



STEAMSHIP MUTUAL

Comprehensive Cover. Exceptional Service.



Southwest Pass, Mississippi River - Maximum Draught Requirements

March 2012

The following message from the Associated Branch Pilots has been circulated by the New Orleans Board of Trade. It serves as a reminder of the maximum draught requirements for vessels intending to transit the Southwest Pass, currently 44ft. As illustrated below, vessels which are even 1 inch over the limit will not be allowed to transit.

"...

As a result of the lack of federal funding for dredging during the past year, the Bar Pilots membership had to reduce the RECOMMENDED LOADING DRAFT in Southwest Pass. The decision to reduce the loading draft was given careful consideration by the Bar Pilots and was the subject of much discussion and debate amongst the Bar Pilot membership. Our membership recognizes the complications and difficulties that a reduction in draft causes your principals in using our River system. Because of this, the Bar Pilot membership has worked closely with industry on vessels that were loaded to our recommended draft in the event that the RECOMMENDED LOADING DRAFT decreased before arrival here. As has always been the case, vessels are only moved through Southwest Pass if the Bar Pilot for the vessel believes that it can safely be transited.

I regret to report that some vessels have not complied with the above accommodation that the Bar Pilots have made. We are aware that some vessels are arriving inbound after loading to a deeper draft than our recommended draft. Moreover, and more disturbing, there are an ever increasing number of vessels being loaded on the River for outbound transit OVER the RECOMMENDED LOADING DRAFT.

Yesterday, an agent for an outbound vessel asked whether the Bar Pilots would move a vessel with a 44.4' draft. Later it was learned that the vessel was actually loaded to 45.6' with knowledge that the recommended draft was 44ft. The vessel was then trimmed by the master to 44.8' but still requested transit through Southwest Pass over the 44ft. draft limitation. This evening the vessel was denied transit and is heading back to the dock to discharge cargo that should have never been loaded. There is no excuse for this to occur.

Therefore, as of today, any inbound or outbound vessel more than 1 inch over the Bar Pilot RECOMMENDED LOADING DRAFT will not transit Southwest Pass. The only exception to that policy will be in the event that there is a lowering of the RECOMMENDED LOADING DRAFT and a vessel is already in transit. In this instance, the Bar Pilots will evaluate it upon arrival and, if it can safely be transited, the Bar Pilot membership will try to accommodate that vessel.

..."