

Navigation Guidelines

Heysham Port Limited

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Navigation Guidelines

These Navigation Guidelines are intended to complement passage planning and should be read in conjunction with the Byelaws, Directions, other Guidelines, and Notices to Mariners issued by Heysham Port Limited.

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Note (1):
In these Navigation Guidelines, unless the context otherwise requires:

"Harbour" means Heysham Port Limited's harbour at Heysham as authorized by section 4 of the Midland Railway Act 1896 (and any statutory amendment or re-enactment thereof);

"harbour limits" means and includes the harbour limits as defined in section 46 of the North Western Railway Act 1852 (and any statutory amendment or re-enactment thereof);

"Harbour Master" means the harbour master appointed by Heysham Port Limited and includes the harbour master's authorized deputies and assistants and any person so authorized by the Company to act in that capacity;

"Pilot" means a pilot authorized by Heysham Port Limited;

"Pilotage Exemption Certificate Holder" means a Deck Officer holding a valid Pilotage Exemption Certificate issued by Heysham Port Limited.

Note (2):
At the time these Guidelines were published, Heysham Port Limited had also published the following documents for Masters and shipowners (and their agents) to review and observe as part of their pre-arrival planning:

- Heysham Harbour Byelaws 1979
- Pilotage Directions
- Notices to Mariners
- Towage Guidelines
- Bunkering Guidelines and Regulations
- Guidelines and Regulations for Carrying and Handling Explosives
- Guidelines for Vessels Berthed at the North Quay
- Information Note: Interpretation of soundings on hydrographic survey charts

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Guideline No. 1: Under-keel clearance

Vessels entering or leaving the Harbour or the harbour limits should do so after careful consideration of the dangers to navigation and only after the Master is satisfied that there will always be sufficient under-keel clearance for the vessel.

Vessels manoeuvring in tidal waters
When determining safe under-keel clearance, consideration must be given to any special circumstances that may exist, including atmospheric conditions and wind direction (which may result in a reduction of the height of tide) and the effects of squat and interaction (which may increase the draught of the vessel).

Vessels should not operate in tidal waters, except in exceptional circumstances relating to the safety of the vessel, if the under-keel clearance is less than sixty centimetres or 10% of draught, whichever is greater.

Vessels alongside berths within the Harbour
When determining safe under-keel clearance while alongside a berth, consideration must be given to any special circumstances that may exist, including the available depth of water.

If it is intended for a vessel to take the ground, confirmation must first be obtained from Heysham Port Control (VHF Ch. 14) that the berth is NAABSA (Not Always Afloat But Safely Aground) designated.

Guideline No. 2: Restricted visibility

Rule 19 of the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions 1972 (as amended) applies within the Harbour and the harbour limits.

If visibility is less than three cables, vessels are not normally allowed to enter the Harbour and, due to the patchy nature of fog in the area, this includes vessels navigating inward of buoy No. 6. Masters should use their discretion when establishing the visibility and level of risk before departing from the Harbour.

Nothing in this Guideline removes responsibility from the Master to navigate according to their passage plan or their company's instructions where those requirements exceed the requirements of this Guideline.

The Heysham Harbour Towage Guidelines must be consulted when planning towage operations.

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Guideline No. 3: Vessel defects, etc.

(1) The Master of any vessel over 50m in length must not navigate within the Harbour or the harbour limits except with the permission of the Harbour Master if the vessel or its tow, if any, has one or more of the following defects:

(a) is unseaworthy in any respect;

(b) has defects to main engines, steering gear, or other auxiliary machinery which may affect the manoeuvring of the vessel;

(c) has inoperable equipment, such as compass, whistle/siren, or rudder indicator;

(d) has inoperable capstans, windlass, mooring winches, or anchors that are not cleared and ready for use;

(e) has a list of over five degrees or is excessively out of trim; or

(f) is leaking oil, chemical or gas cargoes, or has any hull or machinery damage that may affect the safety of the vessel or the containment or safety of the cargo or bunkers.

(2) The Master of any vessel over 50m in length must confirm to the Harbour Master via Heysham Port Control that the vessel does not have any of the defects specified in (1) (a) to (f) inclusive. The Master must give this confirmation when they advise the Harbour Master of their intention to navigate within the Harbour or the harbour limits.

(3) To prevent accidental discharge, while vessels are within the Harbour or the harbour limits, all oily water separators must be isolated, and bilge overboard discharge valves secured and closed.

(4) In the event of a technical failure, the Master of any highly manoeuvrable, twin-screw Ro-Ro ferry should consider the following in relation to operating within the Harbour and harbour limits:

LOSS OF ONE ENGINE— The prevailing circumstances and the vessel's capabilities when attempting to berth on one engine other than on slack water must be considered. It is permissible to sail from a berth on one engine but consider using the ebb tide or slack water. If berthing on one engine, tug assistance should be used.

LOSS OF ONE THRUSTER— The maximum acceptable wind speed for a vessel to berth on one thruster without tug assistance is 30 knots.

LOSS OF STEERING GEAR— If it is not possible for the vessel to have two steering pumps operational while manoeuvring within the Harbour or the harbour limits, the Master should consider whether to proceed with the intended manoeuvre.

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Guideline No. 4: Clear Harbour entrance

Vessels arriving at or departing from the Harbour must not ordinarily pass each other between the North and South Piers and buoy No. 6. Vessels may pass in this area only with the joint agreement of the Masters, Pilots, or Pilotage Exemption Certificate Holders of the vessels involved. Heysham Port Control must be informed of that agreement.

Guideline No. 5: Scheduling of ferry arrival and departure times

At least 45 minutes must separate the scheduled time a ferry is to depart from its berth and the scheduled time the next ferry is to come alongside a berth. (Any time allowed for mooring must be excluded when calculating that interval). The cargo operations team at Heysham will formulate the weekly arrival and departure schedules with the ferry operators based on this requirement.

Guideline No. 6: De-ballasting

It is an offence for vessels to permit any substance that might cause damage to the conservancy of the Harbour to enter its waters (The Heysham Harbour Byelaws 1979 No. 29). Therefore, unless the Master is confident the ballast water will not cause such damage, de-ballasting should not take place.

De-ballasting within the Harbour and the harbour limits must comply with the relevant UK laws relating to the application of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments 2004.

Without the Pilot's prior knowledge and agreement, Masters should ensure that no ballasting, de-ballasting, or internal cargo transfer occurs that could significantly alter the vessel's draught, trim, or handling characteristics.

Guideline No. 7: Wind parameters

The following guidance should be considered in strong wind conditions.

Generally, vessels should not enter the Harbour when the anemometer at the Harbour entrance records a wind speed exceeding 45 knots.

While berthed alongside, if wind speeds are expected above 40 knots off a berth, Masters should consider:

- Sending extra moorings ashore
- Starting engines and thrusters
- Suspending cargo operations
- Having crew, and possibly a tug and Pilot or Pilotage Exemption Certificate Holder, on standby during the period over high water

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In marginal weather conditions, consideration should be given to the height and direction of the tide. At high water, windage may increase, while at low water, shelter improves but reduced water depth may limit manoeuvring.

The use of tugs should be considered where appropriate.

Guideline No. 8: Tidal parameters

In addition to the maximum wind speeds to be considered within the Harbour, Masters should also consider the state of tide for the arrival and departure transits, berthing manoeuvres, and time alongside.

During the approach to the Harbour entrance, southerly to south-westerly winds on a flood tide may push vessels onto the North Pier, particularly during the two hours before high water. If planning an approach during a spring tide, it may be prudent to wait until the ebb has started, because when the tide height is above 6m, the tide flows freely through the South Jetty woodwork.

While the bank north of the Harbour entrance is covered, the ebb tide may affect a vessel all the way to the Harbour entrance.

If the weather deteriorates during the inward passage and swinging within the Harbour would be impractical, the approach into the Harbour should be aborted before the vessel passes buoy No. 6.

When attempting to berth on an ebb tide in strong winds, consideration should be given to the height of tide and rate of fall to ensure there will be sufficient water in the channel to allow the vessel to return to sea in the case of not being able to manoeuvre the vessel alongside and moor safely.

Consideration should be given to the height of tide on the berths. On spring tides and with strong south-easterly to west-south-westerly winds, the linkspan berths receive little shelter from the surrounding buildings at high water. Therefore, consider leaving the linkspan berths and proceeding to sea two hours before high water.

Guideline No. 9: Vessels swinging within the Harbour

Only safe manoeuvres should be undertaken within the Harbour, especially when swinging. If, having considered the available water space, state of the tide, and other vessels berthed on the South Quay or elsewhere in the Harbour, a vessel cannot swing safely within the Harbour, it should not do so.

Vessels over 24m beam should be moved from alongside the South Quay when vessels over 140m in length are swinging within the Harbour.

When preparing a port passage plan, Masters should consider all relevant facts, including allowing sufficient time to conduct the intended manoeuvres, and be prepared to exercise

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their contingency plan if it is not possible to follow the original plan. Contingency plans may include stopping within the Harbour before swinging, berthing bow-in to a linkspan, or lying at another berth while reassessing the situation.

Guideline No. 10: Tug provision for swinging within the Harbour

Vessels requiring a tug to assist swinging within the Harbour must ensure that the tug is available within the Harbour before the vessel passes buoy No. 6.

Guideline No. 11: Vessel manoeuvring capabilities

Vessel operators should supply to Heysham Port Limited the harbour manoeuvring capabilities of all vessels calling at the Harbour and a declaration regarding each vessel's suitability for using the Harbour.

The vessel capability information should include windage (LOA × average freeboard), turning circle sizes, and stopping distances. The information should also include details on using main propulsion, thrusters, and rudders to counter the effects of windage under defined circumstances (wind force, wind direction, and tide limits), and details of additional assistance requirements (e.g. tugs) when conditions exceed those limits.

Guideline No. 12: Port passage plans

All vessels over 50 m in length and tugs engaged in towing should prepare port passage plans for their inbound and outbound transits before navigating within the Harbour or the harbour limits.

When a Pilot is required, upon boarding, and following any actions needed to establish the navigational safety of the vessel, the Pilot should provide the Master with details of the Pilot's port passage plan. The Pilot should also advise the Master of any changes required to the vessel's port passage plan caused by local circumstances. Before proceeding with the passage, the Master and the Pilot should agree on the actual port passage plan.

All commercial vessels that ordinarily operate only within the Harbour or harbour limits should prepare and maintain a generic port passage plan appropriate for use during the vessel's routine passages and operations. The generic port passage plan must be provided to the Harbour Master before commencement of operations.

All port passage plans may be inspected from time to time and at any time by the Harbour Master.

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Operative from October 2026

List of Amendments

Ver. No.	Effective Date	Details
1	19.10.26	Original as issued
2		
3		

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