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City of Duluth Communications Office

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SUBJECT: US Coast Guard issues new schedule for Aerial Lift Bridge

BY: Pakou Ly, Public Information Coordinator

US Coast Guard issues new schedule for Aerial Lift Bridge

[Duluth, MN] - The U.S. Coast Guard has approved the establishment of a new drawbridge schedule for the Duluth Aerial Lift Bridge for vessels under 300 gross tons to help reduce traffic congestion near the drawbridge during the peak navigation and tourist season.

The Duluth Aerial Lift Bridge will run on the new schedule starting the Friday before **Memorial Day through the Tuesday after Labor Day each year**, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., seven days a week.

“This decision establishes U.C. Coast Guard regulations based largely on the test schedule used in 2010. The City of Duluth requested a lift schedule designed to limit lifts for recreational boats to reduce traffic congestion,” said Mayor Don Ness.

The drawbridge shall open on the hour and half-hour for vessels under 300 gross tons, if needed; and the bridge will open on signal for all vessels from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m., seven days a week, and at all times for Federal, State, and local government vessels, vessels in distress, commercial vessels engaged in rescue or emergency salvage operations, commercial-assist towing vessels engaged in towing or port operations, vessels engaged in pilot duties, vessels seeking shelter from severe weather, and all vessels 300 gross tons or greater. From January 1 through March 15, the bridge shall open on signal if at least 12 hours notice is given.

A test schedule took place last summer from May 3 through October 29, 2010. The test period allowed for scheduled bridge openings on the hour and half-hour for all vessels under 300 gross tons between the hours of 6 a.m. and 9 p.m., seven days per week, and on signal between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m.

According to data collected by the City of Duluth, the Lift Bridge opened 1045 fewer times in 2010 under the test schedule compared to 2009, allowing for improved traffic flow. In addition, there was a 23% reduction in the number of lifts needed for water vessels.

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