# Marine Safety Information Bulletin

Commander
Coast Guard Sector New York
212 Coast Guard Drive
Staten Island, NY 10305

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E-Mail: Sail-250-NYNJ@uscg.mil

# New York Sail 4th 250 – Spectator Vessel General Overview

To ensure the safety and security of the maritime public, event participants, and spectator vessels this bulletin provides critical operational guidelines related to Sail 4th 250 events, the U.S. Navy's International Naval Review 250 (INR 250) and International Aerial Review (IAR), and Independence Day fireworks displays taking place throughout New York Harbor from July 1, 2026, through July 9, 2026.

The Sail 4th 250 Tall Ship Parade of Sail, INR 250, IAR, and the Independence Day fireworks displays are expected to be extraordinary marine events, celebrating maritime heritage and honoring the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. These events will offer unique opportunities to witness impressive parades and celebrations on the water. The Coast Guard has collaborated with port partners, area stakeholders, Sail250® and the U.S. Navy, and numerous Federal, State, and Local agencies to develop and enact regulations to support a safe and secure event. However, due to the scale of the events, its heightened security posture, the anticipated crowd size, and limited on-water spectator areas, viewing the Sail 4th 250 Tall Ship Parade of Sail, INR 250, IAR, and Independence Day fireworks displays from shore may provide a safer and more convenient alternative, particularly for smaller vessels or less experienced mariners.

While transiting the regulated areas to and from spectator areas, mariners observing the events from the water should use extra caution, ensure proper watch, and assess all risk factors. This large marine event presents unique challenges to safe navigation, but proper voyage planning and access to relevant information help to ensure that safety is not compromised. In general, mariners transiting within the Port of New York and New Jersey during this event should make a careful assessment of all factors associated with their voyage. These factors at a minimum should include:

1) The operator's qualifications, including their level of experience, physical fitness, and alertness, ensuring they are well-rested and capable of safely operating the vessel.

2) The vessel's characteristics to include the following: appropriate size to safely accommodate passengers and equipment, sufficient maneuverability to navigate crowded waterways, and sea-keeping ability to handle expected water and weather conditions. The vessel must be capable of remaining in a designated spectator area for extended periods. The vessel should be equipped with required essential safety gear, including U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets, functioning navigation lights, fire extinguishers, and reliable communications devices. A boater's guide to the federal requirements for recreational boats and other safe boating information can be found at www.uscgboating.org/. Additionally, the vessel should provide adequate protection from environmental elements, such as sun, wind, and rain. The propulsion, steering, fuel, and navigational equipment must be in excellent operational condition to ensure reliability and safety throughout the event. Furthermore, the vessel should have the ability to retain or manage its sewage in compliance with environmental regulations.

3) Weather conditions – both current and forecasted – to include an assessment of sea state, visibility, temperature, sun exposure, precipitation, and wind speed and direction.

4) Voyage planning should incorporate up-to-date information on the event schedule, including activities such as the Sail 4th 250 Tall Ship Parade of Sail, INR 250, IAR, and Independence Day fireworks displays, as well as the

enforcement of regulations, such as designated spectator areas and security zones. Careful consideration should be given to whether the transit will occur during daytime or nighttime. Additional factors to account for include operator fatigue, crowded waterways, wake and wave action, limited maneuvering space, anchoring challenges due to strong currents, water depth variations during tidal cycles, and prolonged exposure to environmental conditions including high temperatures and sun or cooler temperatures, rain, and wind.

**Spectator Areas:** While **no tickets are required** for access to spectator areas, the Coast Guard and event sponsors strongly encourage voluntary registration. You may register through the process established by the event sponsor at https://tickettree.us/events/sail-250. Please note that voluntary registration does not guarantee a spot in the spectator areas, as access remains available on a first-come, first-served basis, with entry subject to vessel type and size restrictions specific to each area, and capacity, safety, and security considerations. However, registering in advance does provide a way for the Coast Guard and/or event sponsor to prepare appropriately for the surge of maritime traffic during the event. Additionally, the sponsor has partnered with the application Aqua Maps© to publish timely information about the event. **Due to the expected noise level involved with the IAR and fireworks displays, all spectators should have appropriate hearing protection available during the event.**

Please note that spectator areas have not undergone special surveys or inspections, and charts may not reflect all seabed obstructions or the shallowest depths. Additionally, some spectator areas may be subject to strong currents and may not provide good holding ground. Mariners should evaluate the anchoring location before anchoring, upon anchoring and routinely while anchored.

**Discharge of untreated sewage is strictly prohibited within three miles from shore**: Section 312 of the Clean Water Act requires the use of operable, U.S. Coast Guard-certified marine sanitation devices onboard vessels that are equipped with installed toilets and operating on U.S. navigable waters. Mariners are warned they cannot discharge any treated or untreated sewage within a No-Discharge Zone and must instead retain it onboard and use onshore pump-out facilities to dispose of it later. Additional information on commercial pump-out vessels or the location of onshore pump-out facilities dedicated to the collection and legal disposal of marine sewage may be found at https://www.nyc.gov/assets/dep/downloads/pdf/water/nyc-waterways/boat-sewage-disposal/map-of-pumpout-stations.pdf.

**Report suspicious activity:** Call the National Response Center at 1-877-24WATCH. If there is immediate danger to life or property, call 911 or the U.S. Coast Guard on Channel 16.

**The Regulations**: In addition to these guidelines, the Captain of the Port New York has established temporary special local regulations and multiple security zones, and has temporarily suspended certain anchorage grounds in New York Harbor, Sandy Hook Bay, and the Hudson River before, during, and after Sail 4th 250 events. The regulations being enforced for these events are available at https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2026-05-18/pdf/2026-09872.pdf.

**Staying Informed:** The Coast Guard will issue subsequent, targeted Marine Safety Information Bulletins (MSIB) detailing the specific closures and operational restrictions for these events throughout the Port of New York and New Jersey to include Lower Bay/Sandy Hook, Upper Bay/Hudson River, and East River. All MSIBs pertaining to these events can be found at Northeast Coast Guard District's Local Notice to Mariners website https://www.navcen.uscg.gov/local-notices-to-mariners?district=1+0&subdistrict=n, under the Special Notices section. Mariners are strongly advised to monitor VHF-FM Channel 16 for Broadcast Notices to Mariners for real-time updates and enforcement statuses.

For questions regarding this bulletin, please contact the Sector New York Sail 250 Planning Team at Sail-250-NYNJ@uscg.mil.

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Digitally signed by ANDRECHIK.JONATHAN.A.1035140898
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JONATHAN A. ANDRECHIK
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Captain of the Port, New York and New Jersey

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