



The New Jersey Maritime Pilot & Docking Pilot Commission

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COMMISSION ADVISORY

Over the past several years there have been a number of occurrences in which ship antennas or other appendages have struck the Bayonne Bridge as vessels passed under it. Most recently a vessel's radio antenna struck the Bridge and several feet off the top of the antenna broke off. During the Master-Pilot Exchanges, the vessel's Master informed the pilots that the ship's air draft was about 10 feet below the Bayonne Bridge's air draft. Following the incident, it was determined that a radio antenna extended approximately 13 feet above the ship's air draft initially given to the pilots, making the vessel's true air draft about 4 feet above the Bridge's air draft. The Master subsequently acknowledged that he was aware that the antenna would not pass under the Bridge without striking it, but thought the antenna would bend and harmlessly bounce back into position.

Fortunately, other than minor damage to ship antennas, there have been no serious injuries or damages resulting from these incidents. Nonetheless, the potential for serious injuries and damages exists.

The Commission reminds all New Jersey licensed pilots, during the Master-Pilot Exchange, to specifically inquire about any antenna, equipment, and/or mast additions, alterations or modifications which might not have been updated or included in the ship's pilot card. Pilots should visually observe the relative position and heights of antennas, masts and cranes as well as the vessel's condition and discuss any concerns with the master.

Additionally, the Commission reminds all New Jersey licensed pilots that U.S. Coast Guard VTS requires all vessels passing under the Bayonne Bridge to maintain at least a 2-foot air draft clearance.

Questions regarding this Advisory may be directed to the telephone number listed above.

Timothy J. Dacey
President

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