

## Port Passage: KNOW YOUR DRAUGHT

### SAFETY BULLETIN

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In recent months, there has been a noticeable rise in incidents where vessels make contact with the riverbed, resulting in prolonged groundings.

These groundings can pose serious risks to crew safety and heighten the potential for environmental damage.

All Commercial Vessels, including Intra-port Vessels, are required to develop and maintain a comprehensive Port Passage Plan and navigational risk assessment. This should include and not be limited to, ensuring safe air draughts and under keel clearances are upheld at all times.

It is essential all vessel movement is supported- by thorough passage planning that takes into account vessel draught, available water depth, tidal changes and localised conditions.

For vessels involved in towing operations, it is crucial to consider not only the draught of the towing vessel but also the towed object, particularly for barges with spud legs. Mariners must ensure they have an accurate understanding of the vessel's true draught when finalising passage plans.

Masters must familiarise themselves with the ports reporting requirements particularly concerning [General Direction 5 - Pre-Arrival and Departure Notifications](#), as outlined in the PLA General Directions and the [Port of London Act S.136](#).

Mariners are reminded that in the event of a grounding, an immediate verbal report must be made to the Harbourmaster, via the appropriate VTS Centre, followed by a written report from the Master as soon as reasonably practicable. Additional guidance can be found in S.8 of the [Port of London Byelaws](#).

Telephone calls, VHF radio traffic, CCTV and radar traffic images may be recorded in the VTS Centre

