

THE MERSEY DOCKS AND HARBOUR COMPANY

PORT OF LIVERPOOL NAVIGATION GUIDELINES

These Guidelines are for advisory purposes and do not take precedence over, but are to be used in conjunction with, the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company's Acts, Byelaws and directions and are to complement Passage Planning.

Guideline No.1 Under Keel Clearance

Guideline No.2 Restricted Visibility

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Guideline No.4 Pilotage of Large Vessels

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Guideline 1. Under Keel Clearance

Vessels entering or leaving the Port of Liverpool should do so after careful consideration of the dangers to navigation and only after the master is satisfied that there is sufficient under keel clearance for the vessel at all times.

Tidal Waters

Mariners are advised that when determining safe under keel clearance consideration must be given to any special circumstances that may exist, including atmospheric conditions and wind direction that may result in a reduction to the height of tide and the effects of squat and interaction that may result in an increase in the draught of the vessel. It is recommended that vessels do not, other than in exceptional circumstances, operate in tidal waters if the under keel clearance is deemed to be less than sixty centimetres and that laden tankers for Tranmere and passenger vessels do not, other than in exceptional circumstances, navigate in tidal waters if the under keel clearance is deemed to be 10% or less of the vessels observed draught or if it is less than one metre.

Non Tidal waters

Mariners are advised that when determining safe under keel clearance in non tidal waters consideration must be given to any special circumstance that may exist, including the actual impounded water level of the enclosed dock systems and the available depth of water.

Guideline 2. Restricted Visibility

In restricted visibility a vessel may request the VTS for continuous information of their position whilst navigating in the river or sea channels.

IF VISIBILITY BECOMES LESS THAN 3 Cables

Vessels will not normally be allowed to enter the approach channel if the visibility on any part of the intended passage is less than 3 cables.

Vessels engaged in bunkering alongside should cease operations if another vessel is due to pass.

Any vessel not fitted with a working radar installation should not navigate in the Port of Liverpool when visibility is less than 2.5 cables

International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions 1972, Rule 19 applies within the Port of Liverpool

Inward vessels requiring tug assistance to swing should consider carefully whether the probability of the visibility reducing to less than 3 cables is such that an abort should be considered before passing the Q1 Boat Beacon.

However, should a large vessel once committed to entering the Approach Channel experience a further reduction in visibility, then it must be understood that while the tugs will endeavour to assist they will have great difficulty in making fast safely in visibility of less than 2.5 cables.

Guideline No.3 Cross River Ferry Services (Mersey Ferries)

Mersey Ferries must, when visibility between the ferry stages is below 1 nautical mile, establish contact with Liverpool VTS on VHF Ch12 on leaving Liverpool, Seacombe and Wallasey Stages.

Mersey Ferries shall suspend services when visibility between the ferry stages is less than 3 cables.

Guideline No.4 Pilotage of Large Vessels

All vessels over 100,000 DWT are to be provided with a Second Pilot.

Additionally, if a nominated Pilot considers it necessary in the interests of safety, a vessel of less than 100,000 DWT may be required to have a Second Pilot.

(See: Pilotage Act 1987 section 7 (2) (c))

All Second Pilots must have equivalent or higher authorisation than the First Pilot.

Some vessels may be of such a design that a Second Pilot is required.

Guideline No.5 Tugs and Tows

When manning a tug and tow, the Class of Pilot shall be determined by the overall maximum length of the tug and tow combined. The towage operation should be carried out in daylight unless by agreement with the manned Pilot.

Dead Tows require a compulsory consultation

Guideline No.6 Alfred Lock: Compulsory Consultation

Any vessel exceeding 82m in length intending to depart Alfred Lock on the ebb will require a compulsory consultation with a Pilot.

Any vessel inbound to Alfred on the ebb will require a compulsory consultation with a pilot

Guideline No.7 Boarding of Large Vessels at the BAR

As a general rule the boarding of large vessels at the Bar boarding station shall be when they are heading in a westerly direction (away from approach channel) all other vessels should not be permitted to pass the Bar inward bound unless a Pilot has been boarded.

Vessels should continue to listen on channel 11 until the Pilot has been safely boarded or disembarked and the launch is safely clear of the vessel.

Guideline No.8 Tug Provision for Swinging in the River Mersey

Large vessels that require a tug to assist in a swing in the river shall ensure that a tug is available in the river prior to the vessel committing to the inward passage of the approach channels.

Cruise vessels over 180 meters in length shall always have a tug available for a swing in the river.

Guideline No.9 Clear Channel

Large deep drafted vessels shall be given a clear channel between Formby and Crosby safe water marks. Co-ordination of such a requirement shall be between the Pilots and Pilotage Exemption Certificate holder or Master.

VTS will provide information to the vessels and can provide prediction information.

Guideline No.10 Towage

Towage is organised in the Port of Liverpool on a commercial basis.

Vessel's owners contract towage companies to assist their passage in and out of the Port. It is left to the tug operator's judgement to provide the tug capacity to suit the contracts he has or is likely to be required to service, having regard to the Port traffic.

If for any reason the provision of tugs is not enough for the effective management of relevant risk, the Harbour Master will identify other means of doing so. This may include imposing restrictions on harbour operations and the contacting in of other tug provision.

Except in circumstances directed by the Harbour Master the use of tugs for berthing, unberthing and escorting is a matter for the Master and for the agreement of the Pilot, where embarked. Except where directed by the Harbour Master, it is the wishes of the Master and the professional judgment of the Pilot using a dynamic risk assessment that will set the level of tug provision.

Only tugs registered as per the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Act 1945, section 48 and of an appropriate flag state will be allowed to operate in the Port of Liverpool.

The Harbour Master shall in conjunction with the towage companies produce a handbook on towage best practice and information sheets on tugs operating in the Port of Liverpool for the use of Pilots and Pilotage Exemption Certificate holders that may use tug provision.

Guideline No.11 River Event Pilot

All public events on the River Mersey that may affect the safety of navigation of other port users shall employ the services of an Event Pilot. On application a Pilot will be nominated to assist in the organisation of traffic on the river during the event and act as liaison for other vessels, the VTS and the event organisers.

The Event Pilot should be stationed onboard a craft supplied by the organisers of the relevant event.

Guideline No. 12 Bunkering

Only those barges that are registered with MDHC can undertake bunkering operations as per the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Act 1945, section 48 and which shall have been surveyed by an MDHC approved surveyor as to be seaworthy and fit for purpose for which they were built or fitted or intended or likely to be used or classed by a MDHC recognised Classification Society.

MDHC has produced "Guidance Notes for Vessels Bunkering Operations in the Port of Liverpool" and a "Code of Practice for Bunkering Operations during Load/Discharge Operations of AFS".

Vessels receiving bunkers shall comply with their safety management systems and refer to their SOPEP manual.

Bunker companies shall complete a safety checklist prior to any transfer of oil.

Copies of Safety Checklists shall be held by the bunker barge, the vessel being bunkered and the berth operator

Bunkering can only take place with the agreement of the berth operator, vessel and the bunker operator.

Prior to commencing bunkering operation permission shall be obtained from the Harbour Master by contacting the nearest Dock Masters Office.

The Harbour Master and the MDHC safety department may issue special instructions with regard to bunkering from time to time.

Bunkering operations shall be discussed at the pre-arrival meeting for OBO's as stated in the Vessels Arrival Pack

All bunker companies shall confirm compliance annually as to their fitness to operate.

In visibility of less than 3 cables bunkering operations alongside shall cease when another vessel is due to pass.

Guideline No.13 De-ballasting

It is an offence for vessels to permit any substance which might cause damage to the conservancy of the Port to enter its waters. (Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Act 1971 Section 10). Therefore unless the Master is confident his ballast water is such as not to cause such damage de-ballasting should not take place.

HARBOUR MASTER
