

BIG BOATS VS. SMALL BOATS; NOT A FAIR COMPARISON

The Coast Guard Auxiliary wants the boating public to understand that consequences of interfering with a large ship in many of our narrow channels. Especially in our busy port cities, such as New York City, Boston, Houston, Los Angeles and Seattle.

Every day, hundreds to thousands of ships; vessels larger than 65 feet in length; enter and depart our busy ports. These vessels include tankers, cruise ships, container ships and tug-barge combinations. All these vessels are constrained by their draft; and are unable to maneuver; in the narrow range inside the narrow channels in and around our ports and harbors.

The "Rules of the Road", the federal navigation rules provide for this event by giving these ships priority, or right-of-way, over smaller vessels when navigating in these narrow channels.

Many recreational boaters fail to realize the physics involved in stopping or maneuvering a large ship. The average recreational boat stops within a couple of boat lengths, even if they are traveling at maximum speed. However, it can take a large ship thousands of yards to stop.

An example would be if a water skier stopped 1,000 feet in front of a tug and barge. The skier would have less than one minute to get out of the way of the tug and barge, otherwise the skier would be run over.

In the Port of New York and New Jersey, CAPT Glenn Wiltshire, the Captain of the Port and the Commanding Officer of Sector New York said, "While I want all boaters to enjoy the waterways in our area, recent increases in reports of commercial vessels having to take evasive actions to avoid small boats in the channel are of great concern to me. I ask that all boaters be aware of their position and remain outside the main channels to ensure the continued safety of all waterway users. We don't want to wait for a tragedy to occur."

The local boating public should be aware of the penalty provisions within U.S. Code, Title 33, Section 2072, that specify **"Whoever operates a vessel in violation of the navigation rules is liable to a civil penalty of not more than \$5,000 for each violation, for which penalty the vessel may be seized and the case shall be brought before the district court of the United States of any district within which the vessel may be found."**

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