

Offshore Wind Farms  
John Collins, USCG Aux SBOS ADSO-PE

If you plan to sail in the area of the wind farms, south of Buzzards Bay, pay attention to the following.

The Coast Guard has published Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular (NVIC) 03-23: Guidance on Navigational Safety in and around Offshore Renewable Energy Installations (OREI) to highlight considerations when planning and undertaking voyages in the vicinity of OREIs in U.S. waters. You should review and utilize this NVIC to make an informed risk assessment prior to navigating within or in the vicinity of an OREI. Here is the link to the NVIC:

[https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Portals/9/DCO%20Documents/5p/5ps/NVIC/2020/2023/NVIC%2003-23\\_MarinerGuidance\\_OREI\\_FINAL\\_10\\_20\\_2023\\_V2\\_CG-5P%20SIGNED.pdf?ver=OwCdqfYvDktgp8AlzB6zZw%3d%3d](https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Portals/9/DCO%20Documents/5p/5ps/NVIC/2020/2023/NVIC%2003-23_MarinerGuidance_OREI_FINAL_10_20_2023_V2_CG-5P%20SIGNED.pdf?ver=OwCdqfYvDktgp8AlzB6zZw%3d%3d)

After reviewing this guidance, you have three options: 1. Navigate with caution in or through the OREI, 2. Navigate around the edge of the OREI, or 3. Avoid the OREI area completely.

The choice to avoid operations in and around an OREI may not be available to you in some situations. Careful voyage planning will be influenced by several factors including: whether Wind Turbine Generators (WTGs) are on fixed or floating foundations; waterway characteristics including water depth, vessel characteristics (type, length, tonnage, draft, maneuverability, etc.), weather and sea conditions. This NVIC does not provide guidance on a NAVIGATION AND VESSEL INSPECTION CIRCULAR 03-23 11 safe distance at which to pass an OREI. Where there is sufficient sea room, it may be prudent to avoid the area completely. When choosing to navigate around or through the OREI, you should review nautical charts of the area and keep a close look out for hazards mentioned in this document.

WTGs in U.S. waters are required to have the lowest point of the rotor sweep at least 75 feet above highest astronomical tide. You should be aware of rotor sweep height and take appropriate care if your vessel's air draft exceeds 75 feet.