

TABLE I: U.S. VESSELS REQUIRED TO HAVE A LOAD LINE
International Convention on Load Lines (ICLL) & 46 USC 5102

	INTERNATIONAL VOYAGES <i>To/from foreign ports or places¹</i>	DOMESTIC VOYAGES ONLY <i>Outside the Boundary Line^{2,3}</i>
⁴ APPLICABLE VESSEL SIZE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24m (79 ft) or longer, if built on/after 21 July 1968 • 150 GT or greater, if built before 21 July 1968 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 79 ft or longer, if built on/after 1 Jan 1986 • 150 GT or more, if built before 1 Jan 1986
TYPE OF LOAD LINE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International ICLL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICLL or Domestic LL (<i>oceans & unrestricted coastwise</i>) • Special service LL (<i>limited coastwise</i>) • Great Lakes LL (<i>Great Lakes only</i>)⁵
LL REQUIRED FOR ALL VESSELS <u>EXCEPT</u> THESE EXCLUDED CATEGORIES:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ships of war • Ships less than 24m (79 ft) if built on/after 21 July 1968 • Ships less than 150 GT if built before 21 July 1968 • Pleasure yachts not engaged in trade⁶ • Fishing vessels⁷ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vessels of war • Vessels less than 79 ft if built on/after 1 Jan 1986 • Vessels less than 150 GT if built before 1 Jan 1986 • Recreational vessels when operated only for pleasure⁶ • Fishing vessels if built before 1 July 2013⁷ • Certain fish processors & fish tenders⁷ • Small passenger vessels (“T boats” & “K boats”)⁸ • Certain oceanographic research vessels (ORVs)⁹ • U.S. public vessels on domestic voyages

(1) “*International voyages*” include voyages to/from U.S. territories, but voyages between islands of the same territory are considered domestic voyages (such as among the Virgin Islands, and between Puerto Rico & the Virgin Islands). However, non-LL T boats & K boats that transit between the U.S. mainland and Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands must have a single-voyage ICLL exemption certificate each way.

(2) “*Domestic voyages*” are voyages outside the Boundary Line that depart & return directly to a U.S. port without calling at a foreign port or place, regardless of how far offshore the vessel operates. This includes “voyages to nowhere,” commercial fishing voyages, and voyages between the U.S. Pacific coast and Alaska/Hawaii. However, voyages between the U.S. Atlantic/Gulf coasts & the Pacific coast via the Panama Canal are international voyages and subject to ICLL (therefore, non-LL vessels transiting the Panama Canal on an intracoastal delivery or positioning voyage must have a single-voyage ICLL exemption certificate).

(3) U.S. vessels that operate exclusively inside the Boundary Line are excluded from LL (*Boundary Lines are delineated in 46 CFR Part 7*). All non-LL vessels must have a single-voyage LL exemption certificate (issued by the OCMI at the departure port) to proceed outside the Boundary Line on a domestic or international positioning voyage to another port. All LL-exempted voyages must be non-commercial (i.e., no passengers, no cargo) and may be subject to weather limitations and other appropriate restrictions as required by the OCMI.

(4) The international ICLL size threshold changed from 150 GT to 24m (79 ft) on 21 July 1968, but the domestic LL threshold did not change until 1 Jan 1986.

(5) The Great Lakes and St Lawrence River west of Anticosti Island are considered internal waters of the U.S. and Canada. Under the terms of a 1977 MOU between the USCG and Canadian Coast Guard, there is reciprocal acceptance of domestic LL certificates in those waters. All other foreign vessels, however, are required to have an ICLL certificate.

(6) Yachts & recreational vessels under a bareboat charter are still considered to be in recreational service, and are therefore excluded from LL. However, if/when they are otherwise chartered or carry any passenger(s) for hire, then they are considered in commercial service and are required to have a LL. The OCMI will determine the chartered status if necessary.

(7) The ICLL definition of “*fishing vessel*” is any vessel used for “catching fish, whales, seals, walrus, or other living resources of the sea.” This can include fish processors & tenders (regardless of size, number of people aboard, processing activities, etc) as long as they also catch fish. The U.S. definition is narrower and does not exclude fishing industry vessels (i.e., fish processors, tenders, and fishing vessels that process catch beyond “head and gut” stages) except those that are statutorily excluded (*refer to 46 USC 5102(b)(3) thru (b)(5)*). Fishing vessels built on/after 1 July 2013, however, are no longer excluded from domestic LL regulations (unless less than 79 ft). This means that while they can still proceed on international voyages without an ICLL, they will be in violation of U.S. law unless they have a LL (either ICLL or domestic U.S.).

(8) Small passenger vessels less than 100 GTs (such as T boats & K boats) are excluded from LL when on domestic voyages (*refer 46 USC 2101(35) and 5102(b)(11)*), but they are not excluded from the ICLL on international voyages if they are 24m (79 ft) or longer.

(9) Uninspected oceanographic research vessels less than 300 GRTs are excluded from LL when engaging in oceanographic research while on domestic voyages (*refer to 46 CFR 42.03-5(b)(1)(ii)*) if issued a letter of designation as an ORV by the OCMI. However, they are not excluded from the ICLL on international voyages if they are 24m (79 ft) or longer.

TABLE II: TYPES OF LOAD LINES FOR U.S. VESSELS
According to voyage

TYPE OF VOYAGE	ROUTE	REQUIRED LOAD LINE	
INTERNATIONAL VOYAGES	Foreign ports <i>other than Canada</i>	ICLL	
	Canadian ports <i>other than stipulated below</i>	ICLL	
DOMESTIC U.S. VOYAGES <i>other than stipulated below</i>	Ocean routes (<i>including to/from Hawaii, Alaska</i>)	ICLL or Domestic LL	
	Intracoastal routes (<i>between East & West coasts via Panama Canal</i>)	ICLL or ICLL Exemption ¹	
	Coastwise routes <i>other than stipulated below</i>	ICLL or Domestic LL	
	Restricted coastwise <i>not more than 20 nm offshore</i>	Eastport, ME to Norfolk, VA	Special Service LL ²
		Charleston, SC to Key West, FL	Special Service LL (<i>w/certain hurricane season restrictions</i>) ²
		Key West, FL to Rio Grande River	
		San Francisco to San Diego, CA	Special Service LL ²
		Inter-island voyages	Special Service LL <i>with specific USCG approval</i> ²
	Inside the Boundary Line	Rivers; lakes, bays & sounds	No LL required
		US Gulf of Mexico coast	No LL required <i>within 12 NM of coast</i> ³
Puget Sound & Inside Passage <i>(solely within US & Canadian waters defined by the 1934 Treaty)</i>		<i>Passenger vessels: SOLAS subdivision LL</i> <i>Other vessels: No LL required</i>	
“HIGH-SPEED CRAFT” (HSC) VOYAGES	Between designated ports	International	No LL required <i>if vessel has valid HSC certificate</i>
		Domestic US	No LL required <i>if vessel has valid HSC endorsement on COI</i>
U.S. TERRITORIES & POSSESSIONS <i>Guam, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Northern Marianas, etc.</i>	To/from ports outside that territory or possession	ICLL	
	Between ports within that territory or possession	ICLL or Special Service LL <i>with specific USCG approval</i> ²	
	Between Puerto Rico and US Virgin Islands	ICLL or Special Service LL <i>with specific USCG approval</i> ²	
	Between other adjacent territories or possessions	ICLL	
GREAT LAKES VOYAGES <i>including St Lawrence River west of Anticosti Island</i>	To/from foreign ports (<i>via St Lawrence River</i>)	ICLL	
	To/from US coastal ports (<i>via St Lawrence River</i>)	ICLL or Domestic LL	
	Between US & Canadian Great Lakes ports only	ICLL, Domestic LL, or Great Lakes LL	
	Between US Great Lakes ports only	Unrestricted	Great Lakes LL
		Restricted	Great Lakes LL <i>with restrictions</i>
Exempted		No LL required <i>for certain vessels on certain routes</i> ⁴	
“POSITIONING” VOYAGES <i>for non-LL vessels on voyage outside Boundary Line</i>	Single voyage (<i>a return trip is treated as a separate voyage</i>)	Single-voyage LL exemption, <i>with appropriate restrictions</i>	
“VOYAGES TO NOWHERE”	Voyages outside Boundary Line that return directly to a US port	ICLL, Domestic LL, or Special Service LL <i>as appropriate for route & distance offshore</i>	
FISHING VESSELS <i>Built on/after 1 July 2013, and 79 ft or longer</i>	Operating outside the Boundary Line	ICLL or Domestic LL	

- (1) Panama Canal transits are international voyages and therefore require an ICLL (or a single-voyage ICLL Exemption Certificate for non-LL vessels on an intracoastal positioning voyage).
- (2) An international ICLL or Domestic LL is also acceptable for this route.
- (3) Up to 15 NM offshore along the western Florida coast between Crystal Bay and Hudson Creek.
- (4) See 46 CFR 45.171, “Unmanned River Barges on Lake Michigan Routes.” Also, dump scows routinely operating within 10 miles of harbor of safe refuge on the Great Lakes are exempted under fair weather conditions (*per Marine Safety Manual Vol IV, Chapter 6.F.3.f*)