

## **IX. BRIDGES**

**A. CURRENT REGULATION:** Two fixed bridges (Vincent Thomas and Gerald Desmond) and two drawbridges (Commodore Heim highway bridge and adjacent Ford Avenue railroad bridge) span the navigable channels of the ports. The latter two, crossing Cerritos Channel, are the only drawbridges within the Plan's geographical area. The narrow channel-width combined with restrictions on passing under the drawbridges limit traffic through Cerritos Channel (with extremely rare exceptions) to pleasure vessels, tugs without tows and tugs with tows alongside or pushing ahead. However, tugs with bunker barges frequently pass under the bridges. Small size tankers occasionally pass, given appropriate weather, vessel draft and trim and maximum beam.

CFR Title 33, Subpart A to part 117 (33 CFR 117.1-17.49) regulate general operation of all drawbridges across navigable U.S. waters. The Code addresses general duties of the bridge tender, signals to request openings, radiotelephone installation, operation during repair or maintenance, closure for natural disasters, etc. 33 CFR 117.147 specifically regulates operation of our drawbridges. Page 3 of this chapter is an U.S. Coast Guard "Report of Delay at Drawbridge" form which may be forwarded to USCG D11(dpw) Bridge Administration if needed. To summarize:

1. The highway draw shall open on signal; except that the draw need not open for vessel passage from 0630 to 0800 and from 1530 to 1800 Monday through Friday (excluding federal holidays). Use Channel 13 or other assigned frequencies may to contact the bridge tender.
2. The railroad draw shall kept open except for train crossings and maintenance. Use Channel 13 or other assigned frequencies to contact the bridge tender.

**B. AtoN AND CHART NOTES:** The Committee finds sufficient the systems to mark restricted horizontal bridge clearances and the information provided about restricted vertical overhead powerline clearance. Here is a summary of AtoN marking the four bridges and associated information from chart notes and other nautical publications relating to both the bridges and powerline. [Note: Vertical clearances are given above Mean High Water (+4.6 Feet)]:

1. Vincent Thomas Bridge
  - a. AtoN: Two fixed green lights mark the center of the span. Four fixed red lights (two on each side).mark the channel limits.
  - b. Chart Note: Horizontal Clearance 1150', vertical Clearance 165', vertical Clearance 185' for middle width of 500'. Two fixed green lights mark center of span. Four fixed red lights mark limits of channel.

## 2. Gerald Desmond Bridge

- a. AtoN: Two fixed green lights mark the center of the span. Four fixed red lights (two on each side).mark the channel limits.
- b. Chart Note: Horizontal Clearance 300', vertical Clearance 155'.

## 3. Heim Highway Lift Bridge

- a. AtoN: One fixed red light on each end (four in all) mark the fender system. Two fixed red axis lights (one on each side) mark the available horizontal opening. Two fixed red/green lights (one on each side) mark the center of the vertical lift. The lights change from red to green when the lift is fully raised.
- b. Chart Note: Horizontal clearance 180', vertical clearance 38' down, 163' up.
- c. The bridge is coming due for replacement. Caltrans hosted a scoping meeting on February 13, 2002 to gather input regarding possible alternatives for a new bridge. The project is currently in the design and permitting stages.

## 4. Ford Avenue Railroad Lift Bridge

- a. AtoN: One fixed red light on each end (four in all) mark the fender system. Two fixed red/green lights (one on each side) mark the center of the vertical lift. The lights change from red to green when the lift is fully raised.
- b. Chart Note: Horizontal clearance 180', vertical clearance 6.7' down, 165' up.

U.S. COAST GUARD  
REPORT OF DELAY AT DRAWBRIDGE  
PER 33 CFR 117.5

BRIDGE NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
MILE \_\_\_\_\_ WATERWAY \_\_\_\_\_

1. Name/ Type of Vessel \_\_\_\_\_ Direction of Travel \_\_\_\_\_
2. Vessel Owner (Name) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Address) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Name of Pilot (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Address) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Time vessel signaled for bridge opening \_\_\_\_\_
5. Location of vessel when signal was given \_\_\_\_\_
6. Time and location of vessel when delay began \_\_\_\_\_
7. Method of signal for bridge opening ( ) Radio ( ) Sound ( ) Visual  
(If sound or visual signal was used, specify \_\_\_\_\_)
8. Time bridge operator acknowledged signal \_\_\_\_\_
9. Method of bridge operator acknowledgement ( ) Radio ( ) Sound ( ) Visual  
(If sound or visual signal was used, specify \_\_\_\_\_)
10. Did bridge operator acknowledgement indicate the bridge  
( ) Could be opened immediately  
( ) Could not be opened immediately
11. If land traffic crossed the bridge:  
Time land traffic started across the bridge \_\_\_\_\_  
Time land traffic stopped crossing the bridge \_\_\_\_\_  
Did land traffic stop on the bridge? \_\_\_\_\_  
Duration land traffic stopped on the bridge \_\_\_\_\_
12. Time drawbridge opened for navigation \_\_\_\_\_
14. Additional comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I certify the above information is true to the best of my knowledge and understand this statement may be used by the U.S. Coast Guard in levying fines against the bridge owner.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Mariners may complete and send via fax or mail to:

USCG D11(dpw) Bridge Administration  
Building 50-2  
Coast Guard Island  
Alameda, CA 94501-5100  
Cellular: (510) 219-4366, Work Phone: (510) 437-3516  
Work Fax: (510) 437-5836

Mariners are reminded not to require bridge openings for appurtenances nonessential to navigation, per 33 CFR 117.11