

For further information contact:  
[Medway.Marine@peelports.com](mailto:Medway.Marine@peelports.com)



# Peel Ports London Medway

(Port of Sheerness Limited)

## Medway & Swale Operational Rules and Guidelines



2022

# MEDWAY & SWALE OPERATIONAL RULES AND GUIDELINES 2022

## INTRODUCTION

These Operational Rules and Guidelines are for the information of Ships' Masters, Agents, Owners, Pilots, Port Authority Personnel and Terminal Operators. Their purpose is to provide assistance when considering passage planning, berthing parameters, general navigation information and tug allocation for vessels navigating in the River Medway and Swale.

Port of Sheerness Ltd, operating as Peel Ports London Medway, is the Statutory and Competent Harbour Authority in accordance with the Medway Ports Authority Act 1973, the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 and the Pilotage Act 1987. Peel Ports London Medway reserves the right to issue General and Special Directions where and when appropriate.

The sections indicated in **RED** are compulsory. The sections not in red are a guideline only and are thus not compulsory. However, the guidelines are a result of many years Pilotage experience in manoeuvring vessels in the Medway where techniques and tug types have proved efficient, effective and safe. It should be appreciated that Medway Pilots are experts in their district and prudent Shipmasters would be well advised to heed the Pilots' tug requirements. Pilots under UK law are more than advisors (refer to Pilotage Act 1987; section 31(1)) in compulsory Pilotage areas (such as the Medway and Swale) they shall be given the 'conduct' of the vessel. This does not relieve the Master of his specific or common law duties of Command.

Notwithstanding these guidelines, circumstances may arise that dictate a departure from these guidelines. A Pilot may require more tugs than the Operational Rules and Guidelines suggest, which may be the result of particular tidal, weather or traffic concerns. Equally, Pilots may use their discretion to alter the Guidelines if circumstances permit. In the rare case of disagreement, the Statutory Harbour Authority will be the arbiter.

The tug systems presently used in the Medway are generally ASD (Azimuth Stern Drive) and other approved units. Medway Pilots are highly trained and experienced in ship handling and tug use, their expertise should be respected.

The sections dealing with depths and berth parameters are for quick and approximate reference only. In all cases the latest survey charts and Notices to Mariners should be consulted.

These Operation Rules & Guidelines shall come into force in July 2022 on which date the Medway & Swale Operations Rules & Guidelines dated 2015 will be cancelled.

These Operational Rules & Guidelines should be read in conjunction with  
published information contained within

<https://www.peelports.com/marine/our-ports/london-medway>

<b>INDEX</b>	<b>Page No</b>
INTRODUCTION	1
INDEX	2
1. ANCHORAGES	3
2. CONTROLLING DEPTHS	4
3. SHEERNESS	5
4. ISLE OF GRAIN No. 1 JETTY (B.P.)	7
5. THAMESPORT	7
6. ISLE OF GRAIN No. 6 AND 7	8
7. I.O.G. No. 8 & 10 BERTH (LNG)	9
8. KINGSNORTH	9
9. CHATHAM LOCKS AND DOCKS	9
10. CHATHAM TO ROCHESTER BRIDGE	10
11. ROCHESTER	11
12. THE SWALE	11

## 1. ANCHORAGES

<b>Anchorage</b>	<b>Letter</b>	<b>Max LOA (m)</b>	<b>Max Draft (m)</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Great Nore*	N1 - 5	200	12	Limited Stay
Little Nore		100	7	Limited Stay
Small Ships		100	5	Limited Stay
Saltpan Reach		100	5	Max. 2 Vessels
Stangate Creek		N/A	4	

\* When Pilot remains onboard and by agreement with Medway VTS vessels of a greater length may use the Great Nore Anchorage

## 2. CONTROLLING DEPTHS

Area	Depth @ CD (m)*	Remarks
Medway Approach Channel	11.3	
Sheerness Harbour	14.7	
Saltpan Reach	12.0	Z1 Buoy = 8.6 m
Kethole Reach	10.0	No 15 Buoy
	8.4	No 12 Buoy
Long Reach	6.3	
Pinup Reach	5.4	
Gillingham Reach	5.6	
Chatham Locks (River Entrance cill)	3.8	North
	3.5	South
Short Reach	3.8	@ Charted obstruction
Cockham Reach	3.8	
Upnor Reach	3.0	
Chatham Ness	2.5	
Limehouse Reach	2.8	
Bridge Reach	1.8	
The Swale	3.1	Until Ridham
East Swale	0.2	

\* The latest survey information shall be consulted.

### 3. SHEERNESS

#### Operations

Operations at Sheerness are unrestricted subject to compliance with the towage rules and guidelines.

Flood Tide Slot is defined as from LW-1 Hour to HW-30 Minutes.

Ebb Tide Slot is defined as from HW-30 Minutes to HW+5 Hours.

The wind limitation for berthing Large Car Carriers (greater than 170 metres LOA) is 25 knots, this may be modified by the Pilot in consultation with the Master.

<b>Berth</b>	<b>Depth @ CD (m)*</b>	<b>Max LOA (m)</b>
No 10	10.8	170
No 1	10.0	200
No 2 / 3	10.0	250
No 6 / 7	10.0	230
No 4	10.0	230

\* The latest survey information shall be consulted.

### 3. SHEERNESS (continued)

#### Tug Requirements for vessels arriving at Sheerness

##### Berth No 10

##### Port & Starboard Alongside – Any state of tide

Vessels up to 120 m	1 Tug or adequate bow thruster
Vessels greater than 120m	2 Tugs or adequate bow & stern thruster

##### Berth No 1,2,3,6,7

##### Port Side Alongside - Any state of tide

Vessel up to 100m	As per Master/Pilot requirement
Vessels 100 – 120m	1 Tug or adequate bow thruster
Vessels greater than 120m	2 Tugs or adequate bow & stern thruster

##### Starboard Side Alongside – Flood tide

Vessel up to 100m	As per Master/Pilot requirement
Vessels greater than 100m	2 Tugs or adequate bow & stern thruster

##### Starboard Side Alongside – Ebb tide

Vessel up to 100m	As per Master/Pilot requirement
Vessels 100 – 130m	2 Tugs or one may be replaced by adequate bow thruster
Vessels greater than 130m	2 Tugs

#### Starboard Side Alongside

**From 30 minutes before High Water to 1 hour before Low Water and when the average wind speed is 25 knots or more, with any westerly component, vessels of 100 metres or more must have at least one tug.**

### 3. SHEERNESS (continued)

#### Sheerness Car Terminal (No. 4 Berth)

Vessels other than large car carriers, tug requirements as for the previous berths.

Large car carriers: greater than 170 metres LOA

#### Tug Requirements

Port Side Alongside	Any state of tide	2 Tugs
Starboard Side Alongside	FLOOD tide	2 Tugs
Starboard Side Alongside	EBB tide	3 Tugs

### 4. ISLE OF GRAIN No. 1 JETTY (BP)

Berth	Depth @ CD (m)*
No 1	14.0

\* The latest survey information shall be consulted.

**For all operations on this berth refer to BP Isle of Grain Terminal Towing & Berthing Guidelines.**

### 5. THAMESPORT

Berth	Depth @ CD (m)*
Thamesport Upper	9.7
Thamesport Lower	8.5

\* The latest survey information shall be consulted.



## 5. THAMESPORT (continued)

### Tug Requirements

Vessels up to 100m		As per Master/Pilot requirement
Vessels 100 – 140m		1 Tug or adequate bow thruster
Vessels 140 – 250m		2 Tugs or one may be replaced by adequate bow thruster
Vessels greater than 250m	No Swing	2 Tugs or one may be replaced by adequate bow thruster
	Swinging on FLOOD tide	2 Tugs*
	Swinging on EBB tide (Wind > 20 Kts)	3 Tugs**
	Berthing stern to FLOOD tide (Wind > 20 Kts)	3 Tugs**

\* For all vessels with LOA > 300m or draft > 12.3m minimum combined bollard pull of 125t

\*\* For all vessels with LOA > 300m or draft > 12.3m minimum combined bollard pull of 185t

Berthing stern to EBB tide is NOT recommended. **However, if this manoeuvre is undertaken additional tugs must be used.**

## 6. ISLE OF GRAIN No. 6 AND 7

Berth	Depth @ CD (m)**
No 6*	12.6

\*1.8 metre rise of tide needed for line handling craft to work dolphins

\*\*The latest survey information shall be consulted.

**When a vessel is moored on Isle of Grain No. 6 Berth, all vessels intending to pass or manoeuvre close must give this vessel due notice of their intentions and reduce speed as much as circumstances permit, and whenever possible pass to the south of Zulu No.1 buoy commensurate with safe navigation.**

### Tug Requirements

Vessels greater than 200m	Berthing	2 Tugs
	Unberthing	As per Master/Pilot requirement

**Vessels fitted with Bow and Stern thruster may depart without tugs subject to weather conditions, except for an LNG vessel being berthed at IOG 8 or 10, then at least 1 tug is required.**

## 7. I.O.G. No. 8 & 10 BERTH (LNG)

**For all operations on these berths refer to Operational Rules and Guidelines for LNG Vessels visiting the Isle of Grain LNG Berths**

## 8. KINGSNORTH

### Ship Limits

Berth	Depth @ CD (m)*	Max LOA (m)
Kingsnorth Jetty	10.0 @ Main berth	155
	9.0 @ Extension	
Kingsnorth Spur	- 0.3	

**Note:** Kingsnorth is not in commercial use.

\*The latest survey information shall be consulted.

## 9. CHATHAM LOCKS AND DOCKS

### BASIN 3 - BERTHS No. 1 TO 8 AND BASIN 2

Vessels of 140 metres or over in length will only be accepted after application in writing to the Harbour Master.

Lock Gates will only operate when the tide gauge heights are between 2.5 and 6.0m.

No 3 Basin	Normal working depth	7.0m
	Normal length limit	140m

### Ship Limits for Locks

Lock	Depth @ CD (m)	Max LOA (m)	Max Beam (m) Allowing for steps
North	3.3 inner cill	145	22.6
	3.8 outer cill	145	
South	3.5 inner cill	145	19.6
	3.5 outer cill	145	

## 9. CHATHAM LOCKS AND DOCKS (continued)

### Tug Requirements for Entering Docks

Vessels up to 90m	As per Master/Pilot requirement
Vessels 90 – 125m	1 Tug or adequate bow thruster
Vessels greater than 125m	2 Tugs or one may be replaced by adequate bow thruster

## 10. CHATHAM TO ROCHESTER BRIDGE

All piloted vessels sailing from above Chatham Ness must do so before HW +1 hour.

Operators and or Agents wishing to programme the departure of vessels after HW +1 hour above Chatham Ness should apply in writing to the Harbour Master.

Vessels over 120m in length will only be accepted with the Harbour Master's approval, in addition to which the following conditions will apply:

- a) The manoeuvre to be carried out in daylight hours only.
- b) There shall be two tugs of suitable bollard pull in attendance.

When these vessels are required to swing at Gashouse Point, Crown 2 & 3 must be clear of berthed ships.

Medway VTS shall broadcast at regular intervals on VHF channel 74 the advice of the movement of any vessel over 120 metres in length and its requirements for a clear passage.

### Ship Limits

Berth	Depth @ CD (m)*	Max LOA (m)
Eurowharf	1.0	115

\*The latest survey information shall be consulted.

### Tug Requirements

Vessels greater than 90m	1 Tug or adequate bow thruster
Vessels greater than 105m	2 Tugs or one may be replaced by adequate bow thruster

## 11. ROCHESTER

### Ship Limits

Berth	Depth @ CD (m)*	Max LOA (m)
Scotline	- 0.3	115
Crown Wharf 1	2.2	105
Crown Wharf 2 & 3	2.5	130

\*The latest survey information shall be consulted.

## 12. THE SWALE

### General Note

It is recommended that for all vessels that both anchors are made ready for immediate use when transiting the Swale

### Night Navigation above Washer Wharf

Night Navigation above Washer Wharf is defined as from 20 minutes after Sunset to 20 minutes before Sunrise.

Max LOA	83m
Vessels up to 85m	With operational bow thruster and active rudder
Vessels 85 - 90m	Considered, subject to navigation trials

### KINGSFERRY BRIDGE

Max Height	Raised	28.96m
	Lowered	3.35m
Max Beam		17.65m
Total Width		27.40m

## 12. THE SWALE (continued)

### RIDHAM DOCK

Berth	Max Draft (m)	Max LOA (m)
All berths	6.5	102

### Tug Requirements

Vessels up to 80m	As per Master/Pilot requirement
Vessels 80 – 95m	1 Tug or adequate bow thruster
Vessels greater than 95m	2 Tugs or one may be replaced by adequate bow thruster

Latest Berthing - HW on passing Sheerness

Latest Sailing - HW @ Sheerness + 1 hour

### GROVEHURST

Max LOA 95m	Max draft HW + 0.5m
Vessels up to 90m	1 Tug or adequate bow thruster

**Vessels greater than 90m      1 Tug**

Starboard side alongside (stern to tide) considered only in exceptional circumstances (tug recommended).

**Peel Ports Group Ltd  
Archway House  
Sheerness Docks  
Sheerness  
ME12 1RS**

**Telephone: 01795 596 596  
Email: [Medway.Marine@peelports.com](mailto:Medway.Marine@peelports.com)  
[www.peelports.com](http://www.peelports.com)**