



The Mersey Docks and Harbour Company Limited

Mersey Channel Collision Rules



RULES MADE BY ORDER IN COUNCIL OF HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN AT THE COURT AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE THE 20TH DECEMBER 1978 (a) AND AMENDED ON 1ST JUNE 1983 (b) PURSUANT TO THE "MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 1894", SECTION 421, SUB-SECTION (2), AND THE "MERSEY CHANNELS ACT, 1897", CONCERNING THE LIGHTS OR SIGNALS TO BE CARRIED, AND CONCERNING THE STEPS FOR AVOIDING COLLISION TO BE TAKEN, BY VESSELS NAVIGATING THE RIVER MERSEY AND THE SEA CHANNELS OR APPROACHES THERETO.

(a) SI 1978/1914 (b) SI 1983/770

MERSEY CHANNEL COLLISION RULES

PRELIMINARY

1. In these Rules, except where the context otherwise requires:
 “Collision Regulations” means;
 The Merchant Shipping (Distress Signals and Prevention of Collision) Regulations 1996 (a) and the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 set out in Merchant Shipping Notice No. M1642 (COLREG1).

 and the several words and expressions to which meanings are assigned by the Collision Regulations shall have the same meanings as in those Regulations.
2. Every vessel navigating in any part of the River Mersey or in the sea channels or approaches thereto between the Rock Lighthouse and the furthest point seawards to which such sea channels or approaches respectively are for the time being buoyed on both sides shall comply with:
 - (a) these Rules, and
 - (b) the Collision Regulations, except in so far as compliance with these Rules requires otherwise.

RULES CONCERNING MARKS, LIGHTS, ETC.

3. The lights prescribed by these Rules shall be exhibited from sunset to sunrise, from sunrise to sunset in restricted visibility and in all other circumstances when it is deemed necessary and during such times no other lights shall be exhibited, except such lights as cannot be mistaken for the lights specified in these Rules or do not impair their visibility or distinctive character, or interfere with the keeping of a proper look-out.
 - (2) The marks and shapes prescribed by these Rules shall be exhibited from sunrise to sunset.
 - (3) The lights and shapes specified in these Rules shall comply with the provisions of the Collision Regulations.
4. A power driven vessel when being towed, shall, if under power, notwithstanding anything contained in Rule 24 (e) of the Collision Regulations, exhibit the lights prescribed by Rule 23 of the Collision Regulations:

 Provided that a power driven floating crane shall not be required under this paragraph to exhibit the light prescribed by Rule 23 (a) (iii) of the Collision Regulations
5. A power driven floating crane when under way shall exhibit the lights prescribed by Rule 23 (a) (i) (iii) and (iv) of the Collision Regulations, but shall not be required to carry the light prescribed by Rule 23 (a) (ii) thereof.

6. A vessel of 20 metres or over in length, when at anchor, shall, in addition to the requirements of Rule 30 of the Collision Regulations, carry aft where it can best be seen one ball at a height of 4.5 metres lower than the forward ball.
7. (1) A vessel, when lying at, or attached to another vessel lying at, any Jetty or Stage to the northward of a straight line drawn from the south end of the Liverpool Landing Stage to the south end of the Woodside Ferry Stage, shall exhibit the lights prescribed by Rule 23 of the Collision Regulations or, as the case may be, Rule 25 thereof:

Provided that a power driven floating crane shall not be required under this paragraph to exhibit the light prescribed by Rule 23 (a) (ii) of the Collision Regulations.

(2) A vessel, when lying at any Jetty or Stage to the southward of the said line, or when moored head and stern to buoys permanently fixed, shall exhibit where they can best be seen one white all round light forward and at or near the stern a second white all round light. The forward light shall be 4.5 metres above the after light provided that a vessel under 50 metres in length may carry one such light only, fixed where it can best be seen.
8. A vessel exceeding 200 metres in length when under way or at anchor shall, in addition to the lights prescribed by Rule 23 or Rule 30 of the Collision Regulations, exhibit where they can best be seen three red all round lights spaced vertically two metres apart.
9. A vessel wishing to warn ships of an unmarked underwater obstruction shall display the lights or shapes provided for in Rule 27 (b) and (d) of the Collision Regulations; additionally, such vessel may use her searchlight to warn on-coming ships as provided for in Rule 36 of the Collision Regulations.

STEERING AND SAILING RULES

10. For the purpose of Rule 9 of the Collision Regulations (navigation in narrow channels), the fairways of the River Mersey and the sea channels or approaches thereto between the Rock Lighthouse and the furthest point seawards to which such sea channels or approaches respectively are for the time being buoyed on both sides shall be taken to be narrow channels.
11. A vessel shall not navigate to come into or leave the Main (i.e., The Queens and Crosby) Channel seaward of a line drawn on a true bearing of 071 degrees from the Rock Lighthouse (i.e., a line drawn from the Rock Lighthouse to the west pierhead of the Gladstone River Entrance) at such a time or in such a manner as to hamper traffic passing up and down the Main Channel.

(a) SI 1996/75 (b) 1979 c.39 (c) SI 1983/768 (d) 1894 c.60 (e) 1982 c.16

12. A power driven vessel under way, when about to turn round, i.e., alter her course more than 12 points (135 degrees), shall indicate the same by four short and rapid blasts on the whistle followed, after a short interval, if turning with her head to starboard by one short blast or, if turning with her head to port by two short blasts. The giving of the signal so prescribed shall not relieve a vessel of her obligations under the Collision Regulations or these Rules:

Provided that a vessel of less than 50 metres in length shall not be required to give the signal so prescribed unless she is towing one or more vessels and the distance from her stem to the stern of the last vessel towed is 50 metres or more.

LAUNCHING OF VESSELS

13. (1) A shipbuilder or other person (hereinafter call “the shipbuilder”) shall not launch a vessel into any part of the River Mersey to the northward of a straight line, drawn from the Eastham Ferry Slip to the north west corner of the North Dock at Garston, unless the requirements of this Rule have been complied with.

(2) At least three clear days before the date fixed for the launch the shipbuilder shall, in addition to giving any other notice required by law, give to the Secretary of The Mersey Docks and Harbour Company Limited at the Maritime Centre, Liverpool, notice in writing of the place, day and hour proposed for the launch.

(3) Upon receiving such notice The Mersey Docks and Harbour Company Limited shall publish within the Port of Liverpool a notice to mariners, giving particulars of the place, day and hour proposed for the launch, and prescribing the area, which is to be kept clear as provided by these Rules (hereinafter called the “launching area”). The launching area shall be bounded on the shore side by the line of the shore between a point 600 metres, or such other distance as in the opinion of the Harbour Master to the said Company may be necessary, to the southward, and another point 300 metres to the northward, of the river end of the launch-way, and on the remaining three sides by straight lines so drawn as to include an area of a size sufficient in the opinion of the said Harbour Master, having regard to the vessel’s tonnage and to other relevant circumstances, in the interests of safety of vessels using the river

(4) At least three hours before the time proposed for the launch the shipbuilder shall mark the launching area by anchoring at each angle thereof in the river a mark boat suitable dressed with flags in rainbow fashion from stem to stern.

(5) Ten minutes before the time proposed for the launch the shipbuilder shall cause each mark boat to exhibit a red flag measuring 2 metres long by 1.5 metres broad and inscribed with the word ‘LAUNCH’ (hereinafter called a “launching flag”) in large white letters thereon, at such a height being not less than 6 metres above the hull of the mark boat, as to be clear of and to fly well above and distinct from all other flags thereon.

14. If the vessel is not launched within thirty minutes of the launching flags being first exhibited the shipbuilder shall take steps to prevent the vessel being launched upon that day.
15. (1) The shipbuilder shall cause each mark boat to continue to exhibit the launching flag until the vessel has been launched and is under control, or, if the vessel is not launched, until there remains no risk of the vessel coming off the launch-way of her own accord.
(2) As soon as the vessel is under control or there remains no risk of the vessel coming off the launch-way, the shipbuilder shall cause the mark boats to be withdrawn.
16. The shipbuilder shall take means to bring up the vessel which has been launched and to have her under control within the launching area.
17. (1) A vessel anchored or moored, prior to the day of the launch, within the launching area, or in such a position as to swing into it, shall be removed not later than 1 a.m. on the day of the launch.
(2) A vessel shall not on the day of the launch, except for the purpose in connection with the launch, be anchored or moored within the launching area, or in such a position as to swing into it, until after the mark boats have been withdrawn.
(3) A vessel shall not, except for the purpose of leaving the launching area or for a purpose in connection with the launch, be navigated within the launching area whilst the launching flags are exhibited.

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