

## NOTICE TO MARINERS      No.4 of 2021

### PROCEDURES IN THE THAMES BARRIER CONTROL ZONE

The following procedures, initially published in the General Directions for Navigation in the Port of London 2016, will now be encompassed in this standalone Notice to Mariners.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

A permanent Control Zone, encompassing the Thames Barrier, is established between Margaretness and Blackwall Point. All vessels navigating within the Control Zone are subject to the requirements of current General Directions.

#### 2. THAMES BARRIER CONSTRUCTION

The Thames Barrier consists of nine piers numbered 1 to 9 from north to south and ten spans lettered A to K from south to north (see Figures 1 & 2 below).

**Spans B to G** are open to navigation subject to the restrictions in current General Directions.

**Spans C, D, E and F** are 61m wide with a depth of 5.8m below Chart Datum.

**Spans B and G** are 31.5m wide with a depth of 1.2m below Chart Datum and have depth boards on Piers 3 and 9.

**Spans A, H, J and K** are permanently closed to navigation.

Under normal circumstances, and subject to the requirements of partial closures, the northern spans E, F and G are used for inward-bound traffic and the southern spans B, C, and D are used for outward-bound traffic.

*Note: D span may be used by large inward bound vessels.*

Figure 1

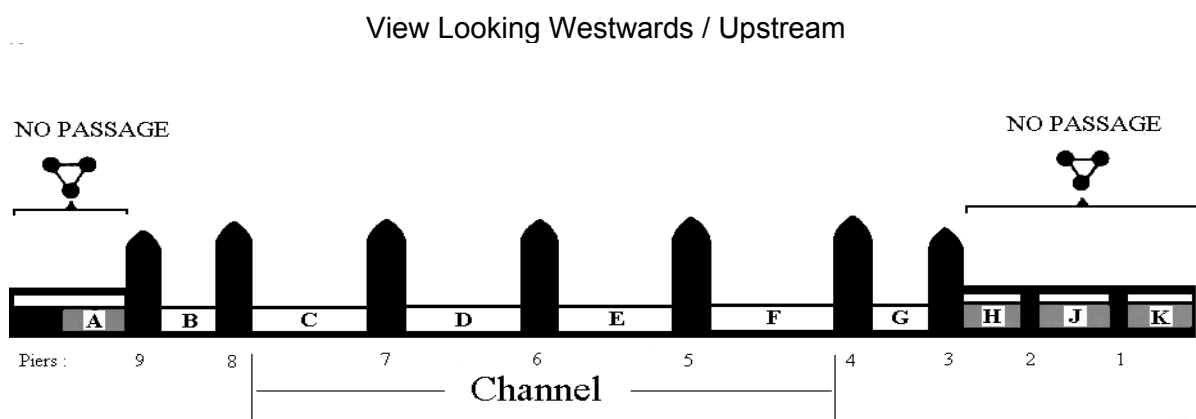
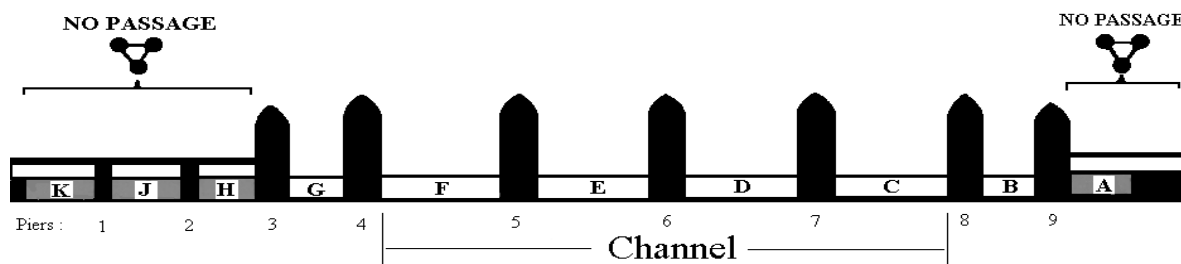


Figure 2

View Looking Eastwards / Downstream



### 3. NAVIGATION LIGHT SIGNALS AND SHAPES

#### Light Signals

Each navigational span of the Thames Barrier has an array of traffic signals on the ends of the adjacent piers to indicate the spans open to navigation and those that are closed. The light signals will be displayed both by day and by night. Spans are open only to traffic in a single direction at any one time. The intensity of the light signals may be varied by the Thames Barrier Navigation Centre (London VTS) on request

#### Spans Open to Navigation

**Green Arrows** will be exhibited from the ends of piers either side of the span(s) open to navigation. The arrows point inwards towards the span open to navigation from a particular direction.

#### Spans Closed to Navigation

**Red Crosses** will be exhibited from the ends of the piers either side of span(s) closed to navigation from one or both directions.

#### Spans Permanently Closed to Navigation

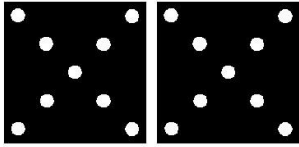
Span A to the south and spans H, J and K to the north are permanently closed to navigation and display at their centres the signals prescribed in the River Byelaws for closed bridge arches, namely:

- **By day**, three red discs 0.6m in diameter at the points of an equilateral triangle, with the apex downward and the base horizontal.
- **By night**, three red lights in similar positions to the discs displayed by day.

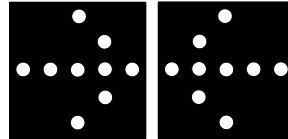
Figure 3

### Illuminated Signals on Piers

Red Crosses - Span Closed



Green Arrows - Span Open



### Fog Lights

High intensity fixed white lights are situated at each end of piers 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 and are operated in conjunction with the green arrows in reduced visibility. The lights may be switched on or off or the intensity varied by the Thames Barrier Navigation Centre (London VTS) on request.

## 4. TYPES OF BARRIER CLOSURE

The Thames Barrier will be closed under the following circumstances:

- i) **Emergency (Full) Closures** - For flood prevention in the event of a surge tide warning and other emergencies.

In normal circumstances, notice of a potential flood protection closure will be given approximately 12 hours before the predicted high water at the Thames Barrier.

- ii) **Test (Full) Closures** - *For the purpose of testing the Thames Barrier machinery and carrying out experiments to improve closure methods.*

Closures will be promulgated by Notice to Mariners published every six months. Such closures may occur at any state of the tide. Mariners, owners, and agents are advised to retain these Notices to Mariners, as no further notice will be given until 24 hours before the closure.

- iii) **Partial Closures** - *For maintenance, other works and training.*

On occasions it is necessary to close individual spans for maintenance or training. A single floodgate can be in the defence or maintenance position for a prolonged period of time. The span closed signals will be displayed and vessels are prohibited from approaching these spans.

### Notes:

1. 5. i) and ii) require total closure of the Thames Barrier, 5 iii) requires a partial closure.
2. When a gate is in the defence position next to a span open to navigation, mariners are advised that variations to the normal current direction and velocity may be experienced.

**5. ADDITIONAL TRAFFIC CONTROL PROCEDURES DURING A FULL THAMES BARRIER CLOSURE**

Vessels programmed to transit the Thames Barrier during a full closure will be subject to the following Traffic Control Procedures:

- a) Inward bound seagoing vessels proceeding to berths above the Thames Barrier will be instructed to anchor in a Designated Anchorage by London VTS.
- b) Outward bound seagoing vessels from berths upstream of the Thames Barrier will be directed to remain on the berth by London VTS possibly via the berth operator or agent.
- c) Non-seagoing vessels will be directed to appropriate moorings and berths.
- d) The approximate time of the Thames Barrier re-opening will normally be known at the same time as closure commences and will be passed to vessels directed to wait.

If the flood prevention barriers situated at Tilbury Lock, Barking Creek, Dartford Creek, and Benfleet Creek are to be closed to navigation, traffic will be similarly directed as in a) to c). Individual instructions will be passed by London VTS as appropriate.

---

**25 January 2021**

Port of London Authority  
London River House, Royal Pier Road,  
Gravesend, Kent DA12 2BG

**Stephanie Smith**  
Deputy Harbour Master



TO RECEIVE FUTURE NOTICES TO MARINERS BY **E-MAIL**,  
PLEASE REGISTER VIA OUR WEBSITE [www.pla.co.uk](http://www.pla.co.uk)  
**Telephone calls, VHF radio traffic, CCTV and radar traffic images may  
be recorded in the VTS Centres at Gravesend and Woolwich**  
All Current Notices to Mariners can be found here -  
<http://www.pla.co.uk/Safety/Regulations-and-Guidance/Notices-to-Mariners/Notices-to-Mariners>

