

-  Wear a Coast Guard approved life jacket at all times and have one aboard for each person on your boat.
-  When in doubt as to the situation, throttle back.
-  Install a radar reflector; fiberglass boats make poor radar targets. If you navigate in poor weather or at night a radar reflector will increase the chances that larger vessels will see you on their radar.
-  Give way to larger vessels when crossing in and out of Southwest Pass, at the mouth of the passes or across the channel. **TAKE EARLY ACTION!**
-  Communicate with commercial vessels on VHF Channel 67 in the Mississippi River or in South or Southwest Pass.
-  Listen to the National Weather Service broadcasts before leaving the dock; understand the affect of the weather forecast on your vessel.
-  File a float plan with your intended plans, fishing areas and pass it on to a friend or relative.
-  Make sure your have enough fuel and oil for the day's run with a good reserve for the unexpected. Have an up to date chart aboard.
-  Fully consider the weather when making your decisions. Take into account the forecast for high winds, storms, fog and other adverse weather conditions. Take into account your capabilities and your boat's capabilities!
-  Practice good seamanship, be vigilant and follow the navigational rules of the road.
-  Stay on the edges of the waterway where practical and out of the middle of the waterway.
-  Know the limitations of your vessel and your crew.
-  Cross the bow of vessels at close quarters, pass close to or between vessels in the navigational channel. Be especially careful is you see a tugboat towing something astern, never attempt to pass between a tug and the towed object astern.
-  Anchor, fish or idle in the path of large vessels in navigation channels. Be aware that large vessels create large waves as they pass even if they are moving at slow speeds.
-  **DRINK AND BOAT!**