

Attention Boaters....

The Florida East Coast railroad bridge in downtown Jacksonville has been a source of frustration for boaters for a long time and the situation doesn't seem to be getting any better.

The bridge closings are subject to regulations by the 7th US Coast Guard District in Miami. The law concerning the bridge closings require that the bridge must be in the full open position at all times when a train is not present. The bridge is allowed to close 8 minutes before the arrival of a train and must reopen 8 minutes after a train has passed. As we all know, this is rarely the case. The Coast Guard has recently monitored the bridge operations and has made a report to the Jacksonville Waterways Commission on its findings. They find that the bridge operator is consistently in violation of the law. The fine for each violation is \$1,100 per incident when reported.. If the violations continue for a set period of time, the fine may be increased to \$25,000 per occurrence.

The Coast Guard is asking for our help in reporting the violations. Whenever you experience a violation of the ordinance, the Coast Guard asks that you record the time, date and length of the occurrence. You are asked to report this information by letter or fax as follows:

Barry Dragon
Commander (obr)
Seventh Coast Guard District
909 SE 1st Avenue, Room 406
Miami, Florida 33131

Telephone (305) 415-6743
Fax (305) 415-6763

The railroad is Required to acknowledge all radio transmissions directed to it. The Coast Guard is asking that boaters who experience any incident where the bridge tender refuses to acknowledge a radio transmission, that the incident be reported to them immediately. This is an opportunity for all boaters to gain some control over our waterways. It is our responsibility to record the violations and report them to the authorities. If enough boaters take the initiative, the violations will cease and we will be able to enjoy our downtown waterway.

*originally sent to
Lamb's Yacht Center slipowners
Spring 2005*