

POST-IDA GUIDANCE

RETURNING COMPROMISED VESSELS INTO SERVICE

It is:

Incumbent on the vessel owner to take command of the fate of his or her vessel - Mission Applicable Vessel (MAV) or non- MAV - as quickly as possible. This includes location, positive identification, condition assessment and plans for retrieval or abandonment.

Any effort by a federal agency to relocate these vessels is subject to reimbursement from the owner to that agency. These fees can be costly and easily exceed the post-storm value of the vessel. If insurance is in place on vessels, such coverage should be used.



Commercial fishing vessel sunk during Hurricane Rita.

The post-Hurricane Ida treatment of compromised vessels (commercial and recreational) is a multi-agency operation which has several distinct, yet simultaneous, components. Initially, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) collectively gather intelligence on the situation and determine the most practical mechanisms to quickly rectify the situation.

At the forefront of their early response is a federally mandated mission of safely opening navigable waterway channels in the affected zone. Any debris/obstructions of the rigidly defined “channel” of a waterway legally considered “navigable” is to be quickly removed. Anything (vessels, fuel tanks, school buses or houses, for example) is removed during these clearing operations. These are NOT SALVAGE OPERATIONS, this is “debris” removal to clear the channel. ANYTHING within this operation termed “mission applicable” is subject to removal. Any such vessel will hereafter be called a Mission Applicable Vessel (MAV).

Status of removal should be priority of vessel owners.

Fate of vessels begin and end in the hands of the current owner, be it a private person or insurance company.

Vessel owners are strongly encouraged to get with USCG and claim their vessels with the USCG number as their own property.

Vessel owners should mark their boats with a name and contact information so salvage crews can reach them.

General Protocol for Actions Involving Navigable Channel Clearing

Non-MAV actions will be covered in later advisories

- USCG/USACOE (agencies) obtain aerial imagery of impact zone
- Agencies assign an internal number to the image of a MAV and nearby non-MAVs they believe are compromised.
- USCG ground-truths and gets vessel registration number from hull. Some agency effort is made to contact owner on record
- USCG plans for removal of MAVs from the waterways per “clear the waterways mission”. The USCG mission is not vessel recovery nor restoration of the commercial fishery industry. This applies to both commercial and recreational vessels.
- Agencies contract recovery crews with heavy equipment to do the removal of MAVs. If known, the owner will be notified of extraction prior to removal. If the owner is onsite at removal, and the vessel is safely and reliably floatable, the vessel could be legally turned over to the owner for relocation at the owner’s expense. Closely adjacent non-MAVs are considered for refloating on a case-by-case basis with onsite owner guidance. The method of removal (spread slings, slings, grapple) is determined by the condition of the MAV
- Private contractors relocate extracted MAVs, recoverable or otherwise, to a “lay-down” site dictated by the local parish/ FEMA/other agencies. Conditions of the lay-down site are critical for later staging, blocking and restoration efforts by vessel owners. Individual parishes should make efforts to allow this to happen.
- If no suitable lay-down/staging site is available, MAVs judged salvageable will be kept on a barge, unavailable to owners, until a site is located. Debris will be transported to a landfill.
- Subject to the conditions at the staging sites, recoverable vessels can be handed over to the owner/insurance company, blocked and renovated onsite, all at the owner’s expense. Items from non-recoverable debris can be requested by the owner from the removal contractor/USCG.