



***FINDINGS OF CONCERN***

**Marine Safety Unit Morgan City**

March 04, 2024  
Morgan City, LA

Findings of Concern 004-24

***ALWAYS UPDATE YOUR TRACK LINE –  
NAVIGABLE CHANNELS CAN SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGE***

Purpose. The U.S. Coast Guard issues findings of concern to disseminate information related to unsafe conditions that were identified as causal factors in a casualty and could contribute to future incidents. Findings of concern are intended to educate the public, state, or local agencies about the conditions discovered so they may address the findings with an appropriate voluntary action or highlight existing applicable company policies or state/local regulations.

The Incident. In October 2023, a towing vessel was pushing a barge upbound on the Atchafalaya River when the barge ran aground near Mile Marker 114 in Morgan City, Louisiana. During the investigation, it was discovered that the Master of the vessel was navigating the tow outside the limits of the navigational channel, locally known as “Stout’s Pass,” using an outdated track line that was created prior to the channel being dredged in September 2022. The 2022 dredging project created a new navigable channel in Stout’s Pass, and the buoy channel markers were moved to the newly dredged area.

Contributing Factors and Analysis. The investigation identified the following causal factor:

1. The Master was utilizing a track line created prior to the 2022 dredging of Stout’s Pass navigational channel, which resulted in the navigation of the barge and tow outside of the channel and running aground.

Findings of Concern. Coast Guard investigators have identified the following measures that, if implemented by owners/operators of vessels, may mitigate the risks posed by these contributing factors:

- Establish an updated track line after navigational channel dredging operations have occurred. Mariners are utilizing track lines that do not reflect the September 2022 dredging updates in Stouts Pass. An updated track line ensures that the vessels remain within the boundaries of navigational channels, which have been dredged and modified to accommodate deeper drafts.
- Establish a consistent schedule for updating track lines to ensure that they are in compliance with Local Notice to Mariners broadcasts and local Marine Safety Information Bulletins.

Closing. These findings of concern are provided for informational purpose only and do not relieve any domestic or international safety, operational, or material requirements. For any questions or comments please contact Marine Safety Unit Morgan City Investigations Division by phone at (985) 397-3291 or email at [MCIO@uscg.mil](mailto:MCIO@uscg.mil).