

# Ninth District Icebreaking Policy

## Icebreaking Operations (Chapter 3):

- Operational Priorities
- Tiered Waterways
- Commercial Icebreaking Policy

Signed Dec 2009- now in our 7<sup>th</sup> season



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# Operational Priorities

- Urgent Response to Vessels: Icebreaking operations to extricate vessels from danger.
  - Exigent Community Services: in direct support of the general public.
  - Facilitation of Navigation – “meet the reasonable demands of commerce” – requires the vast majority of resource hours, governed by tiered waterways and commercial ice breaking policy.
- \* Search & Rescue is a separate mission under the Cleveland SAR plan and takes priority over icebreaking operations.*



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# Tiered Waterways



**Tier One** waterways are those which connect the Great Lakes to one another.

**Tier Two** waterways are those waters which connect tier one to tier three waterways.

**Tier Three** waterways are the federally maintained channels which connect tier two waterways to the various commercial ports.

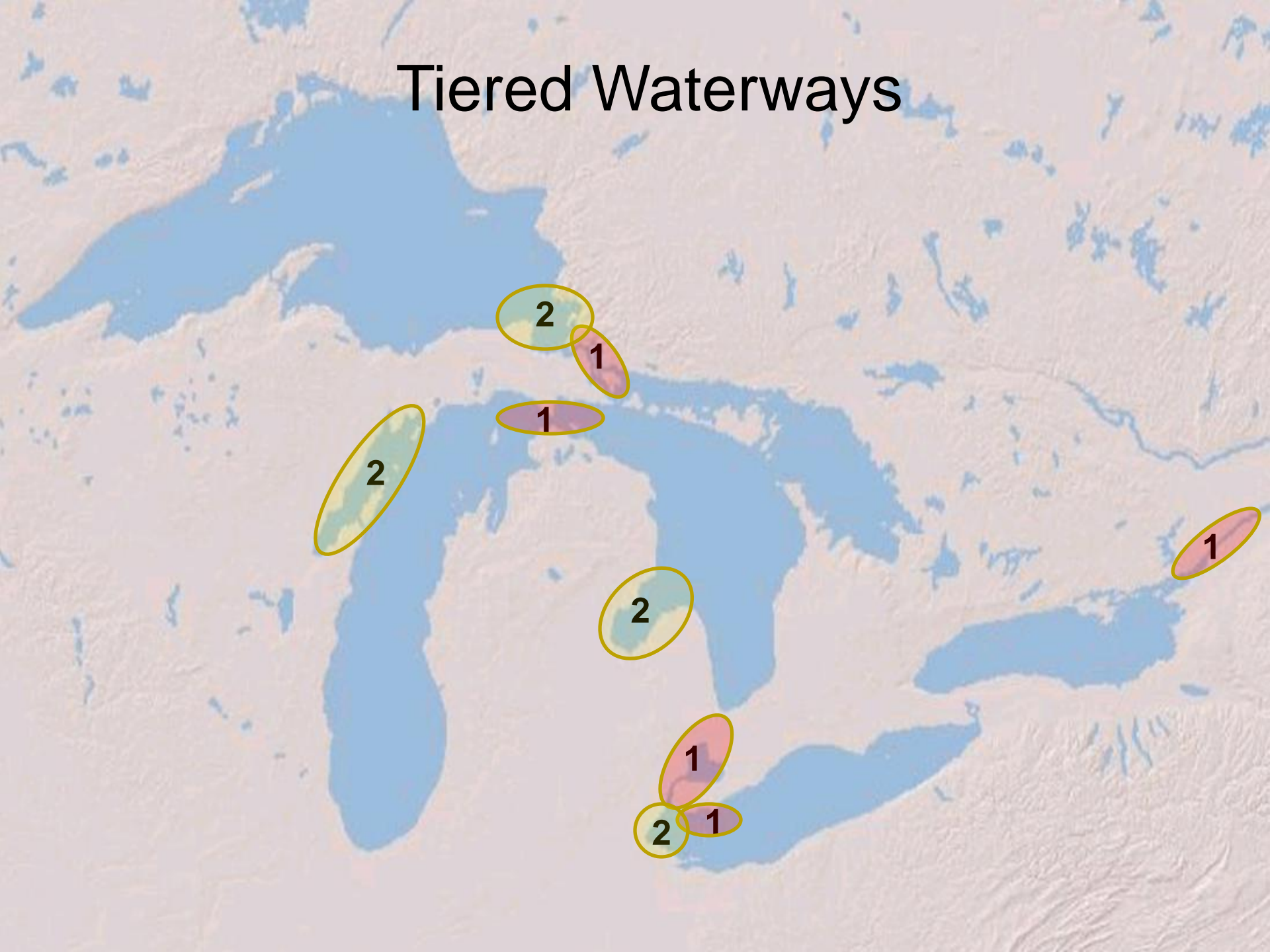
**Tier Four** waterways are those docks, shipyards, or other wholly private areas.



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# Tiered Waterways



# Employment of Icebreakers

<b>WATERWAY CLASSIFICATIONS</b>	<b>ICE BREAKING ASSISTANCE</b>	<b>OPERATIONAL PHASES OF ICE BREAKING</b>
TIER ONE	PI / VA / DA	Extended, Closed, Breakout
TIER TWO	PI VA* / DA *	Extended, Breakout (Closed Season Upon Request)
TIER THREE	PI* / VA* / DA *	Extended, Breakout (Closed Season Upon Request)
TIER FOUR	Exigent Only*	Extended, Closed, Breakout

\* = If Commercial Assistance not available

PI – Preventive Icebreaking

VA – Vessel Assistance

DA – Direct Assistance

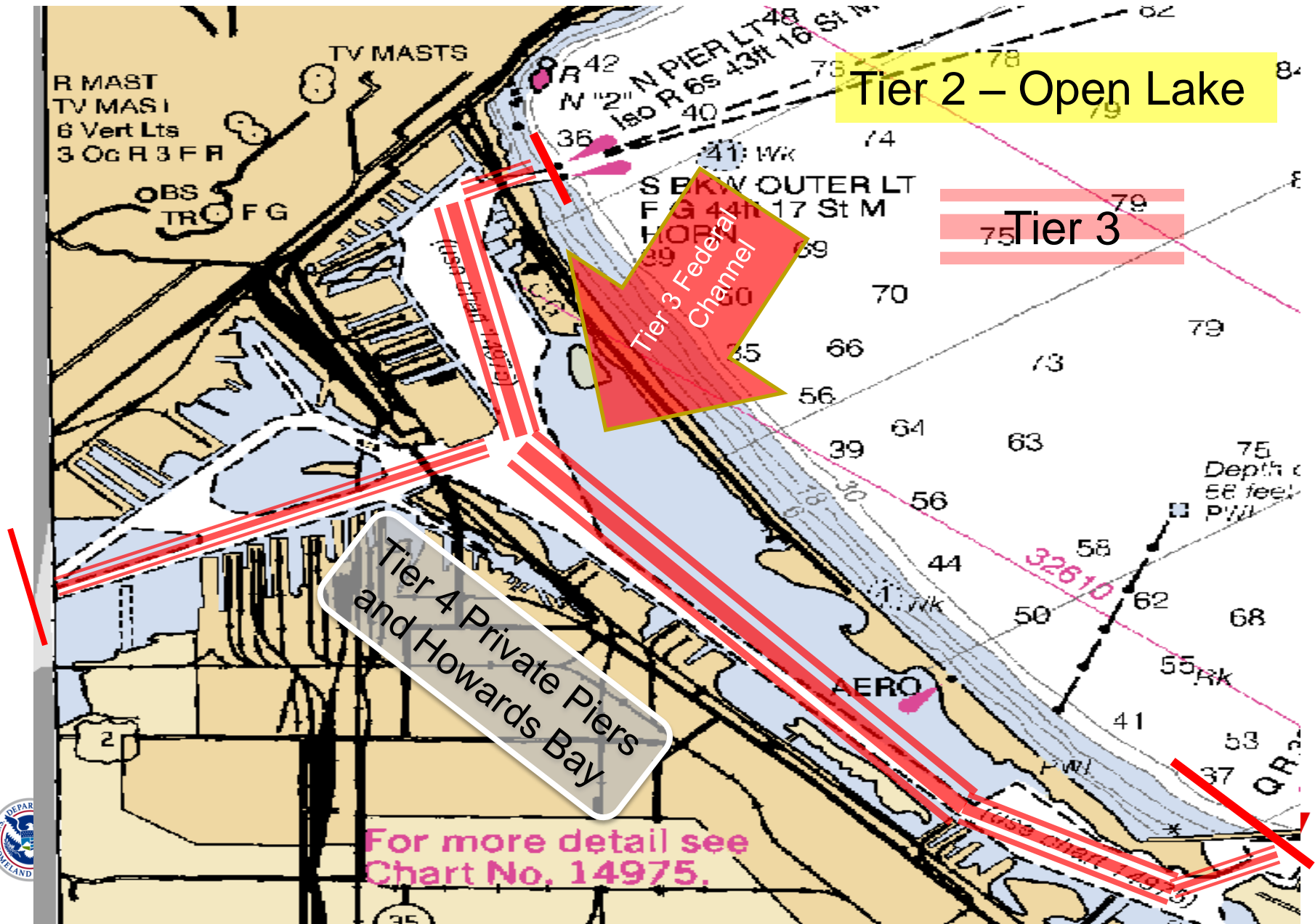


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## Harbor entrances, The Superior Front Channel, Duluth Harbor Basin and Minnesota Channel to Buoy 19

Harbor entrances, The Superior Front Channel, Duluth Harbor Basin and Minnesota Channel to Buoy 19



# Types of Icebreaking

- **PI – Preventive Icebreaking** (ie: track maintenance) – creating a track by which vessels can transit an ice covered area.
- **VA – Vessel Assistance** – track grooming or preparation completed within 24 hours of a specific transit activity or request.
- **DA – Direct Assistance** – directly assisting a vessel that has become beset or escorting a vessel which lacks sufficient power to transit unassisted through an ice covered area.



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# Winter Navigation Periods

**Extended Navigation Season:** ice begins until Sault Locks close (typically on or around 15 Jan) and the bulk of the commercial fleet reaches their winter layup ports (typically nlt 20 Jan)

**Closed Navigation Season:** end of the extended season (typically nlt 20 Jan); officially begins the Monday after lock closure at 0800. Continues until Spring Break Out (on or about 10 March, approx. two weeks before lock opening)

**Spring Break Out:** End of closed navigation season until ice no longer impedes navigation.



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# Commercial Icebreaking Policy

**Tier One** – CG primary.

**Tier Two** – As resources are available from Tier One waterways, CG will establish and maintain tracks along charted shipping lanes in Tier Two waterways. Vessel escorts and direct assistance will be left to commercial providers (if available).

**Tier Three** – CG will not render assistance where commercial providers are available. CG reserves right to continue to escort vessels from Tier Two into a Tier Three waterway in situations when assistance was begun in an area where the conditions inside the Tier Three waterway is comparable.

**Tier Four** – exigent circumstances only, case by case, no commercial available after careful risk analysis.



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# Commercial Icebreaking Availability

- Availability: The reasonable time for commercial assistance is defined as their willingness to respond and their capability of being on scene in less time than the nearest government icebreaker.
- The criteria to determine cutter arrival time, in other than Tier one waterways, is the nearest available cutter's readiness status plus the transit time (i.e. Ice Breaking Assistance is needed at Rock Island Passage; the nearest cutter is moored in a B12 status at St. Ignace. Availability equals the cutter's recall of twelve hours plus the transit time to Rock Island Passage, in this case eighteen hours).



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# Closed Season Operations

- Due to increased risk during the “closed season” it is reasonable to expect shipping to provide vessels which are capable of handling the ice conditions. During the closed season, tracks through the ice will not normally be maintained and will only be established or freshened in advance of known vessel traffic.



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# Closed Season Operations (Con't)

- Requests are required to be submitted at least 48 hours prior assisted vessel movement. If abnormal ice conditions exist, which produce a request for direct assistance, the Coast Guard will provide such resources as available and deemed appropriate.
- During this “closed season”, USCG response to requests for direct assistance will be analyzed on a case by case basis.
- If no unusual conditions are present, but the vessel is incapable of handling its own transit, it will first be referred to commercial icebreaking providers regardless of the designation of the waterway.
- When commercial resources are unavailable, under powered vessels will be advised it is not safe to sail.



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# Impasses

- When commercial icebreaking will meet a vessel in the same period of time or less than Gov't Icebreaker - commercial should be used.
- When a shipping company and commercial provider cannot reach agreement, the shipping company should contact Sector Soo or the ROC and request icebreaking assistance. The Tactical Commander will evaluate the *impasse* to determine if and when government icebreaking assistance will be available.
- Tactical Commanders are delegated the authority to determine the availability of commercial providers in their AOR and refer the requesting company to the commercial provider.



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# Questions?

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