

WGMA Houston Area Ship Channel Update #10

Wednesday, August 30, 2017

The Houston Area VTS conducted a Port Coordination Team (PCT) conference call today at 0900 hours. WGMA participated on the call and provides the following report.

The Captain of the Port, Sector Houston-Galveston expects to remain at Port Condition ZULU for at least the next 24 hours. Deep-water traffic may not start moving until Thursday, and possibly later.

National Weather Service: At 7AM CDT, the center of Tropical Storm Harvey was over southwestern Louisiana, about 25 miles WNW of Lake Charles LA, or about 30 miles NE of Port Arthur TX. Maximum sustained winds are at 45 mph, with higher gusts. Tropical storm force winds extend outward up to 80 miles from the center.

For the last several hours, the storm was moving due north at 9 mph. The storm is expected to move north-northeastward later this morning, and then a northeastward movement at a faster forward speed is expected through Thursday night.

Catastrophic and life-threatening flooding continues in southeastern Texas and portions of southwestern Louisiana. Harvey is expected to produce additional rainfall accumulations of 3 to 6 inches from southwestern Louisiana and the adjacent border of eastern Texas northeastward into western Kentucky through Friday with isolated amounts up to 10 inches.

While the threat of heavy rains has ended in the Houston/Galveston area, catastrophic and life-threatening flooding will continue in and around Houston eastward into southwest Louisiana for the rest of the week.

Northwest winds 20-30 across the bay, with seas of 6-9' offshore. Winds and seas should quickly moderate.

No significant rainfall is expected for the next 24 hours. The only anticipated issues will be the high current flows from local rivers and bayous.

US Army Corps of Engineers advised they will commence channel surveys today using 5 survey boats, with another 3 boats arriving tomorrow and another on Friday. Surveys are being posted on-line as usual.

NOAA advised they got one of their Navigation Response Team boats at the Houston Yacht Club, with another one enroute to arrive Friday. One boat should be in service tomorrow provided the crew can get out there, and several other assets are enroute or can be installed. One NRT is already working in the Corpus Christi area. There is a huge amount of debris in the water, so using any towed sonar scanning device will be dicey.

USCG Houston-Galveston Vessel Traffic Service confirms they are hopeful to get a Modified ZULU approved today which would allow limited vessel movements within the port. At this time Port Condition ZULU is still in effect. Survey priorities were noted to be the main ship channels from the jetties up to Houston, Galveston and Texas City harbors.

Mariner reports are also contributing to the collection of data and these are encouraged.

USCG Houston advises they have salvage teams assisting with the sunken dry dock near Brady's Landing, and other sunken or missing equipment. All facilities are reminded that they must complete a post-storm assessment form and provide those to USCG before their terminals will be allowed to receive vessel traffic; numerous terminals have already filed. Once the forms have been received, they will be **scheduling facility inspections** as quickly as possible.

USCG MSU Texas City has started facility inspections based upon post-storm assessment reports they've received. They have also begun working on ATON surveys and restorations.

Initial reports are positive.

Houston Pilots reported that conditions have begun to improve on the bar. They sent a boat out this morning; several buoys offshore are off station. Only one buoy in the channel appears to be off station. They are also sending a pilot boat running up one side of the channel, then returning to Galveston down the other side, to assess the situation on the ship channel. Due to the currents (7mph) running out of the San Jacinto, it may not be possible to move traffic above the San Jacinto until the run-off improves.

Galveston-Texas City Pilots advised they sent a pilot boat out to survey their area and things appear to be in fairly good shape. Only one ATON was damaged.

Brazos Pilots reported the sea conditions offshore were much improved in the channel and jetties. Having conducted basic surveys of the channel and facilities, they are ready to start moving traffic at much limited drafts. Surveyors are needed to survey the facility berths to insure readiness.

Port of Houston volunteered the use of their fireboats to support channel surveys and is otherwise standing by to assist as needed in order to get the port opened as quickly as possible.

Port of Galveston advised they are working to get the port ready to receive the cruise ships.

Port of Freeport advised they are working to get ready to receive ships. Some traffic has already diverted. The terminal is in fair condition and roads are passable. Initial surveys by pilots have started.

Port of Texas City advised they are in pretty good shape. They are still doing surveys and are working to get the port ready to receive traffic.

G&H Towing reported having 10 tugs moved to Barbour's Cut; 5 tugs will be moving to Port of Houston. These tugs were moved to facilitate crew changes and provisioning. They hope to run 2 tugs to Freeport today after permission given by USCG to move them. 2 tugs are in Texas City. A few tugs still in holding positions.

CBP Houston Seaport Notice #3, Aug 27 @ 12PM: Please be advised, as a result of widespread flooding in the Houston area, the Houston Field Office has decided to close the following offices on Monday, August 28: Houston Airport (including North Belt Port Office), Houston Hobby Airport, Houston Seaport, Galveston, Freeport, Corpus Christi and Port Arthur. Closures may extend beyond Monday, if weather conditions do not improve. Updates to follow. The Houston Seaport office is still being manned 24/7. Call (713) 454-8002 for assistance.

USCBP Seaport Houston-Galveston is still asking for updates on vessels that will call here or that have diverted to other ports. They are especially interested to receive information on the cruise ship schedules.

Area ports and terminals on standby: Numerous personnel representing port authorities, terminals and facilities were on the call and reported they are standing by awaiting improvement of conditions. Discussions have begun amongst the various industry representatives to develop priority ship lists.

Agents are reminded to keep eNOA/D's current. **WGMA members should contact the undersigned with any urgent needs or requests, ideally by email.**

PortVision user update: Due to Hurricane Harvey, we have an unusually large amount of AIS Hosts that have been affected by the storm. You will notice a drop in coverage while our AIS Hosts regain power and we make repairs to damaged AIS hardware. We appreciate your patience while we reclaim coverage that was temporarily lost. If you have any questions, please contact Brian Crawford @ bcrawford2@oceaneering.com

Roadway conditions: Many roadways in the region are still experiencing high water. Please consider using these resource links: [Houston TRANSTAR](#) and [DriveTexas.org](#) in order to check road conditions.