Section 7 of the River and Harbor Act of August 8, 1917, provides as follows:

"That it shall be the duty of the Secretary of War to prescribe regulations for the use, administration, and navigation of the navigable waters of the United States as in his judgment the public necessity may require for the protection of life and property, or of operations of the United States in channel improvements, covering all matters not specifically delegated by law to some other executive department. Such regulations shall be posted, in conspicuous and appropriate places, for the information of the public, and every person and every corporation which shall violate such regulations shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction thereof in any district court of the United States within whose territorial jurisdiction such offense may have been committed, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding $500, or by imprisonment in the case of a natural person not exceeding six months, in the discretion of the court.

In pursuance of the law above quoted, the following regulations were prescribed to govern the use, administration, and navigation of the Mississippi River above Cairo, Illinois, and its tributaries:

THE REGULATIONS

Sec. 207.200 Ohio River, Mississippi River above Cairo, Ill., and their tributaries; use, administration, and navigation.

(a) Authority of Lockmasters.

(1) Locks staffed with Government personnel. The provisions of this paragraph apply to all waterways in this section except for Constell Hall Lock located at Mile 315.5 on the Cumberland River in Tennessee. The lockmaster shall be charged with the immediate control and management of the lock, and of the area set aside as the lock area, including the lock approach channel. The lockmaster shall see that all laws, rules, and regulations for the use of the lock and area are fully complied with, to which end he/she is authorized to give all necessary orders and directions in accordance therewith, both to employees of the government and to any and every person within the limits of the lock and area, whether navigating the lock or not. No one shall cause any movement of any vessel, boat, or other floating thing in the lock or approaches except by or under the direction of the lockmaster or his/her assistants. In the event of an emergency, the lockmaster may depart from these regulations as he deems necessary. The lockmasters shall also be charged with the control and management of federally constructed mooring facilities.

(2) Locks staffed with contract personnel. The provisions of this paragraph apply to Constell Hall Lock located at Mile 315.5 on the Cumberland River in Tennessee. Contract personnel shall give all necessary orders and directions for operation of the lock. No one shall cause any movement of any vessel, boat, or other floating thing in the lock or approaches except by or under the direction of the contract lock operator. All duties and responsibilities of the lockmaster set forth in this section shall be performed by the contract lock operator except that responsibility for enforcing all laws, rules, and regulations shall be vested in a government employee designated by the Nashville District Engineer. The district engineer will notify waterway users and the general public through appropriate notices and media concerning the location and identity of the designated government employee.

(b) Safety rules for vessels using navigation locks.

The following safety rules are hereby prescribed for vessels in the locking process, including the act of approaching or departing a lock:

(1) Tows with flammable or hazardous cargo barges, loaded or empty.

(a) Stepping hawsers or transferring cargo is prohibited.

(b) All hatches on barges used to transport flammable or hazardous materials shall be closed and latched, except those hatches carrying a gas-free certificate.

(c) Spark-proof protective ribbing fenders (‘possums) shall be used.

(2) All vessels.

(a) Leaking vessels may be excluded from locks until they have been repaired to the satisfaction of the lockmaster.

(b) Smoking, open flames, and chipping or other spark-producing activities are prohibited on deck during the locking cycle.

(c) Painting will not be permitted in the lock chamber during the locking cycle.

(d) Tow speeds shall be reduced to a rate such that the tow can be stopped by checking should mechanical difficulties develop. Pilots should check with the individual lockmasters concerning prevailing conditions. It is also recommended that pilots check their ability to reverse their engines prior to beginning an approach. Engines shall not be turned off in the lock until the tow has stopped and been made fast.

(e) U.S. Coast Guard regulations require all vessels to have on board life saving devices for prevention of drowning. All crew members of vessels required to carry work vests (life jackets) shall wear them during a lockage, except those persons in an area enclosed with a handheld or other device which would reasonably preclude the possibility of falling overboard. All deckhands handling lines during locking procedure shall wear a life jacket. Vessels not required by Coast Guard regulations to have work vests aboard shall have at least the prescribed life saving devices, located for ready access and use if needed. The lockmaster may refuse lockage to any vessel which fails to conform to the above.

(f) Reporting of navigation incidents. In furtherance of increased safety on waterways the following safety rules are hereby prescribed for all navigation incidents:

(1) Any incident resulting in uncontrolled barges shall immediately be reported to the nearest lock. The report shall include information as to the number of loose barges, their cargo, the time and the location where they broke loose. The lockmaster or locks shall be kept informed of the progress made in bringing the barges under control so that he can initiate whatever actions may be warranted.

(2) Whenever h massive are temporarily moored at other than commercial terminals or established floating terminals, and their breaking away could endanger a lock, the nearest lock shall be so notified, preferably the downstream lock.

(3) Sinking or sinking barges shall be reported to the nearest lock both downstream and upstream of the location in order that other traffic passing those points may be advised of the hazards.

(4) In the event of an oil spill, notify the nearest lock downstream, specifying the time and location of the incident, type of oil, amount of spill, and what recovery or controlling measures are being employed.

(5) Any other activity on the waterways that could conceivably endanger navigation or a navigation structure shall be reported to the nearest lock.

(6) Whenever it is necessary to report an incident involving uncontrolled, sinking or sinking barges, the cargo in the barges shall be accurately identified.

(g) Precedence at locks.

(1) The vessel arriving first at a lock shall normally be first to lock through, but precedence shall be given to vessels belonging to the United States. Licensed commercial passengers vessels operating on a published schedule or regularly operating in the ‘for hire’ trade shall have precedence over cargo tows and like craft. Commercial cargo tows shall have precedence over recreational craft, as described in paragraph (f) of this section.

(2) Arrival posts or marks may be established above and/or below the locks. Vessels arriving at or opposite such posts or marks will be considered as having arrived at the locks within the meaning of this paragraph. Precedence may be established visually or by radio communication. The lockmaster may prescribe such departures from the normal order of precedence as in his judgment is warranted to achieve best lock utilization.

(h) Precedence at locks.

(i) Unnecessary delay at locks. Masters and pilots must use every precaution to prevent unnecessary delay in entering or leaving locks. Vessels failing to enter locks with reasonable promptness when signaled to do so shall lose their turn. Rearranging or switching of barges in the lock or in approach channels is prohibited unless approved or directed by the lockmaster. This is not meant to curtail “jacking off” or set-overs where normally practiced.

(i) Lockage of recreational craft.

In order to fully utilize the capacity of the lock, the lockage of recreational craft shall be expedited by locking them through with commercial craft, provided that both parties agree to joint use of the chamber. When recreational craft are locked simultaneously with commercial tows, the lockmaster will direct, whenever practical, that the recreational craft enter the lock and depart while the contract craft are in the lock. Recreational craft will not be locked through with vessels carrying volatile cargoes or other substances likely to emit toxic or explosive vapors. If the lockage of commercial craft cannot be accomplished within the time required for three other lockages, a separate lockage of recreational craft shall be made. Recreational craft operators are advised that many locks have a pull chain located at each end of the lock which signals the lockmaster that lockage is desired. Furthermore, many Mississippi River locks utilize a strob light at the lock to signal recreational type vessels that the lock is ready for entry. Such lights are used exclusively to signal recreational craft.

(k) Simultaneous lockage of two with dangerous cargoes. Simultaneous lockage of other tows with tows carrying dangerous cargoes or containing flammable vapors normally will only be permitted when there is agreement between the lockmaster and both vessel masters that the simultaneous lockage can be executed safely. He shall make a separate decision each time such action seems actual and appropriate, provided:

(1) The first vessel or tow in or the last vessel or tow out are secured before the other enters or leaves.

(i) Any vessel or tow carrying dangerous cargoes is not locking.

(3) All masters involved have agreed to the joint use of the lock chamber.

(l) Simultaneous lockage of vessels with other vessels. When navigable dams are up or are in the process of being raised or lowered, vessels desiring to use the pass shall wait outside the limits of the approach points unless authorized otherwise by the lockmaster.

(m) Signals. Signals from vessels shall ordinarily be by whistle; signals from locks to vessels shall be by whistle, another sound device, or visual means. When a whistle is used, long blats of the whistle shall not exceed 10 seconds and short blats of the whistle shall not exceed 3 seconds. When a lock is not provided with a sound or visual signal installation, the lockmaster will indicate by voice or by the wave of a hand when the vessel may enter or leave the lock. Vessels must approach the locks with caution and shall not enter or leave the lock until signaled to do so by the lockmaster.

The following locking signals are prescribed:

(i) Sound signals by means of a whistle. These signals apply at either a single lock or twin locks.

(1) Vessels desiring lockage shall on approaching a lock give the following signals at a distance of not more than one mile from the lock;

(a) If a single lockage is only required: One long blat of the whistle followed by one short blat.

(b) If a double lockage is required: One long blat of the whistle followed by two short blats.

(2) When the lock is ready for entrance, the lock will give the following signals:

(a) One long blat of the whistle indicates permission to enter the lock chamber in the case of a single lock or to enter the landward chamber in the case of twin locks.

(b) Two long blats of the whistle indicates permission to enter the riverward chamber in the case of twin locks.

(3) Permission to leave the locks will be indicated by the following signals given by the lock:

(a) One short blat of the whistle indicates permission to leave the lock chamber in the case of a single lock or to leave the landward chamber in the case of twin locks.
(b) Two short blast of the whistle indicates permission to leave the riverside in a safe manner.

(iv) Four or more blast of the whistle delivered in rapid succession will be used as a means of attracting attention, to indicate caution, and to signal danger. This signal will be used to indicate the attention of the captain and crew of vessels using or approaching the lock or navigation in its vicinity and to indicate that something unusual involving danger has occurred that may make navigation difficult or dangerous in the vicinity of such lock. When this signal is given by the lock, the captain and crew of vessels in the vicinity shall immediately become on the alert to determine the reason for the signal and shall take the necessary steps to cope with the emergency.

(2) Lock signal lights. At locks where density of traffic or other local conditions make it advisable, the sound signals from the lock will be supplemented by signal lights. Flashing lights showing a two-second eclipse shall be located on or near each end of the land wall to control use of a single lock or of the lock and lock gate sills if there be no land wall. In addition, at double locks, instantaneous flashing lights (showing a one-second flash, a one-second eclipse, and a one-second interval) shall be located on or near each end of the intermediate wall to control use of the riverward lock. Navigation will be governed as follows:

(i) Red light. Lock shall not be made ready immediately. Vessel shall stand clear.

(ii) Amber light. Lock is being made ready. Vessel may approach but under full control.

(iii) Green light. Lock is ready for entrance.

(iv) Green and amber. Lock is ready for entrance but gates cannot be recessed completely. Vessels shall be allowed to pass one at a time or in company as the lock, lock gate sills, or riverwall structures are away from the vessel for passage.

(c) Radio communications. VHF-FM radios, operating in the FCC authorized 156.5 to 166.0 MHz band, have been installed at all operational locks (except those on the Kentucky River and Lock 3, Green River). Radio contact may be made by any vessel in passage.

Commercial vessels are required to be equipped with a voice radio for a minimum of 30 minutes before arrival in order that the pilot may be informed of current river and traffic conditions that may affect the safe passage of his tow.

All locks monitor 156.8 MHz (Channel 16) and 166.5 MHz (Channel 13) and can work 156.5 to 166.0 MHz (Channels 14, 15, and 16). The authorized call, reply and distress frequency is 156.8 MHz. This frequency is to be used on this frequency only for communicating with lock personnel involving the risk of immediate loss of life or property. Vessels may call and work Channel 13, without invoking, but it is cautioned that vessel to lock traffic must not interrupt or delay bridge traffic which has priority at all times.

(ii) Red lights. To be looked through shall be made in such manner as not to obstruct the entrance of the lock, and if to be looked sections, shall be brought to the lock as directed by the lock master. After passing the lock the sections shall be reassembled at such distance beyond the lock as to not interfere with other vessels.

(iii) Entrance to and exit from locks. In case two or more boats or tow free or in tandem for the same lockage, each other shall be determined by the lock master. Except as directed by the lock master, no boat shall pass another in the lock. In no case will boats be permitted to enter or leave the locks until directed to do so by the lock master. The sides of all passing locks through any lock traffic shall be free from projections of any kind which might impede the lock walls. All vessels shall be provided with suitable fenders, and shall be used to protect the lock and guide walls until it has cleared the lock and guide walls.

(m) Mooring

(1) At locks.

(i) All vessels when in the locks shall be moored as directed by the lock master.

(ii) Vessels shall be moored with bow and stern lines leading in opposite directions to prevent the vessel from “running” in the lock. All vessels will have one additional line available on the head of the bow for emergency use. The pilothouse shall be attended by qualified personnel during the entire locking procedure. When the vessel is securely moored, the pilot shall not cause the movement of the propellers except in emergency or unless directed by the lock master. Tying to lock ladders is strictly prohibited.

(iii) Mooring of unattended or non-propelled vessels or small craft at the upper or lower lock chamber will not be permitted within 1200 feet of the lock.

(2) Outside of locks.

(i) No vessel or other craft shall regularly or momentarily moor in any reach of a navigation channel. The approximate centerline of such channels are marked as the sailing line on Corps of Engineers, 1960 River Chart booklets. Non-navigation vessels and other floating craft shall be prohibited from entering the lock chamber except as directed by the lockmaster. Vessels occupying the lock chamber shall not be moored to railroad tracks, telephone poles or power poles, or to bridges or similar structures used by the public.

(ii) No vessel or other craft shall be moored to railroad tracks, to telephone poles or power poles, or to bridges or similar structures used by the public.

(iii) Four or more short blasts of the lock whistle delivered in rapid succession will be used as a means of attracting attention, to indicate caution, and to signal danger. This signal will be used to indicate the attention of the captain and crew of vessels using or approaching the lock or navigation in its vicinity and to indicate that something unusual involving danger has occurred that may make navigation difficult or dangerous in the vicinity of such lock. When this signal is given by the lock, the captain and crew of vessels in the vicinity shall immediately become on the alert to determine the reason for the signal and shall take the necessary steps to cope with the emergency.

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