SB8-24

Speed Reduction King Edward Memorial Park

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SAFETY BULLETIN

Speed Reduction King Edward Memorial Park

Following recent incidents involving vessels not taking appropriate action when passing speed reductions, specifically at King Edward Memorial Park, the PLA has identified a requirement to publish further guidance on adherence to speed reductions.

Mariners are reminded of their obligations to reduce speed and wash, such as to be appropriate for the activities taking place, when a speed reduction is in force.

While this guidance is framed for King Edward Memorial Park, it applies to all speed reductions on the tidal Thames.

What is a speed reduction?

"Speed Reduction" means a notification from London VTS that vessels must proceed at reduced speed through areas where activities sensitive to the effects of wash or draw-off are taking place.

As a guide, speed reductions are used for hazardous activities such as diving, salvage, heavy lifting, working on the waterline from scaffolding or pontoon/small boat, and bunkering operations.

Signals for Speed Reduction Notification

Mariners will be notified of speed reductions by:

1. **Romeo Yankee flags**. The site, vessel or installation will display the international code flags "Romeo Yankee" by day and illuminated rigid replica by night.
2. **VTS broadcasts.** The speed reduction details, including location and activity requiring the speed reduction, will be identified in the half hourly navigational broadcast.

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

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Romeo
Yankee

Masters considerations in a Speed Reduction

- The Master must judge the speed appropriate to the circumstances, based upon the activity identified in the broadcast.
- Reduce speed in good time.
- Fully consider the vessels wash and draw off, especially when accelerating/decelerating.
- Remember the exact location of works within the site may not be visible, such as in the case of diving.
- Remain at appropriate speed until finally past and clear.

King Edward Memorial Park

King Edward Memorial Park is a Thames Tideway Tunnel works, where a number of hazardous activities have been and continue to take place; these predominantly include diving and heavy lifting.

These activities may be taking place in any location across the works site when a speed reduction is broadcast. For this reason, regular speed reductions have and continue to be broadcast.

Following an increase of substantiated complaints against vessels transiting this area, when a speed reduction is broadcast by London VTS and Romeo Yankee flags flown, Masters must reduce speed to such that they will not endanger the works through dangerous wash.

As works may be taking place in any one or multiple locations across the site Masters should consider speed reductions in this area to apply across the area , and maintain a steady speed, as shown in the chartlet below.

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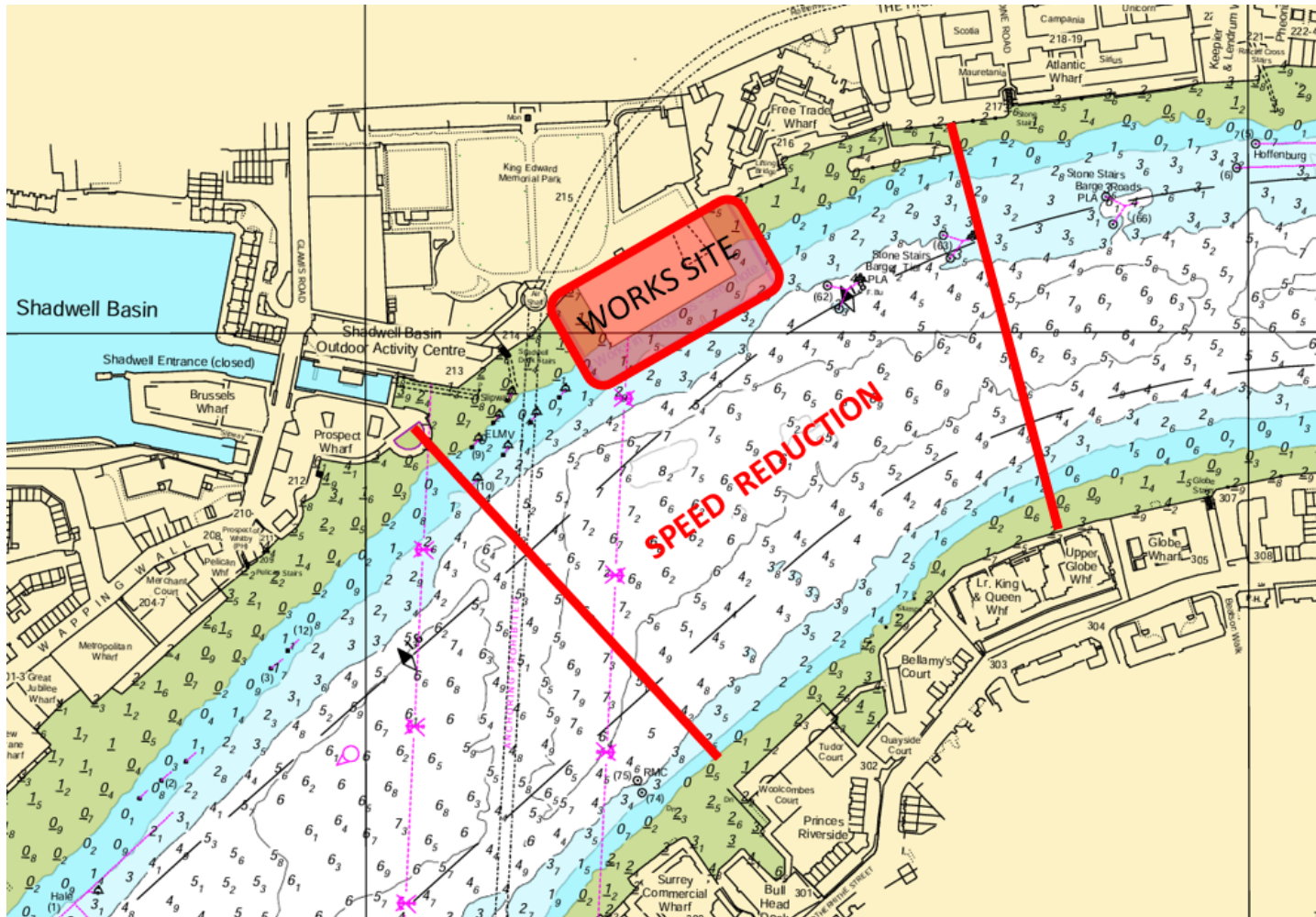Sophie Williams, Deputy Harbour Master
Published: 09/08/2024
Expires: 30/09/2025
Lower Pool

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Masters of high-speed vessels should pay particular attention, and ensure all wash is dumped before reaching the speed reduction/work site.

Failure to comply with a speed reduction

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As speed reductions are granted to ensure the safe execution of hazardous activities any failure to comply may result in property damage, pollution, or even serious injury or death.

For this reason, failure to reduce to an appropriate speed in good time and remain at such speed until finally past and clear will be taken seriously by the PLA. All incidents will be investigated and where non-compliance with the speed reduction is found, enforcement action will be taken.

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