

Bay bridges offer sailors many options

Clearances under the main spans of the twin bridges across the Chesapeake Bay at Annapolis are readily available from charts, waterway guides and other sources of navigation information. But what about clearances in the other spans between the many piers that support the several mile long structures?

The adjacent table gives clearances in feet between Mean High Water and the lowest part of the bridge, or where applicable, both knee and main span are given.

The pier numbers are displayed on the bridges numbered eastward from Sandy Point to Kent Island. The main ship channel for the south bridge is between piers 25 and 26; for the north bridge the main span is between piers 32 and 33.

John Coffin, a racing and cruising sailor from Annapolis, compiled this data about twenty years ago. By reviewing the engineering drawings of the bridge, Coffin generated the table and validated the numbers with the Maryland Toll Facilities.

This table was published in "Chesapeake Boatman", a now defunct boating magazine. I've been using it over the years and I have every reason to believe that Mr. Coffin was diligent in his research, but there's nothing "official" about this data, so use for reference only and stay within your comfort zone.

South Bridge

Pier No.	Knee	Main
6-7		31
7-8		33
8-9		23
9-10		28
10-11		34
11-12		19
12-13		27
13-14		34
14-15		42
15-16		43
16-17		52
17-18		61
18-19		70
19-20		79
20-21		88
21-22	87	98
22-23	89	115
23-24	75	(NA)
24-25		168
25-26		186
26-27		168
27-28	75	(NA)
28-29	91	119
29-30	86	98
30-31	71	88
32-33	66	78
33-34	50	67
34-35	39	58
35-36	30	47
36-37	29	77
37-38		63
38-39		52
39-40		38
40-41		34
41-42		30

North Bridge

Pier No.	Knee	Main
21-22		42
22-23		43
23-24		52
24-25		61
25-26		70
26-27		79
27-28		88
28-29	87	98
29-30	89	115
30-31	102	125
31-32		168
32-33		186
33-34		168
34-35	104	127
35-36	91	119
36-37	86	108
37-38	71	99
38-39	66	88
39-40	50	78
40-41	39	67
41-42	30	58
42-43	29	47
43-44		53-60
44-45		63
45-46		37
46-47		38
47-48		34
48-49		30