



The Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Seaway System
Le réseau Grands Lacs - Voie maritime du Saint-Laurent

2026 - SEAWAY NOTICE #1

Opening / Closing Dates of the 2026 Navigation Season and Maximum Allowable Drafts

The opening of the 2026 navigation season is scheduled to take place on the following date and time:

- Montreal / Lake Ontario Section: March 22, 2026 - 0800 hours (D.S.T.)
- Welland Canal: March 22, 2026 - 0800 hours (D.S.T.)

Ship transits will be subject to weather and ice conditions. Restrictions may apply in some areas until lighted navigation aids have been installed.

The target closing dates for the 2026 navigation season are as follows:

- Montreal / Lake Ontario Section: January 5, 2027 (Year 3 of the pilot program)
- Welland Canal: January 10, 2027

Sault Ste. Marie Locks and Canals

Opening of the Sault Ste. Marie Locks (U.S.A.) is currently scheduled for March 25, 2026. Please note the Notice to Navigation Interests released by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for further information.

Allowable Draft

In the **Montreal / Lake Ontario Section**, the maximum allowable draft will be **8.00 m**. The maximum draft will be increased to 8.08 m for all ships when the South Shore Canal is ice-free and when water levels are favourable.

In the **Welland Canal**, a maximum allowable draft of **8.08 m** will be in effect from the start of the navigation season for all ships.

Ships equipped with an approved and operational Draft Information System will be permitted to transit at a draft of up to 7cm above the maximum allowable draft provided they meet the requirements set out in Section 29 of the Seaway Handbook Practices & Procedures.

There will be zero tolerance for ships to transit at drafts in excess of those specified in this Notice.

February 19, 2026