



Marine Safety Information Bulletin

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Sector Delaware Bay
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Use of Engine/Shaft Power Limiters in Pilotage Waters

The U.S. Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay has observed an increase in vessels entering the **Captain of the Port (COTP) Zone** with **Engine Power Limiters (EPLs)** or **Shaft Power Limiters (ShaPoLis)**. Inspections have revealed inconsistencies in their implementation under international standards, necessitating clarification.

It is essential for masters and Officers In Charge of a Navigational Watch (OICNW) to understand that these systems are equipped with override functionality and the International Maritime Organization (IMO Resolution MEPC.335(76)) **explicitly permits overriding these systems to ensure the safety of the ship**. The authority for the master or OICNW to do so, as well as override procedures, should be clearly documented in the Onboard Management Manual (OMM) and/or Safety Management System (SMS).

Masters and OICNW are further reminded of their obligations under **33 CFR § 164.11(k)**, which requires employed pilots to be informed of the vessel's draft, maneuvering characteristics, unique features, and any abnormal conditions that may affect safe navigation. The use of EPLs or ShaPoLis must not impair the vessel's ability to maneuver effectively, particularly in narrow, winding, or heavily trafficked pilotage waters where precise control is essential. Pilot cards for ships utilizing an EPL or ShaPoLis should be up to date and reference: (1) procedures for accessing power reserves; (2) time required for overriding the limiter; and (3) the ship's maximum unlimited (design) and limited power. The accurate representation of maneuvering characteristics and limitations of ships on pilot cards and wheelhouse posters is vital to safe navigation, particularly in restricted waters. Specific expectations for pilot cards and wheelhouse poster content can be found in **IMO Resolution A.601(15)**, "*Provisions and Display of Manoeuvring Information on Board Ships*."

In addition, masters and OICNW are required to:

- **Be fully familiar** with the procedures for overriding these systems as outlined on the pilot card and in the OMM and/or SMS.
- **Clearly communicate** to any employed pilot(s), in advance, the presence and type of EPLs or ShaPoLis (Electronic, Mechanical, etc.), how these systems may affect the vessel's maneuvering characteristics, and the procedures and the time required to override them.

Given the unique challenges and potential hazards of navigating river systems, **masters and OICNW must exercise sound judgment and be prepared to immediately override the system if a safety concern or hazard arises**.

If the ship's maneuvering characteristics indicated on the pilot card and wheelhouse poster were not updated following installation of an EPL/SHaPoLis system or acceleration-limiting program, **the system shall be overridden prior to entry into U.S. territorial waters**. If override is not feasible, the attending pilot or vessel master should notify the COTP. The COTP may require additional measures (e.g. towing vessel assistance) to ensure the safety of the ship and the port during the ship's restricted water transit.

For questions regarding this notice, please contact the Sector Delaware Bay Command Center at (215) 271-4807.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "K. F. Higgins-Bloom".

K. F. HIGGINS-BLOOM
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Captain of the Port, Sector Delaware Bay

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