



Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing

Environmental Impact Statement/ Overseas Environmental Impact Statement



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Access and Public Safety

PUBLIC SAFETY MEASURES

For decades, the U.S. Navy has shared the use of ocean and coastal areas of the Atlantic and Gulf coasts and the lower Chesapeake Bay region with those who rely on marine resources for their livelihood and recreation. The Navy understands the concerns of commercial and sport fishermen, maritime businesses and marine recreationists and takes steps to conduct its activities in a manner that is compatible with ocean and airspace users to the extent possible. However, for the public's safety, the use of certain ocean areas must be temporarily limited during some training and testing activities.

The Navy provides advance notice of area closures and access limitations to the U.S. Coast Guard which helps the public plan accordingly and increases safety. This information is accessible to the public on the Coast Guard's Local Notice to Mariners website at www.navcen.uscg.gov. The published notices advise the public to allow them to adjust their routes. Temporary access limitations (usually lasting several hours) occur during training or testing activities for the safety of commercial and recreational users.

If civilian vessels are within a limited access area at the time of a scheduled activity, Navy personnel will proceed with the activity and avoid the vessels if it is safe and possible to do so. In some instances, where safety requires exclusive use of a specific area, civilian vessels in the area will be asked to relocate to a safer area for the duration of the activity.

Ocean areas throughout the Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing study area are accessible to the public for recreational and commercial purposes. The U.S. Navy is committed to ensuring public safety during training and testing activities to minimize risk to personnel, ocean users, and commercial and recreational enthusiasts. To protect public safety, access to certain ocean areas must be temporarily limited during certain training and testing activities.



Photo credit: NOAA

SHARING THE SEA

The Atlantic and Gulf coasts and the lower Chesapeake Bay region are used by many people for commercial and recreational purposes. Tourism, shipping and commercial fishing play a significant role in the regional economy. Recreational activities, including boating, sport fishing and diving also contribute to the economy and quality of life.

These areas are also important to the U.S. Navy as they provide critical realistic training to Sailors and Marines. To ensure public safety, the Navy acknowledges that during specific exercises, its training and testing activities could briefly limit public access to a portion of coastal and ocean areas.

On the occasions when access to ocean areas must be limited, the Navy provides advance notice of temporary closures and warnings through Notices to Mariners and Notices to Airmen. These advance notifications allow for planning and safety.

