

## **NOTICE TO MARINERS** 1 of 2019

### **VESSEL LICENSING REQUIREMENTS**

Vessels operating commercially on the tidal Thames are required to be licensed by the PLA, unless they are certificated by another recognised authority, such as the Maritime & Coastguard Agency.

From 1 June 2018, a clearer divide between the PLA's vessel licensing and surveying functions was put in place. Under this revised system, vessel surveys are arranged direct with the marine surveyors; and applications for licences are now made through the PLA's Planning and Environment Department. Human-powered vessel fleets are now subject to a self-declaration scheme, and Ship Towing Licences and the Certificate of Compliance are now issued direct by the Harbour Master.

Use of an unlicensed vessel is an offence under the Port of London Act 1968 (as amended). Under the revised survey and licensing requirements, vessel owners (including charterers where applicable) are reminded of the following important points:

- It is the owner's responsibility to arrange a vessel survey where required
- Surveys should be arranged well in advance of the expiry of the licence, in order to allow time for remedial works to be completed, a certificate of survey to be issued and a new licence obtained
- An inspection by a PLA marine surveyor does not waive the requirement for a valid vessel licence
- PLA Marine surveyors cannot issue extensions to licences and a surveyor's defect report cannot be regarded as a licence extension
- A certificate of survey will not be issued until the surveyors are content that the vessel complies with the relevant technical requirements and any defects identified have been remedied
- A certificate of survey is not a valid vessel licence
- In order to obtain a new vessel licence, an application must be submitted in good time to the licensing team before the expiry of the previous licence

Owners and charterers are advised to take careful note of the expiry dates of their vessels' licences and to ensure that a valid licence remains in force at all times whilst the vessel is in use. Where a licence has expired, the vessel should be removed from service until a new licence has been obtained to avoid the potential of prosecution.

Owners and charterers of commercial vessels holding alternative forms of certification claiming exemption from PLA licensing should ensure that this certification remains valid and that the relevant documentation is available for inspection upon request by the PLA.

For further guidance and information on the PLA's Vessel Licensing process visit: <https://www.pla.co.uk/Safety/Vessel-Licensing/Vessel-Licensing>

If you are in any doubt as to whether your vessel requires a licence or if you believe the licence may have expired, you should contact [vessellicensing@pla.co.uk](mailto:vessellicensing@pla.co.uk) for clarification.

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**2<sup>nd</sup> January 2019**

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**BOB BAKER**  
**CHIEF HARBOUR MASTER**



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