

# NOTICE TO MARINERS

## Standard Operating Procedures

### Introduction:

This notice should be read by all vessels entering into, departing from and shifting within Dublin Port. All regular calling vessels should hold briefings with their bridge teams to ensure that bridge teams have a thorough working knowledge of this Notice.

These safety requirements will be scaled or added to dependant on traffic density and available searoom to ensure there is safe separation of vessels.

### 1) Vessel Traffic Services

- a) Dublin Port operates a Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) for the safe and efficient management of vessel traffic within the port limits as set out in the Harbours Act 1996 (as amended).
- b) VTS operates an Information and Traffic Organisation Service including a system of traffic clearance. The service is operational 24hrs/day. Further information on the VTS is contained in a separate Notice to Mariners.
- c) VTS shall issue results oriented instructions and shall not encroach upon the Master's responsibility for safe navigation, or interfere with the traditional relationship that exists between the Master and the Pilot. The details of execution for any such instruction, such as courses to be steered and engine movements are at the discretion of the Master or the Pilot on board the vessel.

## VTS CONTROL THE SPACE – SHIPS MASTERS CONTROL THEIR SHIPS

### 2) Notification Requirements and ETAs

- a) Attention is drawn to the importance of reporting requirements in order that VTS can safely and efficiently manage vessel movements. Vessels who do not provide the required notice may not receive permission for a movement within the lesser provided notification time. This requirement applies to all vessels.
  - i) To facilitate channel management and to create a common reporting procedure all vessels are required to give their ETA to the Dublin Bay Buoy. The ETA's must be given as a specific time in the 24 hour clock format.
  - ii) A minimum of two (2) hours' notice is required for all ships arriving at the Port of Dublin.
  - iii) A minimum of two (2) hours' notice is required for ships sailing/shifting and requiring a pilot.
  - iv) A minimum of one (1) hours' notice is required for RORO ferries operating on a slot time. If the ferry is operating 'off' slot they should refer to point a. above and provide as much notice as possible for operational planning and channel assignment.

Captain Michael McKenna | Harbour Master | 01 January 2026

Masters, owners, agents, charterers, marinas, yacht clubs and recreational boaters should ensure that the contents of this notice are made known to the persons in charge of their vessels or craft. All notices to mariners can be found at [www.dublinport.ie/information-centre/notice-to-mariners/](http://www.dublinport.ie/information-centre/notice-to-mariners/)



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safety culture  
and practice,  
port-wide.

- v) A minimum of thirty (30) minutes' notice is required for Pilot Exempted ships and ships with a PEC holder on board when sailing or shifting. The allocation of a channel slot-time and the observance of "Priorities" as specified below will be dependent upon the ETA's received.
- vi) To assist with situational awareness of all users; reporting should be carried out on VHF radio.

### 3) Mandatory Reporting - Safe Seas Ireland

- a) Attention is drawn to vessels Operators, Masters and Agents of Statutory Instrument No.573 of 2010, implemented on the 30th November 2010. These Regulations give effect to the Directive 2009/17/EC and Article 24.1 of Directive 2009/18/EC which amend Directive 2002/59/EC. The Regulations strengthen the EU vessel traffic monitoring and information systems which will enhance the safety and efficiency of maritime traffic. The Regulations provide mainly for vessel notification requirements prior to entering port, including for the transport of dangerous or polluting goods; use of technology for monitoring movement of vessels; transmission of information concerning vessels which might pose a threat to the safety of persons, shipping, or the environment; reporting obligations concerning incidents and accidents at sea.
- b) Under Part 2, section 7 (1) of the Regulations, the Operator, Agent or Master of a ship bound for a port in the State shall notify the relevant port authority using SafeSeasIreland, or where for technical reasons SafeSeasIreland is unavailable using telephone, fax, email or other electronic means, of the information specified in Part 1 of Schedule 2 –
  - i) at least 24 hours in advance,
  - ii) if the voyage time is less than 24 hours, at the least, at the time the ship leaves the
  - iii) previous port, or
  - iv) if the port of call is not known or is changed during the voyage, as soon as this information is available.
- c) Further information on the SafeSeasIreland reporting system is available at [www.gov.ie/en/service/safeseas-vessel-reporting-formalities](http://www.gov.ie/en/service/safeseas-vessel-reporting-formalities)
- d) Vessel will not be allowed enter the Port unless the appropriate notification procedures as per the Regulations have been complied with.

### 4) Vessel Passage Planning & Routing

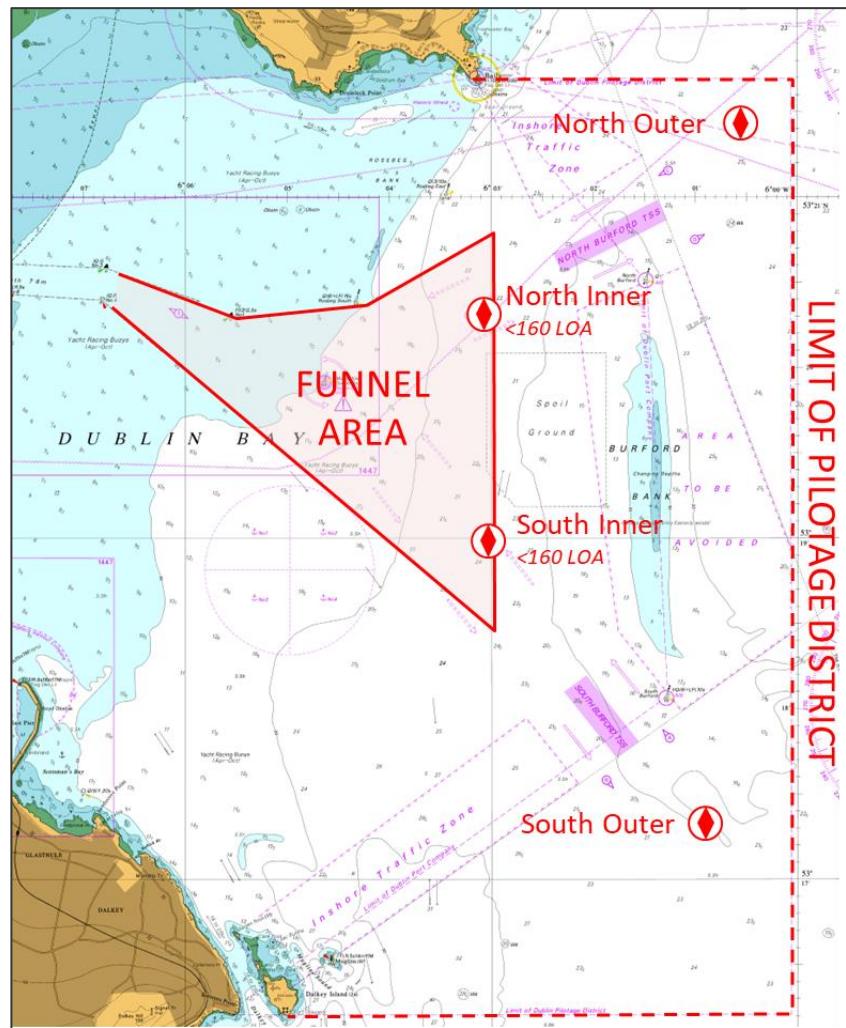
- a) All vessels shall have an appropriate passage plan prepared for arriving/departing Dublin Port, In preparing the passage plan the following primary sources of information should be consulted;
  - i) Approved ENC/Raster Charts and/or Admiralty Paper Charts 1415 Dublin Bay, 1447 Dublin and Dun Laoghaire.
  - ii) Admiralty Sailing Directions – NP40 Irish Costal Pilot or digital equivalent
  - iii) Admiralty Tide Tables – NP201B or digital equivalent
  - iv) Admiralty List of Radio Signals – NP286(1) or digital equivalent
  - v) Admiralty List of Lights – NP74 or digital equivalent
  - vi) The Mariners Handbook NP100
  - vii) Admiralty Notice to Mariners
  - viii) Dublin Port Notice to Mariners - [www.dublinport.ie/information-centre/notice-to-mariners/](http://www.dublinport.ie/information-centre/notice-to-mariners/)
  - ix) Dublin Port Soundings - [www.dublinport.ie/information-centre/soundings/](http://www.dublinport.ie/information-centre/soundings/)
- b) Vessels arriving and departing will be routed by VTS to follow either North Burford or South Burford Traffic Separation Scheme. The routing will be based upon shipping traffic, weather conditions and the manoeuvring space or sea room required to safely manoeuvre a vessel so as to create a lee for safe pilot boarding / disembarkation. Vessels should clarify their routing arrangement when

communicating with VTS at the 2 hours' notice. All vessels should have appropriate passage plans prepared for either route.

- c) Vessels subject to compulsory pilotage will not be permitted into the funnel area as delineated on the below chart extract without having a pilot on board. This applies to both arriving and departing vessels as can be safely achieved with respect to the environmental conditions for pilot boarding / disembarkation.
- d) Where weather conditions exist that prevent pilot boarding or disembarking at the appointed pilot boarding areas other risk mitigations may be applied to allow a vessel into the funnel area. Such mitigations will include but not be limited to factors such as planning, communications, monitoring, ship size, ship type and traffic management that will feed into a risk assessment.
- e) Where a vessel approaching from seawards request to use the Dublin Bay Anchorage the vessel will be routed into the anchorage via the southern TSS via Reporting Point Alpha.

## 5) Pilot Boarding Grounds

- a) Pilot boarding grounds have been established in proximity to the following locations:
  - i) **North Outer:** 53°21.'40N 006°00.40W
  - ii) **North Inner:** 53°20.'40N 006°03.'00W for vessels <160m LOA or as directed by VTS
  - iii) **South Outer:** 53°17.'30N 006°00.'70W
  - iv) **South Inner:** 53°18.'70N 006°03.'00W for vessels <160m LOA or as directed by VTS
- b) Vessels are not permitted to enter the 'Funnel' area without a Pilot or PEC Holder unless permission has been granted by VTS



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## 6) Vessel Movements

- All vessels must first obtain permission and traffic clearance from VTS prior to:
  - Approaching the jurisdiction and/or channel from seawards.
  - Letting go and departing from a berth.
  - Shifting within the Port.
  - Crossing the channel or fairway.

## 7) Criteria For Prioritising Ship Movements

- The term "slot-time" refers to the time span allocated to a ship to enable it to pass unhindered through that area of the approach channel delineated at the eastern end by Buoys Nos. 7/8 and at the western end by Buoys Nos. 9/10. The priority referred to in this Notice to Mariners applies to that constrained section of the channel and not the entire fairway.
  - Priority 1:** RORO vessels when operating on their slot times shall have priority.
    - A Priority 1 vessel when going off-slot/schedule defaults to the status of a Priority 2 vessel.
  - Priority 2:** Any ship arriving / departing on its allocated time.
- An exception may be made over Priority 1 vessels when a deep draft vessel is arriving and needing to work on arrival, when at least 12 hours' notice has been given to the effected operator(s).

- c) Other considerations of Priority 2 vessels:
  - i) Tidal window deadlines / weather / work dependent
  - ii) Departing vessel if a vessel awaiting that berth
  - iii) Inbound vessels over outbound if berth is unoccupied.
- d) A schedule of Slot Times is published in a separate Notice to Mariners.

## 8) Conduct Of Ships Within The Dublin Port Company Limits

- a) Navigation safety shall be the overriding consideration governing the movement of all vessels. In addition to those regulations, set out in the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea, the following shall also apply:
  - i) Vessels are prohibited from meeting or overtaking within the constrained section of the channel between Buoys Nos. 7/8 and Nos. 9/10. This does not apply to harbour tugs, pilot boats, various workboats and leisure craft unless instructed to the contrary by VTS.
  - ii) Where two or more vessels propose to agree a particular manoeuvre, then such a manoeuvre shall not be carried out until it has been reported to and is cleared by VTS.
  - iii) The Dublin Bay Buoy shall act as a 'roundabout' with vessels passing it on their own port side, in an anticlockwise direction.
  - iv) No vessel shall enter the channel/fairway, unless it has been confirmed by VTS that it may do so and that the intended berth is clear or expected to be clear. Vessels awaiting access to a berth may not be permitted to wait off that berth or at any place in the river.
  - v) Where a vessel is waiting access to a berth or to enter the river the vessel may be directed to wait east of the Dublin Port jurisdiction so as to allow other vessels adequate sea-room to safely transit the river and bay.
  - vi) VTS may direct any ship(s) to enter and or exit the Bay via the north or south TSS as appropriate to allow for safe traffic management. Ships are required to have appropriate passage planning in place for the use of both TSSs.
  - vii) All communications between ships relating to movements, manoeuvring, berthing or un-berthing, shall take place on VHF Channel 12 only and shall be in the English language only. Instructions received from VTS, in relation to any confusion, ambiguity or the procedure of such communications, shall be followed immediately.
  - viii) Traffic contra-flow is prohibited in circumstances where the visibility is reduced to less than 0.5 nautical miles, anywhere within the buoyed channel.
  - ix) All vessels including all port craft, must report in to VTS Radio at the designated reporting points.
  - x) Gas tankers when navigating in the fairway channel, which extends as far as the Dublin Bay buoy, shall not proceed against traffic moving in the opposite direction. At least a one (1) mile separation between vessels shall be maintained both ahead and astern of gas carriers when proceeding in the same direction.
  - xi) Particular attention is drawn to masters of RORO ferries when arriving and departing in convoy of the requirement to maintain a safe separation between vessels at all times.
  - xii) Small vessels, yachts and leisure vessels may be instructed by VTS to remain on the south side of the channel close to the port lateral marks.
  - xiii) A vessel intending to navigate stern foremost within the Port should indicate such intention on VHF Radio Channel 12, to VTS Dublin. The above radio communications shall not relieve a vessel of the requirements of Rule 34(a) of the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea, to indicate astern propulsion. Attention is also drawn to the provision in this Rule (34) for the use of light signals to supplement whistle signals. Whilst navigating stern

foremost in the fairway a vessel shall keep to the side of the channel which lies on the right hand side of the direction in which it is moving.

xiv) Power and Propulsion: To reduce the risk of power loss and blackout all vessels navigating within the jurisdiction shall maintain stable power and propulsion arrangements, vessels shall avoid changing over power, propulsion and fuel systems while actively underway within the jurisdiction. Changes to the power, propulsion and fuel systems should be carried out in a controlled manner; prior to arrival, once the vessel is safely alongside her berth or anchored, in preparation for departure or shifting and once clear of the jurisdiction.

#### 9) Under Keel Clearance

- a) The Master is fully responsible for maintaining a safe Under Keel Clearance at all times.
- b) All vessels navigating within the Port shall maintain a minimum under keel clearance of 1.0m. Masters should take into account the tide, weather and the effects of squat, increase in draft due to turning, rolling, heeling or pitching and interaction with other vessels navigating in shallow water.
- c) All vessels shall maintain a minimum under keel clearance of 0.5m while alongside taking into account heel, list and trim, ballasting and loading and discharging operations.
- d) Masters are cautioned that tidal predictions for any given tide may be higher or lower due to the effect of wind, barometric pressure and storm events. Water levels are raised by persistent winds from the south and levels and tidal streams in the river are increased after heavy rains, whereas Northerly winds lower the level and periods of high pressure can cause the tide to cut up to 0.5m.
- e) The latest fairway and berth depths are published in a Notice to Mariners and sounding charts are available online. VTS can provide information on the live tidal performance

**Notwithstanding anything contained in the above, exceptions to these rules may be made by the Harbour Master.**