

Port of Liverpool



General Directions for Navigation in the Port of Liverpool 2012

THE MERSEY DOCKS AND HARBOUR COMPANY LIMITED

GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR NAVIGATION IN THE PORT OF LIVERPOOL 2012

INTRODUCTION.....	2
1. COMMENCEMENT	3
2. SHORT TITLE	3
3. DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION	3
4. USE OF VHF RADIO.....	7
5. USE OF VHF RADIO IN COLLISION AVOIDANCE	8
6. TIME OF ARRIVAL AND CLEARANCE OF INWARD BOUND VESSELS.....	8
7. CLEARANCE OF VESSELS MANOEUVRING WITHIN THE PORT.....	8
8. CARRIAGE OF RADAR INSTALLATION	9
9. VESSELS WITH MECHANICAL, EQUIPMENT OR STRUCTURAL DEFECTS, OILY WATER SEPARATORS AND BILGE SYSTEMS.....	9
10. VESSELS GROUNDED, ON FIRE OR WHICH HAVE BEEN IN COLLISION WITHIN THE PORT.....	10
11. VESSELS WHICH HAVE BEEN GROUNDED, HAD A FIRE, BEEN IN COLLISION OR ALLISION OR SUSTAINED HEAVY WEATHER DAMAGE OUTSIDE THE PORT	10
12. USE OF AUTOMATIC PILOT STEERING DEVICES AND BACKUP STEERING GEAR	10
13. PORT PASSAGE PLANS.....	11
14. NAVIGATION RISK ASSESSMENT.....	12
15. VESSEL TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT IN THE QUEENS AND CROSBY CHANNELS	12
16. REPORTING POINTS	13
17. RESTRICTIONS OF MOVEMENT OF CERTAIN VESSELS	13
18. RESTRICTIONS ON TOWING AND PUSHING	13
19. PERSONS ON THE BRIDGE.....	14
20. PROHIBITED ANCHORAGES AND EXCLUSION ZONES.....	14
21. OFFSHORE WIND TURBINE TOWERS.....	14
22. CONDUCT IN RESTRICTED VISIBILITY.....	14
23. OVERTAKING MANOEUVRES.....	15
24. PASSENGER VESSEL LOOKOUTS.....	15
25. REQUIREMENT FOR OPERATIONAL AIS	15
26. SPEED RESTRICTIONS.....	16
27. VESSELS WISHING TO ADJUST COMPASSES WITHIN THE PORT	16
28. HAZARDOUS VESSELS.....	16
29. LARGE VESSELS SWINGING.....	16
30. GAS FREEING	17
31. SAFE SPEED	17
NOTES.....	17

THE MERSEY DOCKS AND HARBOUR COMPANY LIMITED

GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR NAVIGATION IN THE PORT OF LIVERPOOL 2012

INTRODUCTION

The Mersey Docks and Harbour Company Limited (MDHC), in exercise of their powers under section 3 of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Act 1971 (the Act), and with the agreement of the Chamber of Shipping repeals the MDHC General Directions No.6 of 2000 (as amended) give the following General Directions to vessels in the Port of Liverpool (“the Port”).

In order to maintain and enhance safety of navigation within the limits of the Port of Liverpool, it is important that Masters and bridge watch keepers are aware of current Byelaws, Directions and Notices to Mariners. It is therefore vital that owners/agents ensure that all such relevant information and publications are promptly distributed to vessels as appropriate.

Note should also be taken, as appropriate, of the content of the VHF Navigation Information Broadcasts issued on a regular basis by Mersey VTS.

These General Directions are to be construed in conjunction with:

- (a) the MDHC Byelaws (as amended), which include and amend the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 (as amended), as now given effect by the Merchant Shipping (Distress Signals and Prevention of Collisions) Regulations 1996 (as amended);
- (b) any Special Direction given by a Harbour Master under Section 4 of the Act; and current:
- (c) Notices to Mariners, including Permanent Notices to Mariners.

It is the duty of the Master of a vessel to which a General Direction applies to comply with that Direction. However, the giving of a Direction does not diminish or in any other way affect the responsibility of the Master in relation to his vessel, persons on board, its cargo or any other person or property (Section 7 of the Act).

Failure by the Master of a vessel to comply with a Direction constitutes an offence, and renders that person liable, on conviction, to a fine. However, it is a defence for the Master of a vessel to prove that he had reasonable grounds for supposing that compliance with the Direction in question would be likely to imperil his vessel or that in the circumstances compliance was impracticable (Section 8 of the Act).

THE MERSEY DOCKS AND HARBOUR COMPANY LIMITED

GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR NAVIGATION IN THE PORT OF LIVERPOOL 2012

1. COMMENCEMENT

These Directions shall come into force at 0001 hours on 1st January 2012, on which date the General Directions for Navigation in the Port of Liverpool No.6 (as amended) are revoked and Notice to Mariners No.4 2000 General Directions for Navigation in the Port of Liverpool (No.6) and Notice to Mariners No.2 2004, Safe Speed and No.29 2007 Safe Navigation in Restricted Visibility will be cancelled.

2. SHORT TITLE

These Directions may be cited as the MDHC General Directions 2012.

3. DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

(1) In these Directions:

- a) **“the Act”** means the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Act 1971 (as amended);
- b) **“AIS”** means Automatic Identification System;
- c) **“Authorised Pilot”** means a person authorised under section 3 of the Pilotage Act 1987 for the Port of Liverpool and so authorised for ships of that description
- d) **“Barge”** includes dumb vessels, including but not limited to: barges, lighters, collar and mooring barges, crane barges and engineering barges, pontoons, oil storage/processing barges and dredgers, but excludes any power-driven vessels;
- e) **“Bunker Vessel”** means any vessel, normally navigating within the Port of Liverpool, used for the storage, transportation or delivery of oil products to vessels or facilities in the Port of Liverpool;
- f) **“Class”** has the same meaning as in the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code (IMDG Code);
- g) **“Commercial Vessel”** means any vessel which is not a Pleasure Vessel;
- h) **“Dock Master”** includes the Marine Officer in charge of the Dock;
- i) **“Exclusion Zone”** means any area of the Port of Liverpool, defined by a Harbour Master as being closed temporarily to general navigation for the purposes of navigational safety or emergency response;
- j) **“Fairway”** means a regular course or track of shipping, comprising all marked and/or charted navigable channels within the Port of Liverpool and includes the following areas:
 - (i) Queens and Crosby Channel;
 - (ii) The River Mersey from Perch Rock to Brombro Buoy;
 - (iii) The Eastham Channel; and
 - (iv) The Garston Channel

- k) **“Gross Tonnage”** in relation to a vessel means the tonnage as ascertained in accordance with the International Convention of Tonnage Measurement of Ships 1969, or the Merchant Shipping (Tonnage) Regulations 1982, as amended, and where in accordance with those regulations alternative tonnages are assigned to a vessel, the Gross Tonnage of the vessel shall, for the purposes of these Directions, be taken to be the larger of those tonnages;
- l) **“Harbour Master”** means a person appointed by MDHC to be a Harbour Master and includes the Marine Surveyor, deputies and assistants of a person so appointed and Officers authorised to discharge the Harbour Master’s duties through Mersey VTS;
- m) **“High Speed Craft Code”** means the International Code for the Safety of High- Speed Craft 2000, as adopted by IMO as Annex to Resolution MSC.97 (73), as amended by MSC.119 (74);
- n) **“Hazardous Vessel”** means any vessel having on board (including in its slop tanks), quantities of the following:
- (a) Dangerous Goods as defined in the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code (IMDG Code), Classes 1 to 9 inclusive of and including:
 - (i) Marine Pollutants as defined in the Environmentally Hazardous Substances N.O.S. UN 3077 and UN 3082. (MARPOL 73/78 Annex III, Regulations for the Prevention of Pollution by Harmful Substances Carried by Sea in Packaged Forms);
 - (ii) Radioactive Materials referred to in the Code for the Safe Carriage of Irradiated Nuclear Fuel, Plutonium and High Level Radioactive Wastes in Flasks on board Ships (INF Code); and
 - (iii) Solid bulk cargoes which may possess a chemical hazard and classified as Group B in accordance with the International Maritime Solid Bulk Cargoes Code (IMSBC Code).
 - (b) Harmful Substances in Bulk so defined and listed in:
 - (i) MARPOL 73/78 Annex I, Regulations for the Prevention of Oil Pollution, Appendix I;
 - (ii) MARPOL 73/78 Annex II, Regulations for the Control of Pollution by Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk, Appendix n;
 - (iii) Chapter 17 of the International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships Carrying Dangerous Chemicals in Bulk (IBC Code);
 - (iv) Chapter 19 of the International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships Carrying Liquefied Gases in Bulk (IGC Code);
 - (v) the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) circulars listing the substances provisionally assessed by IMO or assessed by tripartite agreement; and
 - (vi) the IMO Bulk Chemical (BCH) circulars listing the substances for which a hazard profile exists.
- o) **“IMO”** means the International Maritime Organisation;
- p) **“ISM Code”** means the International Management Code for the Safe Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention as adopted by IMO in Resolution A.741 (18);
- q) **“International Collision Regulations”** means the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 (as amended), as now given effect by the Merchant Shipping (Distress Signals and Prevention of Collisions) Regulations 1996 (as amended);
- r) **“Length Overall”** means the maximum length of a vessel, including overhanging structure, cargo or equipment, and if a Tug and tow, the combination of the Tug and the object(s) towed including the length of the towing medium;
- s) **“LNG”** means liquefied natural gas;
- t) **“LPG”** means liquefied petroleum gas;

- u) **“Master”** in relation to a vessel, means any person having or taking the command, charge or management of a vessel, for the time being;
- v) **“MDHC”** means The Mersey Docks and Harbour Company Limited;
- w) **“Mersey VTS”** means the Vessel Traffic Service operated by MDHC - Call Sign “Mersey VTS” - and includes any other Vessel Traffic Services control point through which the Harbour Master’s instructions and advice are issued to Masters of vessels by VHF radio and to which vessels report;
- x) **“Narrow Channel”** means all the buoyed channels in the Port of Liverpool
- y) **“Navigating within the Port”** includes navigating within the MDHC’s enclosed system of docks;
- z) **“Notices to Mariners”** means Notices to Mariners issued by MDHC;
- aa) **“Passenger Boat”** means a vessel used for carrying passengers;
- bb) **“Passenger Vessel”** has the same meaning as the Merchant Shipping (Survey and Certification) Regulations 1995;
- cc) **“PEC”** means Pilotage Exemption Certificate granted under Section 8 of the Pilotage Act 1987;
- dd) **“Permission”** may be granted subject to such conditions as the Harbour Master may think fit and shall be deemed never to have been given if such conditions are not complied with;
- ee) **“Pleasure Vessel”** means:
- i) any vessel which at the time it is being used as:
 - a) i) in the case of a vessel wholly owned, chartered or hired by an individual or individuals, used only for the sport or pleasure of the owner or the immediate family or friends of the owner; or
 - a) ii) in the case of a vessel owned by a body corporate, one on which the persons on board are employees or officers of the body corporate, or their immediate family or friends; and
 - b) on a voyage or excursion, which is one for which the owner does not receive money for or in connection with operating the vessel or carrying any person, other than as a contribution to the direct expenses of the operation of the vessel incurred during the voyage or excursion; or
 - ii) any vessel wholly owned by or on behalf of a members’ club formed for the purpose of sport or pleasure which, at the time it is being used, is used only for the sport or pleasure of members of the club or their immediate family; and for the use of which any charges levied are paid into club funds and applied for the general use of the club and/or upkeep of the vessel; and
 - iii) in the case of any vessel referred to in paragraph (a) or (b) above no other payments are made by or on behalf of the users of the vessel, other than by the owner; and in this definition “immediate family” means, in relation to an individual, the husband, wife or partner of the individual, and a relative of the individual or the relative’s husband, wife or partner, and “relative” means brother, sister, ancestor or lineal descendant;
- Note:** *The definition of Pleasure Vessel follows closely that used in the Merchant Shipping (Survey and Certification) Regulations 1995.*
- ff) **“Port of Liverpool”** means the area comprising all the sea and channels leading to the River Mersey and bounded within the port limits described in section 2 of the Act “the Port”;
- gg) **“Port Passage Plan”** means a formal, systematic and documented navigational plan for all stages of any voyage into, out of or within the Port of Liverpool in accordance with the

guidelines contained in the appropriate SOLAS regulations, High Speed Craft Code or any similar flag state administration notice issued pursuant to the associated IMO Conventions on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch keeping for Seafarers (STCW);

hh) **"Prohibited Anchorage"** means an area designated by a Harbour Master as an area or berth where anchoring is not permitted and where possible published on charts, and/or in Notices to Mariners;

ii) **"Restricted Visibility"** means all circumstances when visibility is restricted by fog, mist, falling snow, heavy rainstorms or any other similar causes;

Note: Within the Port of Liverpool a Harbour Master may using all available information, decide that Restricted Visibility pertains in a particular area or at a particular time or is likely to pertain and inform shipping as appropriate.

jj) **"SOLAS"** means the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea;

kk) **"Special Direction"** means a Direction authorised by Section 4 of the Act;

Note: Section 4 of the Act empowers a Harbour Master to give a Special Direction to a vessel anywhere in the Port of Liverpool.

ll) **"Speed Reduction"** means an instruction from the Harbour Master requiring vessels to proceed at "reduced speed" through areas where activities sensitive to the effects of wash or draw-off are taking place;

Note: At such times, mariners should reduce speed as appropriate, in order to minimise wash and draw-off, commensurate with maintaining manoeuvrability, to ensure the safety of those engaged in such activities.

mm) **"Speed Restriction"** means any temporary limitation on the speed of vessels in a part of the Port of Liverpool.

(2) In these Directions, unless the context otherwise requires:

a) words and expressions used in these Directions have the same meanings as in the Act;

b) unless stated otherwise in a particular Direction, for the purposes of Section 3 (4) (a) or 4 (3) of the Act, all Directions shall be deemed to apply to all vessels, to the whole of the Port of Liverpool and at all times, and a Direction addressed to a Master shall be deemed to apply to the vessel of which he is the Master;

c) the Direction headings form part of and affect the construction and interpretation of the Directions;

d) unless the context otherwise requires, words importing one gender include the other gender; and words in the singular shall include the plural and vice versa;

e) where these Directions refer to an enactment or to subordinate legislation, the reference, unless the contrary intention appears, is a reference to that enactment or the subordinate legislation:

(i) as amended and includes a reference thereto as extended or applied by or under any other enactment or subordinate legislation including any other provision of the Directions; and

(ii) as re-enacted with or without modifications from time to time

(f) The Interpretation Act 1978 shall apply to the interpretation of these Directions as it applies to the interpretation of an Act of Parliament.

4. USE OF VHF RADIO

(1) This Direction shall apply to:

Vessels over 50 gross tons and tugs engaged in towing;

Passenger Boats;

Tugs;

Bunker Vessels;

Vessels engaged or intending to engage in fishing; and

Vessels of more than 50 gross tons, except:

a) narrow boats greater than 13.7m in length overall in the enclosed Dock systems;

b) Pleasure Vessels of more than 50 gross tons navigating on the River Mersey provided that:

i) they are travelling in company or a flotilla;

ii) they are not the lead vessel of that company or flotilla; and

iii) there is a lead vessel, which complies with the requirements of this Direction and is able to communicate immediately and effectively with all other vessels in the company or flotilla; or

c) vessels under oars.

(2) A narrow boat navigating on the River Mersey shall comply with the requirements of the Small Vessel Guidance produced by MDHC.

(3) Any vessel or group of vessels planning to exercise the exemption under Direction 4. (1) b) above, need to either individually or through the lead vessel:

a) provide at least 7 days' notice to the Harbour Master of their intention to navigate on the River Mersey;

b) comply with any conditions for their passage required by the Harbour Master; and

c) report, through the lead vessel, to Mersey VTS prior to commencing navigation on the River Mersey, providing details of the vessels involved, their destination and estimated time of arrival. Upon completion of the passage the lead vessel shall inform Mersey VTS of their arrival.

(4) On every vessel to which this Direction applies, at all times when underway or at anchor there shall be:

a) an operational VHF radio capable of communicating with a Harbour Master at Mersey VTS;

b) an effective, continuous listening watch on the bridge when the ship is within the Port and underway or at anchor shall be maintained on the frequency of 156.6 MHz VHF channel 12 or by arrangement with the Harbour Master, on an alternative frequency.

c) compliance with the communications requirements set out in these Directions for the use of VHF radio; and

d) manning and operation of the VHF radio by a suitably qualified person, capable of communicating effectively in English.

(5) Prior to a vessel's departure from a berth, stage or anchorage, the appropriate MDHC VHF channel shall be monitored for information that may affect the safe navigation of the vessel including, the routine General Situation and Movement Statement at approximately 3 and 2 hours before each

high water and VHF navigation information broadcasts made immediately prior to the intended departure time.

(6) The Master of every vessel shall inform the Harbour Master at Mersey VTS when that vessel is changing over to a channel used by tugs or at a Dock Entrance or at Tranmere Oil Stages.

Note:

1. Notwithstanding that only vessels over 50 gross tons and tugs engaged in towing routinely report their movements, other vessels to which this Direction applies should generally "listen and learn" from VHF radio traffic. They must however, report in an emergency and when required by the Harbour Master.

2. Details of Radio Communications in the Port of Liverpool were promulgated in Notice to Mariners No. 19 2011.

5. USE OF VHF RADIO IN COLLISION AVOIDANCE

When special passing agreements are made between vessels in order to reduce the risk of collision, communication must be conducted on the frequency of 156.6 MHz (VHF Channel 12) to ensure that Mersey VTS and other River users are aware of the vessels' intentions.

Note: *The Maritime & Coastguard Agency issues advice on this topic in the form of Marine Guidance Note 324 (M+F).*

6. TIME OF ARRIVAL AND CLEARANCE OF INWARD BOUND VESSELS

(1) This Direction applies at all times to every vessel having a Gross Tonnage of more than 50 tons which proposes to enter from seaward and navigate within the Port.

(2) The Master of every vessel to which this direction applies is required:

(a) at least 24 hours prior to arrival at the Port or on leaving the last Port whichever is later to advise the Harbour Master of his ETA at the BAR Buoy and subsequently when within VHF range but not later than when in the vicinity of the BAR Buoy to confirm this time, advising of his intention to navigate within the Port.

(b) if he intends to enter a buoyed channel at a point inwards of the BAR Buoy, to advise the Harbour Master at Mersey VTS of his intention to navigate within the Port before entering the buoyed channel and confirm his ETA at the intended point of entry of the buoyed channel.

(c) to inform the Harbour Master at Mersey VTS when the vessel has entered a lock, or completed mooring at a River berth or come to an anchor.

7. CLEARANCE OF VESSELS MANOEUVRING WITHIN THE PORT

(1) This Direction applies at all times to every vessel which has a Gross Tonnage of more than 50 tons that proposes to navigate within the Port, except that it does not apply to any tug when employed assisting the berthing of a powered vessel.

(2) The Master on departure from a berth or anchorage is required so far as practicable:

(a) to give, or cause to be given by the owner of or agent for the vessel, notice, of not less than 60 minutes, of the time at which the vessel proposes to start navigating within the Port to the

Harbour Master at Mersey VTS either directly or in the case of vessels berthed in dock to the Dock Master for that dock;

(b) within 10 minutes before the vessel proposes to start navigating within the Port, to advise the Harbour Master at Mersey VTS or in the case of vessels berthed in dock, the Dock Master for that dock that the vessel proposes so to navigate; and

(c) to inform the Dock Master for that dock on completion of the movement or exit from the Lock.

(3) The Master of a vessel that proposes to navigate within the Port shall report that the vessel “complies with the navigational safety requirements of MDHC General Directions”. This report will confirm:

(a) that the vessel's charts for the Port of Liverpool and associated navigational publications are corrected and up to date;

(b) that the Master has prepared an appropriate Port Passage Plan for use during the vessel's passage in the Port of Liverpool;

(c) that the vessel, if appropriate, is compliant with the requirements of the ISM Code;

(d) if the vessel is not subject to the ISM Code, that the vessel has no deficiencies or defects in respect of its manning, navigational equipment, propulsion or manoeuvring machinery;

(e) that arrangements have been made to provide appropriate mooring assistance for the vessel at its intended berth in the Port of Liverpool; and in addition shall confirm that

(f) the vessel's International Ship and Port Facility Security Code, security level; and

(g) the number of persons on board.

(4) In the event of it proving impracticable to give the notice required in paragraph (2) (a) or (2) (b) of this Direction before the vessel is obliged to commence navigating within the Port then the Master shall as soon as practicable thereafter advise the Harbour Master at Mersey VTS or in the case of vessels in dock, the Dock Master for that dock, of the vessel's movements.

(5) When any vessel is engaged in, or is to engage in, or has been engaged in fishing operations in the Port of Liverpool, the Harbour Master via the Mersey VTS, is to be provided with a:

(a) report of the vessel's departure from its berth or mooring, or entry into the Port of Liverpool; and

(b) periodic update of the Master's subsequent intentions and movements whilst the vessel is proceeding to, from or engaged in fishing operations inside port limits.

8. CARRIAGE OF RADAR INSTALLATION

Vessels over 50 gross tons not fitted with a radar installation in proper working order shall not, except with the prior permission of the Harbour Master, navigate within the Port (except to proceed to a safe anchorage) when due to fog, mist, falling snow, heavy rainstorms, dust, smoke or any other similar cause, visibility is less than 0.5 nautical mile

9. VESSELS WITH MECHANICAL, EQUIPMENT OR STRUCTURAL DEFECTS, OILY WATER SEPARATORS AND BILGE SYSTEMS

(1) The Master of any vessel having a Gross Tonnage of more than 50 tons shall not navigate within the Port except with the permission of the Harbour Master if the vessel or its tow, if any, has any one of the following defects:

(a) is unseaworthy in any respect;

- (b) defects to main engines, steering gear or other auxiliary machinery which may affect the manoeuvring of the vessel;
- (c) inoperable equipment such as compass, whistle/siren, or rudder indicator;
- (d) inoperable capstans, windlass, mooring winches, or anchors that are not cleared and ready for use;
- (e) a list of over 5 degrees or is excessively out of trim; or
- (f) leaking oil, chemical or gas cargoes, or any hull or machinery damage which may affect the safety of the vessel or the containment or safety of the cargo or bunkers.

(2) The Master of any vessel having a Gross Tonnage of more than 50 tons shall confirm to the Harbour Master at Mersey VTS that his vessel does not have any of the defects specified above in (1) (a) to (f) inclusive. The Master shall give this confirmation at the same time as he advises or is required by these directions to advise the Harbour Master of his intention to navigate within the Port.

(3) Whilst vessels are in the Port of Liverpool, all oily water separators are to be isolated and bilge overboard discharge valves secured closed, to prevent accidental discharge.

(4) The Master of any vessel under pilotage shall ensure that no ballasting, deballasting or internal transfer of cargo, which significantly alters the draught, trim or handling characteristics of the vessel, shall take place without the prior knowledge and agreement of the Authorised Pilot.

10. VESSELS GROUNDED, ON FIRE OR WHICH HAVE BEEN IN COLLISION WITHIN THE PORT

The Master of any vessel which has grounded, is on fire or has been in collision or allision within the Port shall give immediate notice to the Harbour Master at Mersey VTS of the position of the vessel, known damage, confirmation of cargo or any other information required by the Harbour Master and shall not navigate the vessel other than for the safety of the vessel without the prior permission of the Harbour Master and only in accordance with his directions.

11. VESSELS WHICH HAVE BEEN GROUNDED, HAD A FIRE, BEEN IN COLLISION OR ALLISION OR SUSTAINED HEAVY WEATHER DAMAGE OUTSIDE THE PORT

The Master of every vessel which has been grounded, had a fire, been in collision or allision or sustained heavy weather damage outside the Port is required to give notice to the Harbour Master on the condition of his vessel and or cargo such notice to be given at least 24 hours prior to the vessels arrival at the BAR Buoy or as soon as possible after the incident whichever is later and the vessel shall only navigate within the Port with the prior permission of and in accordance with the directions of the Harbour Master.

12. USE OF AUTOMATIC PILOT STEERING DEVICES AND BACKUP STEERING GEAR

(1) The Master of any vessel when navigating within the Port shall ensure that in the event of use being made of an Automatic Pilot Steering Device a competent helmsman other than the Master or a Pilot is in attendance of the steering position to steer the vessel manually immediately circumstances so require.

(2) Any duplicate, secondary or backup steering gear and steering gear power systems are to be fully operational and ready for immediate use whilst vessels are navigating within the Port of Liverpool. Emergency steering gear systems should have been recently tested.

Note: The attention of Masters is drawn to the Merchant Shipping (Safety of Navigation) Regulations 2002 and the MCA publication "Safety of Navigation – Implementing SOLAS Chapter V, 2002".

13. PORT PASSAGE PLANS

(1) All Vessels over 50 gross tons and tugs engaged in towing ordinarily navigating outside the Port of Liverpool, shall, prior to navigating in the Port of Liverpool, prepare a Port Passage Plan for use during the vessel's passage in the Port of Liverpool.

(2) All Vessels over 50 gross tons and tugs engaged in towing ordinarily navigating outside the Port of Liverpool provided with an Authorised Pilot, the embarking Authorised Pilot, upon arrival on board and following any action to establish the navigational safety of the ship, will advise the vessel's Master of the details of the Authorised Pilot's Port Passage Plan. He will also advise the Master of any changes made necessary to the vessel's Port Passage Plan by local circumstances. Before proceeding with the passage the Master and the Authorised Pilot shall agree the Port Passage Plan for the voyage in the Port of Liverpool.

(3) All Commercial Vessels normally operating only in the Port of Liverpool shall prepare and maintain a generic Port Passage Plan, appropriate for use during the vessel's routine passage and operations in the Port of Liverpool. All such Port Passage Plans may be inspected by the Harbour Master.

(4) Further to the requirements of Direction 13(3) above, all Commercial Vessels operating in the Port of Liverpool and observing the High Speed Craft Code, shall have their generic Port Passage Plan approved by the Harbour Master prior to commencing operations.

(5) All Vessels over 50 gross tons and tugs engaged in towing ordinarily navigating outside the Port of Liverpool, and not embarking a Liverpool Authorised Pilot, but navigating or intending to navigate within the Port of Liverpool, (including those vessels declaring a valid PEC holder as navigating the vessel for the passage in the Port of Liverpool), the Master or PEC holder shall, upon request from Mersey VTS, provide the Harbour Master with relevant details of the Port Passage Plan.

Note: Information for the preparation, updating and execution of Port Passage Plans may be found in:

- *UK Admiralty Sailing Directions – West Coasts of England and Wales Pilot Chapter 8 – Liverpool Bay*
- *Appropriate Guides to Port Entry*
- *UK Admiralty List of Radio Signals, Volume 6*
- *World VTS Guide*
- *MDHC General Directions and Pilotage Directions*
- *Tidal information and local constraints*
- *Current MDHC Notices to Mariners*
- *Code of Practice for Tug Operation in the Port of Liverpool*
- *2 hours and 3 hours to high water VHF navigational information broadcasts from Mersey VTS.*

14. NAVIGATION RISK ASSESSMENT

(1) Any vessels, which fall outside the scope of the MDHC marine safety management system, and intend to navigate in the Port of Liverpool or vessels within the scope of the MDHC marine safety management system whose operation, in the opinion of the Harbour Master, causes or is likely to cause a risk to navigational safety, shall, when required by the Harbour Master, be subjected to a formal risk assessment before entering or operating further in the Port of Liverpool or any part of the Port of Liverpool Hazardous.

(2) Any intra-port passenger or freight service shall not be commenced or expanded in any way in the Port of Liverpool without first notifying and subsequently obtaining the formal agreement of the Harbour Master.

(3) When a vessel is required to submit to a formal risk assessment as required by General Direction 14 (1), the Harbour Master shall be provided with any information he may request in respect of, but not limited to; the vessel, its equipment, general condition, certification, organisational and ship management systems and crew competency, so that a full assessment of the risks associated with the navigation or operation of the vessel and any appropriate mitigation of such risks in the Port of Liverpool can be made.

15. VESSEL TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT IN THE QUEENS AND CROSBY CHANNELS

Vessels over 50 gross tons and tugs engaged in towing navigating in the Queens and Crosby Channels between the Formby Safe Water Mark and the Crosby Safe Water Mark are subject to the following traffic management procedures:

- a) passing and overtaking within the buoyed channel may be permitted subject to the agreement of the Masters of the vessels involved except when a Hazardous Vessel over 200m in length carrying hydrocarbons in bulk or any vessel over 200m in length that is constrained by her draft is involved. However;
- b) one-way traffic working will normally be agreed between vessels or instructed by the Harbour Master at Mersey VTS for traffic restricted by size or draught to navigating within the buoyed channel, and;
- c) vessels navigating in the general direction of the tide should normally have priority; and
- d) smaller vessels should always remain within the buoyed channel due to the proximity of the Training Walls and Revetments however if they should for any reason navigate outside the buoy line they should ensure that other traffic and Mersey VTS are informed. (See Note 2)

Note:

1. In the interests of navigational safety, the Harbour Master at Mersey VTS will arbitrate in the event of conflict and may direct on priority, passing or overtaking.

2. Water depths can vary considerably due to the mobility of sand banks.

Frequent periodic surveys of depths are undertaken in the recognised buoyed channel. Main surveys are carried out less frequently outside the channel and mariners are reminded that, when navigating outside the buoyed channel, they should do so with appropriate caution and not rely on minimum under keel clearances.

16. REPORTING POINTS

Every vessel over 50 gross tons shall inform the Harbour Master at the Mersey VTS Centre when passing the following waypoints (reporting stations) either inward or outward bound:

- (i) Q1 (inward) or Q2 (outward);
- (ii) Crosby Safe Water Mark;
- (iii) Brazil Buoy (inward) or C22 Buoy (outward);
- (iv) Woodside Stage (inward) or Dukes Buoy (outward); and
- (v) Brombro Buoy.

17. RESTRICTIONS OF MOVEMENT OF CERTAIN VESSELS

(1) Any vessel, which is to the west of the BAR Buoy and from which a harmful, polluting or dangerous substance is escaping or likely to escape, shall not be navigated to the east of the BAR Buoy, except with the permission of a Harbour Master and in accordance with his directions: provided that nothing in this Direction shall affect the exercise by the Secretary of State of any of the powers conferred on him by Schedule 3A of the Marine Safety Act 2003 (as amended).

(2) Any vessel of more than 50 gross tons, which has suffered damage, which affects or is likely to affect its seaworthiness or ability to navigate safely shall not:

- a) if the vessel is to the west of the BAR Buoy, be navigated to the east of the BAR Buoy, or;
- b) if the vessel is to the east of the BAR Buoy, be moved, except with the permission of a Harbour Master and in accordance with his directions.

(3) Any vessel of more than 50 gross tons, which has suffered damage, which affects or is likely to affect its seaworthiness or ability to navigate safely shall not:

- a) if the vessel is in the Liverpool or Birkenhead Dock Systems, be navigated outside that system
- b) if the vessel is within the Liverpool or Birkenhead Dock Systems, be moved, except with the permission of a Harbour Master and in accordance with his directions.

18. RESTRICTIONS ON TOWING AND PUSHING

(1) The Master of any vessel, when towing another vessel, other than a tug when employed in towing or assisting the berthing of a powered vessel or where the towing operation is being controlled by the vessel being towed, shall:

- a) give notice of not less than 60 minutes to the Harbour Master at Mersey VTS of the time at which the vessel proposes to commence towing within the Port and shall give notice also of the details of the tow, for example whether the tow involves a dead ship, abnormal tow or partially disabled ship.
- b) All dead ship tows of 82m or over in length overall shall be conducted in the hours of daylight and will be subject to an Authorised Pilot's Consultation.

(2) A power-driven vessel shall not:

- a) be engaged in towing a vessel when pushing another vessel ahead;
- b) be engaged in pushing a vessel when towing another vessel alongside;

c) be engaged in pushing ahead more than one vessel at a time, except where the vessels being pushed are secured together as a composite unit, which is made fast to the pushing vessel.

19. PERSONS ON THE BRIDGE

There shall be, on the bridge of a power-driven vessel underway in the Port of Liverpool:

(1) The Master of the vessel or a member of the crew who is capable of taking charge of the vessel and, when an Authorised Pilot is on board, is capable of understanding the Authorised Pilot's directions in the English language.

(2) When a PEC holder has conduct of a vessel within the Port of Liverpool, a second person shall be immediately available and competent to take charge in an emergency.

(3) The Master, Authorised Pilot or PEC holder shall be supported at all times by an appropriate bridge team.

20. PROHIBITED ANCHORAGES AND EXCLUSION ZONES

(1) No vessel shall, except in an emergency or with the prior permission of the Harbour Master:

a) anchor in a Prohibited Anchorage; or

b) approach within 50 metres of any River stage in the Port of Liverpool unless berthing at that stage.

(2) No vessel to which this Direction applies shall anchor before first consulting the Harbour Master at Mersey VTS regarding the place and period of anchoring, and shall not anchor for the purpose of discharging or loading cargo, bunkering or taking water without the prior permission of the Harbour Master.

(3) If in an emergency a vessel is obliged to anchor otherwise than in accordance with this direction, the Master of such a vessel shall as soon practicable thereafter, inform the Harbour Master at Mersey VTS.

Note: Details of the Prohibited Anchorages established in the Port of Liverpool were promulgated in Notice to Mariners No. 15 2014 and are found on Admiralty Charts.

21. OFFSHORE WIND TURBINE TOWERS

No vessel shall, except in an emergency, for the purposes of construction or maintenance or with the prior permission of the Harbour Master, approach within 50 metres of any wind turbine tower.

22. CONDUCT IN RESTRICTED VISIBILITY

Except to proceed to the nearest safe anchorage or berth:

(1) Passenger Vessels inbound to or outbound from City of Liverpool Cruise Terminal and oil tankers inbound to or outbound from the Tranmere Oil Stages shall not navigate in visibility of less than 5 cables.

(2) A vessel of more than 50 gross tons which is not equipped with an operational radar installation and tugs towing a “dead” tow shall not navigate in visibility of less than 5 cables

(3) Tugs shall not make fast ahead and tow another vessel in visibility of less than 2 cables.

(4) A vessel of more than 50 gross tons shall not approach or depart a River entrance in visibility of less than 2 cables.

(5) At all times when vessels are navigating in the Port of Liverpool in restricted visibility they shall comply with the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 (as amended) and in particular Rule 19.

(6) Any vessel navigating or moored in Restricted Visibility observing that the visibility at its location is not the distance broadcast by Mersey VTS, or that the Mersey VTS is not aware of Restricted Visibility at the vessel’s location, should advise Mersey VTS of the current level of visibility at the vessel’s location.

23. OVERTAKING MANOEUVRES

Overtaking manoeuvrings shall only be undertaken so that the vessels involved do not prejudice their ability to navigate safely, particularly in areas of additional constraint such as channel bends and river entrances.

Note: Particular care should be taken in conditions of Restricted Visibility where the consideration of safe speed may prolong the overtaking manoeuvre.

24. PASSENGER VESSEL LOOKOUTS

(1) Public announcements, commentaries, on board noise or music shall not inhibit the ability of the Master or, where appropriate, that of a person acting as lookout to:

- a) hear clearly and respond to sound signals and all internal and external communications, including VHF navigation information broadcasts; and
- b) assess and appreciate fully the intentions of vessels in the immediate vicinity so that there will be no delay in taking or failure to take such action as may become necessary in compliance with the International Collision Regulations, in particular Rule 8 – Action to avoid collisions.

(2) Except in an emergency, public announcements and commentaries shall not be made by the person having conduct of the vessel.

25. REQUIREMENT FOR OPERATIONAL AIS

(1) Where a vessel is required by international law to fit and operate AIS, the system shall be switched on at all times when the vessel is underway.

(2) Vessels required to carry AIS under SOLAS V are to operate AIS when alongside in the Port of Liverpool, except for security reasons, or for safety reasons when the berth requires the AIS unit to be switched off or to be operated on low power in the vicinity of that particular berth. Such vessels are to inform Mersey VTS when they intend to switch off AIS.

(3) Vessels constrained by their draught shall transmit an appropriate AIS status.

Note: AIS installations are to be kept updated with the correct settings and particular care is to be taken to ensure that the correct vessel "status" is set and that vessel "heading" is accurately aligned.

26. SPEED RESTRICTIONS

All vessels shall comply with the requirements of any Speed Restriction or Speed Reduction imposed by the Harbour Master, subject to the requirements of navigational safety, the good practice of seamen and any constraints imposed by the vessel's size, draught, position and/or safe manoeuvring speed.

Note: Speed Restrictions will normally be promulgated by Mersey VTS and/or by Notice to Mariners.

27. VESSELS WISHING TO ADJUST COMPASSES WITHIN THE PORT

The Master of any vessel shall whenever possible give at least 24 hours' prior notice of the intention to adjust the compasses of the vessel and to confirm the intention to adjust compasses immediately prior to commencing to do so.

28. HAZARDOUS VESSELS

(1) This Direction applies at all times to every Hazardous Vessel of more than 50 gross tons which proposes to navigate within the Port of Liverpool

(2) The Master of every vessel to which this Direction applies is required:

(a) To give notice to the Harbour Master not less than 48 hours in advance of:

(i) his intention to navigate within the Port and the nature of the cargo being carried;

(ii) the nature of a previous cargo, if the vessel is in ballast but not gas-free; and

(iii) whether the vessel is fitted with an operational Cargo Environmental Control System

(b) On giving notice of intention to navigate under Direction 6 (2) or 7 (2), to confirm the nature of the Dangerous Goods and/or Harmful Substances.

(3) A vessel not carrying a valid Certificate of Fitness for:

(a) the Carriage of Dangerous Chemicals in Bulk or the Carriage of Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk for vessels where the IBC Code applies; or

(b) the Carriage of Liquefied Gases in Bulk for vessels where the IGC Code applies

shall not navigate within the Port except with the prior permission of the Harbour Master.

29. LARGE VESSELS SWINGING

The Master of any vessel of 150 metres or over in length intending to swing in the River; i.e., alter her course more than 12 points (135 degrees), shall give advance notice of at least 10 minutes to Mersey VTS prior to this manoeuvre.

30. GAS FREEING

All vessels requiring gas-freeing in the Port of Liverpool may only do so when they are positioned to seaward of the Q1 buoy

31. SAFE SPEED

A vessel shall not be navigated or manoeuvred in any part of the Port of Liverpool including the enclosed docks, River Mersey, or in any of the sea channels or approaches to the River from the furthest point seaward to which such sea channels or approaches are or may be buoyed, at speeds which will or are likely to:

- (1) endanger life;
- (2) force opens the gates or caissons or damages any of the works or property;
- (3) cause damage to any such gates or caissons, or to any walls, revetments, training banks, or other works or property (including vessels) of the board;
- (4) cause damage to the banks of the River Mersey or sea channels or approaches as aforesaid; or
- (5) cause damage to vessels lying alongside any quay, jetty or stage or to the moorings of such vessels.

NOTES

(1) It is the duty of the Master of a vessel to which a General Direction is given to comply with the Direction. However, the giving of a Direction does not diminish or in any other way affect the responsibility of the Master in relation to his vessel, persons on board, its cargo or any other person or property (Mersey Docks and Harbour Board Act 1971, S.7).

(2) Masters are reminded of the need to comply with the Mersey Channel Collision Rules 1978 as amended.

(3) The owners of a vessel to which a General Direction applies should take all reasonable steps to ensure that the Master of the vessel is informed of the Direction and understands its significance.

(4) Subject to Direction 18 hereof the General Directions for Navigation in the Port of Liverpool 2012 shall not apply to a dumb barge being towed, but the tug or other vessel towing a dumb barge shall observe them.

(5) The notice required to be given under this Direction, to the Harbour Master, may be given by:

Telephone: 0151 949 6131/6133/6134
Email: vtg.portoperations@merseydock.co.uk

List of Amendments

No.	Effective Date	Details
0	01/01/2012	Original as issued
1	01/06/2014	MDHC limited company status updated
2	01/04/2018	References to associated legislation/documents updated