

BRIDGE CLEARANCE AND CANAL DEPTH OF BAY POINT CANAL

CANAL DEPTH

The canal is dredged to five foot depth at mean low water "MLW" and is only less than MLW around the edges, at drain out falls and at the terminus of the canal at the north end of Wahoo. When the water depth on the flats west of Marlin Circle at #2 Tee Box is completely covered with water, about five inches deep on the main flats is approximately MLW depth. Strong northerly winter winds cause lower tides and extended southerly winds increase our tides.

BRIDGE CLEARANCE

The clearance to go under the bridge is controlled by the height of the tide. A vessel with a fixed clearance of 15'0" can make passage about 90% of the time in the summer months and a little more with lower winter tides. The prohibitive window restricting to 90% is usually about 2 or 3 hours around higher tides of the month. A vessel with a 14'0" fixed clearance can usually get under the bridge about 98% of the time. Occasionally with real low tides, say 1'6" below MLW a 17' or so fixed clearance vessel might clear the bridge IF the reduced water depth was sufficient for the vessel to stay off of the bottom.

The south side of the bridge has about 1" additional clearance. There are pieces of angle iron under the north side of the bridge running parallel to the canal that hang 2" below the girders and pipes. A careful captain making way can go between the angle iron.

MEASURING FOR CLEARANCE

The first step is to measure your boat from the highest fixed point to the water line. Be careful to measure with the boat level and near empty of fuel and water. This measurement must be exact.

Second, go to the bridge and lower a tape with a weight to get a straight exact measurement from the bottom of the of the bridge concrete to the water at that moment.

Determine your margin of inches for safety and return immediately to your dock and place a permanent "drop dead mark," with water level above which you cannot go under the bridge. Place another mark at the marina or somewhere on the seawall east of the bridge so you will know exactly the height of the water when returning.

Get a tide table, watch for full and new moons, resulting in very high and very low water. Also, these tides tend to rise and fall rapidly.

This information is thought to be accurate but is not guaranteed. It is only a guide. You are responsible for all measurements and their accuracy.