

MARINE SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETIN (MSIB)

U.S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



Commander
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Sector Charleston

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MSIB (99-10) – Right Whale Reporting and Safe Speed

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This MSIB serves two purposes: it reminds the port community of the seasonal right whale ship reporting system, and it informs the maritime community of a speed restriction while transiting the waters off the coast of South Carolina and Georgia.

Mandatory Ship Reporting System for the Protection of Northern Right Whales

The Mandatory Ship Reporting requirement for the southeast U.S. is effective from November 15th through April 16th. Vessels of 300 GT or greater are required to report their entry into the designated right whale reporting area in accordance with 33 CFR Part 169. Reports can be made in accordance with IMO standard format via INMARSAT C e-mail to rightwhale.msr@noaa.gov. This requirement applies to vessels in the southeastern reporting system defined in 33 CFR 169.115 as follows: coastal waters within about 25 nautical miles along a 90-nautical mile stretch of the Atlantic seaboard in Florida and Georgia; the area coordinates extend from the shoreline east to longitude 80° 51.6' W with the southern and northern boundaries east latitude 30°00' N and 31°27' N, respectively.

Safe Speed in the Mid-Atlantic Right Whale Seasonal Management Area

In accordance with 50 CFR part 224, effective from November 1st through April 30th, commercial vessels over 65 feet in length are required to maintain a speed of 10 knots or less while in the Right Whale Seasonal Management Area. This includes most coastal waters of South Carolina from the COLREGS line out to approximately 20 nautical miles. For a detailed description of the area and an illustration, see the attached fact sheet published by NOAA. However, in accordance with the regulation, vessels may operate at a speed greater than 10 knots if necessary to maintain a safe maneuvering speed in an area where conditions severely restrict vessel maneuverability as determined by the pilot or master. Vessel masters or pilots should not place the ship in danger in order to meet the speed requirement.

During your work on the water and in the port, please contact the Coast Guard's 24 hour operation Command Center on VHF Channel 16 or via phone at (843) 740-7050 with all right whale sightings.

For further information, visit:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/shipstrike>

<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/mm/rightwhales/RightWhalesSouth.htm>

If you have any questions regarding this matter please contact Sector Charleston's Waterways Management Division, at (843) 740-3188.

/S/

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