

Preparing a Port for Heavy Weather

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The US Coast Guard facilitates a phased port operations closure to minimize detrimental impacts due to severe weather. The Houston Maritime Complex is the largest complex in the US by tonnage and facilitates approximately \$7.4M in commerce per minute. Re-constituting port operations post-storm is critical to our national economy.

We direct port conditions that roughly align with the National Weather Service’s Hurricane Condition establishment. There can be some variability depending on the predicted severity and track of the storm.

Heavy Weather Port Condition Matrix		
Warning	Modified Track	Traditional Track
Heavy weather predicted for COTP Zone.	Certainty below 20% of any tropical storm conditions or any chance of only low intensity tropical storms.	Certainty above 20% of any tropical storm condition except low intensity tropical storms.
WARNING: - Vessels and Facilities are to take proper precautions for pending storm conditions.	Modified WHISKEY (72 hrs): - Initiate vessel and facility severe weather plans. - Regulated facilities submit Pre-Storm Checklist. - Commercial self-propelled vessels >500 GT submit "Declaration of Intent to Remain in Port".	WHISKEY (72 hrs): - Initiate vessel and facility severe weather plans. - Regulated facilities submit Pre-Storm Checklist. - Commercial self-propelled vessels >500 GT submit "Declaration of Intent to Remain in Port". - Ocean going vessels begin making plans for departure. - Port Closure (ZULU) expected 12 hours out from tropical storm conditions.
	Modified XRAY (48 hrs): - Any vessel requesting to remain in anchorage shall notify Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) of their intentions. - Smaller vessels shall seek shelter in preparation for possible port closure. - All containers stored near flood-prone areas should be moved.	XRAY (48 hrs): - Any vessel requesting to remain in anchorage shall notify Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) of their intentions. - Smaller vessels shall seek shelter in preparation for possible port closure. - All containers stored near flood-prone areas should be moved. - Port Closure (ZULU) expected 12 hours out from tropical storm conditions.
	Modified YANKEE (24 hrs): - Suspend all inbound transits. - Clear all vessels from Bolivar Anchorage. - Suspend bunkering and lightering. - Suspend all cargo transfers w/winds ≥ 40mph. - Disconnect transfer hoses/arms w/ winds ≥ 50mph. - Inland tows properly moored. - Regulated facilities shall secure or remove missile hazards, dangerous cargo and container and/or pallet stacks. - Regulated facilities should press up storage tanks to reduce wind damage.	YANKEE (24 hrs): - Suspend all inbound transits. - Clear all vessels from Bolivar Anchorage. - Suspend bunkering and lightering. - Suspend all cargo transfers w/ winds ≥ 40mph. - Disconnect transfer hoses/arms w/ winds ≥ 50mph. - Inland tows properly moored. - Regulated facilities shall secure or remove missile hazards, dangerous cargo and container and/or pallet stacks. - Regulated facilities shall press up storage tanks to reduce wind damage. - Port Closure (ZULU) expected 12 hours out from tropical storm conditions.
		ZULU (12 hrs): - Port Closed to all transits.

We utilize the National Incident Management System / Incident Command System Framework to manage pre-storm preparation and post storm operations jointly with state federal, and applicable industry partners. Our objective throughout the process is to ensure safety of life and enable swift re-constitution of port operations.