PORT MARINE SAFETY CODE

Marine Safety Plan 2021—2023

Introduction

As required by the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC), the Port of London Authority (PLA) publishes its Marine Safety Plan for the conduct of marine operations in the Port of London every three years; this plan covers the period 2021 – 2023.

This Marine Safety Plan commits the PLA to undertaking the proper management and regulation of marine navigation within the scope of its powers and authority, according to Port of London Act 1968 (as amended) and the PMSC. The PLA has a responsibility for maintaining the safety of navigation on the River Thames, together with a duty to improve and conserve the river and its environment. In managing the safety of navigation and the provision of services, the PLA always has the safety of life, vessels and the environment as its highest priorities.

1.   Navigational Safety Policy

The PLA has a Navigational Safety Policy which outlines it's compliance with the standards laid down in the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) and the management of navigation shall be in accordance with those standards. The policy can be found in the PLA's Marine SMS and is also published separately on the PLA website at: www.pla.co.uk.

The Navigational Safety Policy covers the following areas:

- Safety Management Systems
- Vessel Traffic Service
- Pilotage
- Hydrography
- Vessel Licensing
- Management of River Activities and Works
- Emergency Preparedness and Response
- Enforcement and Prosecution
- Marine Training
- Consultation
- Environment

What is the Port Marine Safety Code?

The 'Port Marine Safety Code' sets out a national standard for every aspect of port marine safety. Its aim is to enhance safety for everyone who uses or works in the port marine environment.

It is endorsed by the UK Government, the devolved administrations and representatives from across the maritime sector and, while the Code is not mandatory, these bodies have a strong expectation that all harbour authorities will comply.

It applies to all harbour authorities and other marine facilities, berths and terminals in the UK and is intended to be flexible enough that any size or type of harbour or marine facility will be able to apply its principles in a way that is appropriate and proportionate.

The PLA also has an Environmental Policy and other non-marine policies such as the Drug and Alcohol, Health and Safety and Security Policies which are applicable to marine staff within the PLA.

2.   Safety Management System

A comprehensive overview of the structure, management and maintenance of the port's Marine SMS and the PLA's compliance with the PMSC in support of this Plan, is contained in the Marine SMS Manual.

External audits of the PLA's compliance with the PMSC are undertaken at least every 3 years, through an annual rolling programme, supplemented by regular internal audits and health checks.

3.   Continual targets to fulfil the PLA's Navigational Safety Policy

	Policy Section	Objective
1.	**Safety Management Systems**	Ongoing review on the PLA Regulatory Framework and SMS Documentation with a continuous aim to refine content for ease of use and understanding and maintain compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code
2.	**Pilotage**	Provide a pilotage service of well-trained, suitably qualified and authorised pilots that is supported by appropriate recruitment and the authorisation of pilotage exemptions to similar standards, resulting in no serious or very serious incidents caused by errors made by PLA Pilots.
3.	**Vessel Traffic Services**	1. Maintain an effective VTS across all sectors in accordance with UK national, IMO and IALA standards ensuring a 99.9% service availability. 2. Ensure no VTS assisted incidents take place.
4.	**Hydrography**	1. To continually review the authority's long term survey and hydrographic data provision strategy to ensure it remains relevant and fit for purpose. 2. To continue our collaborative work with MCA and UKHO to develop and provide port users with the most appropriate scale electronic and paper chart products for their vessel which comply with national and international requirements.
5.	**Vessel Licensing**	Deliver a vessel licensing regime to identify compliant organisations and ensure their accountability with associated regulations.
6.	**Vessel Survey**	Deliver a vessel surveying service which supports operators managing their vessels and meeting the requirements of TFS or IWSPBC
6.	**Management of River Activities and Works**	1. River events are to avoid river closures and any unnecessary restrictions on commercial and leisure vessel movements. All risks associated with river events are to be at ALARP prior to consent being given for an event to take place. 2. Over the life of the Thames Tideway Tunnel (TTT) project, maintain an enhanced regime that ensures that marine activities supporting construction of the TTT are managed effectively and adequately risk assessed using site specific risk assessments and a project wide cumulative navigation risk assessment, the latter reviewed monthly. Project tows and marine transport elements will also be risk assessed and planned on a case by case basis.
7.	**Emergency Preparedness and Response**	1. Establish and maintain a detailed and robust schedule of regular training and exercises for implementing emergency plans and oil spill procedures. 2. Run and/or attend exercises with external stakeholders such as local authorities and the emergency services.
8.	**Enforcement and Prosecution**	Continue to support efforts to bring into force the same drink-drive and drugs legislation for recreational users as applies already to commercial users under the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003.

4.   Specific Targets for the period of the Plan

1. Reduce the number of Serious/Very Serious/Severe incidents across the period of the plan by 10% compared to the previous three year period.
2. Develop an internal document management system capable of allowing users to prioritise viewing their own documents, whilst providing in-built, automated revision control and automated approval routing. The system should provide automated archiving of historic versions.
3. Introduce a port wide communication guide to raise standards of voice communication to international level, to include all Thames river users.
4. To complete the programme of planned hydrographic surveys of those areas of PLA responsibility and navigational significance within port limits, ensuring they are surveyed and charted to the appropriate International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO) standards and to make the associated published paper and digital products accessible to the maritime community both commercial and leisure to best support safety of navigation on the Thames.
5. Complete incident investigations within the following targets:
   - Minor Incidents, near misses and deficiencies – close within 4 weeks of being reported.
   - Serious / Very Serious / Severe Incidents – produce an investigation report within 6 weeks and close within 10 weeks of being reported.
6. To establish and implement a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) scheme for Thames based Masters and crew, with the Company of Waterman & Lighterman and Thames Skills Academy by the end of 2021