



Port Information Guide

Supporting Navigation in the Port of London

Port of London Authority

Port Information Guide

NOTE

Please check the PLA website for the latest version to ensure the correct information is available to you at all times.

LAST UPDATED

31 March 2025

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Cover photograph: Lee Marriott – PLA Pilot

INTRODUCTION

This guide has been produced for all river users, vessel owners and operators, publishers and any other parties that publish or need nautical information.

The Port of London Authority (PLA) makes every effort to make and maintain the contents of this document as up-to-date, accessible, error-free and complete as possible; however, the correctness and completeness of these contents cannot be guaranteed. The PLA accepts no liability for the occurrences and/or consequences of errors, faults or incompleteness, or any other omission in connection with the information provided by this document. In case of any discrepancies or inconsistencies between this document and the applicable legislation, including port regulations, the latter will prevail. Any substantive change to port regulations, practices or procedures would be reflected in amendments to this guide as soon as possible.

The Port of London Authority cannot guarantee the security of any external links used in this document. Any external links used will be marked with an asterisk (*).

The Port of London Authority (PLA) was established in 1909 as per the Port of London Act of 1968 (as amended) which is available on our website: pla.co.uk/port-london-act

For Rules, guidelines and best practice for navigation on the Tidal Thames, visit our website: pla.co.uk/regulations-guidance

For queries about this guide, please contact our Harbour Master team: harbourmaster@pla.co.uk

CONTACT US

For General Enquiries, contact the Port of London Authority using the details below:

London River House
Royal Pier Road
Gravesend
Kent
DA12 2BG
United Kingdom

General Enquiries: [\(+44\) \(0\) 1474 562200](tel:+44201474562200)

pla.co.uk/contact-us

For **Safety of Navigation, Incident/Near Miss Reporting, Emergencies and issues requiring Urgent attention**, contact London VTS. For more information see section '[London VTS](#)'.

Found an error in the information provided in this guide? Email us: harbourmaster@pla.co.uk



LATEST CHANGES

- (1) Updated section on **Ballast Water Operations**.
- (2) Updated section on **Bridges**.
- (3) Added new section on **Certificate of Compliance**.
- (4) Renamed section on **Charges** to **PLA Charges**.
- (5) Updated section on **Charts and Publications**.
- (6) Updated and renamed section on **Craft Towage** to **Craft Towage Operations**.
- (7) Added new section on **Combined Sewer Outfalls (CSO)**.
- (8) Updated section on **Diving**.
- (9) Added new section on **Draught Calculations** combining existing **Calculating Vessel Draughts, Vessel Draught Information** and **Water Density** sections.
- (10) Updated section on **Drones**.
- (11) Added new section on **Ebb Tide Flag Warning System**.
- (12) Updated section on **Ecology**.
- (13) Updated section on **Emergency Moorings**.
- (14) Renamed section on **Emergency Planning** to **Emergency Preparedness**.
- (15) Updated section on **Emissions Reduction**.
- (16) Updated section on **Exclusion Zones**.
- (17) Updated section on **Exhaust Gas Scrubbers**.
- (18) Added new section on **Gangway Angle Calculator**.
- (19) Added new section on **Hot Works**.
- (20) Updated title of **Immobilisation** section to **Vessel Immobilisation**.
- (21) Updated and renamed section on **Large Vessel Transits West of Margaretness**.
- (22) Updated section on **Local Knowledge Endorsement** to include contact email.
- (23) Updated section on **Local Traffic Control**.
- (24) Updated section on **London VTS**, moving Speed Reduction information to a new section.
- (25) Added new section on **Moorings** combining sections on **Cruise & Superyacht Moorings, Visitor Moorings** and **Ship Tiers & Moorings**. Updated length overall limit for Greenwich Ship Tier.
- (26) Updated section on **NAABSA Berths**.
- (27) Renamed section on **Notices to Agents, Berths and Ship Operators** to **NABSO**.
- (28) Updated section on **Non-tidal Thames**.
- (29) Updated section on **Pilotage** combining the existing section with **Pilot Boarding Areas**.
- (30) Added new section on **Pollution Prevention & Response** combining the **Thames Oil Spill Clearance Association (TOSCA)** and **Pollution Prevention** sections.
- (31) Added new section on **Port Limits**.
- (32) Added new section on **Port of Tilbury** combining the sections on **Port of Tilbury & Tilbury 2** and **Port of Tilbury Lock**.
- (33) Renamed section on **Reporting Requirements** to **Reporting ETA/ETD**.
- (34) Added new section on **Reporting Vessels**.
- (35) Updated section on **River Works** to include contact email for licensing team.
- (36) Updated and renamed section on **Ship Towage** to **Ship Towage Operations**.
- (37) Updated section on **Speed Limits**.
- (38) Added new section on **Speed Reductions**, formerly contained within section on **London VTS**.
- (39) Updated section on **Thames Barrier Control Zone**.
- (40) Updated section on **Thames Byelaws**.
- (41) Added new section on **VHF Carriage Requirements**.
- (42) Added new section on **Weighted Heaving Lines**.
- (43) Added new section on **Works Overside**.

PLEASE REPORT A NEAR MISS



By PHONE
(+44) (0) 203 260 7711
above Crayfordness

(+44) (0)1474 562 215
below Crayfordness



Over VHF
channel 14
Teddington - Crayfordness

channel 68
Crayfordness - Sea Reach 4

channel 69
Sea Reach 4 - Sea Reach 1



on the PLA
Mobile Website
Go to
mobile.pla.co.uk

Scroll down to
Report Incident

You can also report directly via our website, click on **make a report** at the top of the screen

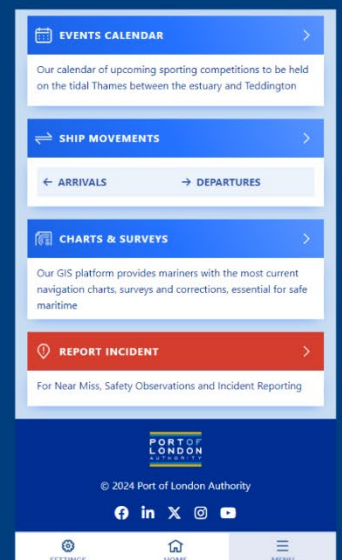
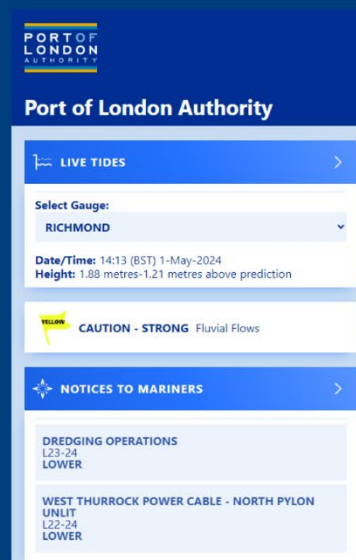
Our specially designed mobile website makes navigating our website on your phone easier. To find out more, go to your web browser on your phone and visit:

mobile.pla.co.uk

Go to our mobile website to view information on:

- Live Tides
- Fluvial flow flag warning
- Latest Notices to Mariners
- Events Calendar
- Ship Movements
- Charts & Surveys
- Report an Incident or Near Miss

We have also provided guidance on how to add a shortcut to the website on your phone, simply click on settings at the bottom of the screen when you are in the site.



EXECUTIVE FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Port Information Guide, a comprehensive resource designed to support all those navigating and operating within the Tidal Thames.

This guide serves as an essential reference for mariners, port users, and stakeholders, ensuring that our shared commitment to safety, efficiency, and environmental responsibility remains at the forefront of our operations.



The Tidal Thames is the one of the UK's busiest and most dynamic waterways, playing a vital role in trade, transport, and industry. As custodians of this crucial maritime hub, we continuously strive to maintain world-class standards in port management, navigation safety, and sustainability.

This document provides clear guidance on regulatory requirements, best practices, and operational procedures, reinforcing our collective responsibility to uphold the highest levels of safety and compliance.

I encourage all users of the Port of London to familiarise themselves with the information in this guide and apply it diligently in their daily operations.

By working together, we can ensure the continued success and safe operation of this vital waterway.

Thank you for your commitment to making the Tidal Thames a safe, efficient, and thriving maritime environment.

James Stride

Chief Harbour Master
Port of London Authority

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ANCHORING

- (1) There are various designated anchorages in the Port of London, for a full list of anchorages refer to the PLA Tide Tables and Port Information available at: pla.co.uk/tidal-information#tables
- (2) For rules on Anchoring in the Port of London, refer to our General Directions for Navigation in the Port of London (GD22): pla.co.uk/general-directions-navigation-port-london

BALLAST OPERATIONS

- (1) The PLA does not have any specific restrictions on ballast water operations in the Port of London. Questions regarding ballast water operations should be directed to the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) via the vessel's agents.
- (2) Any vessels wishing to undertake ballast operations should adhere to UK and International Regulations, plus any restrictions/requirements of the berth owner/operator.

BERTHS

- (1) For a list of commercial berths and terminals on the Tidal Thames visit: pla.co.uk/berths-terminals
- (2) See also section NAABSA BERTHS.

BRIDGES

- (1) For a full list of clearance heights for bridges crossing the river and the various creeks along the Tidal Thames visit: pla.co.uk/thames-bridge-heights
- (1.1) The clearance height of the main navigational arch for each bridge is referenced to the local Mean High Water Springs (MHWS) tidal level and is also included in the Chart notes and by the bridge location on PLA published charts. See below example extracts (Figure 1 and 2) taken from PLA Chart 316:

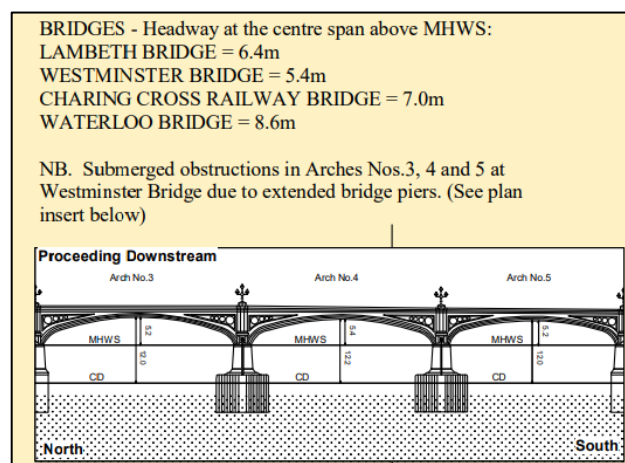


Figure 1: Extract from PLA Chart 316 showing notes of bridge clearance heights at main navigational span

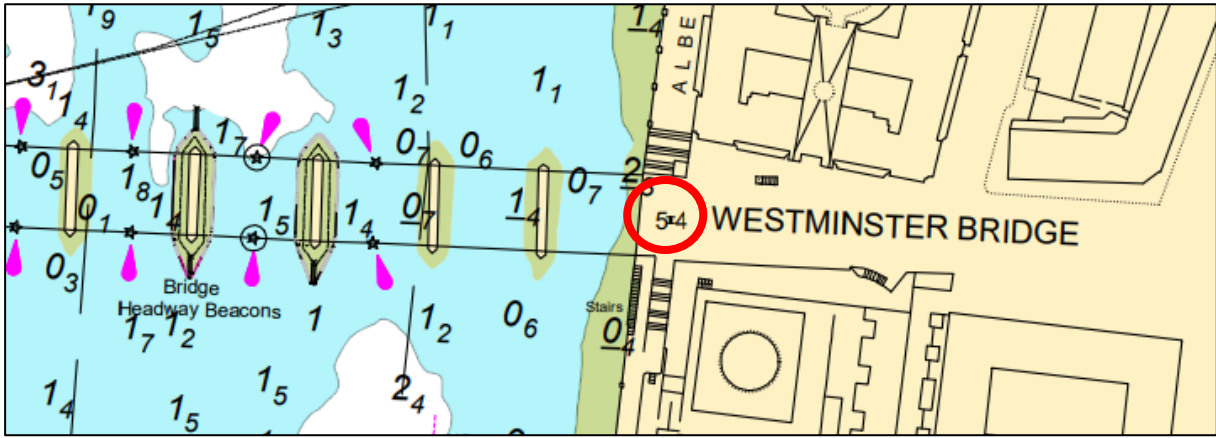
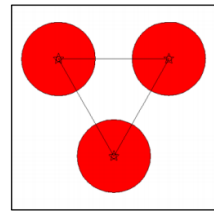


Figure 2: Extract from PLA Chart 316 showing bridge clearance height at main navigational span of Westminster Bridge

(2) **ARCHES CLOSED TO NAVIGATION**

Arches on Thames bridges may be closed for various reasons from time to time. As per the PLA General Directions (GD17.1 (e)), No vessel is to transit through a bridge arch which is closed to Navigation. Arches closed to navigation will be marked in accordance with the Thames Byelaws 2012:

- a) by day, three red discs 0.6 metres in diameter at the points of an equilateral triangle with the apex downwards and the base horizontal;
- b) by night, three red lights in similar positions to the discs displayed by day.



- (3) Arches closed/open/open to specific vessels may also be marked by the use of smart signals, as detailed below:



Open to navigation to all vessels



Closed to navigation to all vessels



Only 'PERMITTED VESSELS' may transit through the arch

(4) **SIGNAGE AND LIGHTING ON ARCHES DURING MAINTENANCE OR CONSTRUCTION WORKS**

During maintenance and construction works other appropriate signage and lighting as agreed by the Harbour Master may be displayed on or around bridge arches. The characteristics of these will be communicated in a Notice to Mariners as appropriate.

(5) **BRIDGE TRANSITS WITH SPECIAL PROCEDURES**

As per the PLA General Directions (GD28), vessels wishing to transit the following bridges must follow the procedures as described below:

(5.1) **TOWER BRIDGE**

Vessels with an air draught of 9 metres or more wishing to transit Tower Bridge may request a bridge lift at least 24 hours in advance, as described on the following website: [*towerbridge.org.uk/lift-times/book-a-bridge-lift](http://towerbridge.org.uk/lift-times/book-a-bridge-lift). Vessels intending to transit Tower Bridge which have arranged for the bascules of the bridge to be raised must:

- a) at Crayfordness inward-bound, or when departing a berth west of Crayfordness, notify London VTS of:
 - i) a confirmed Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA) for Tower Bridge; and
 - ii) the place at which the Vessel can safely abort;
- b) establish communications with Tower Bridge control 30 minutes before their ETA for Tower Bridge;
- c) not transit beyond their declared abort point until confirmation has been received from Tower Bridge Control that the bridge bascules will be raised in good time.

(5.2) DEPTFORD CREEK BRIDGES

The bridges are able to open to river traffic 24 hours a day, every day of the year, but operation is based upon an advance notice system as the bridges are not staffed continuously. Vessels wishing to transit the Deptford Creek bridges must contact the bridges Controller on [\(+44\) \(0\) 208 291 4561](tel:+442082914561) at least 12 hours in advance, and by midday on a Friday or any other workday immediately preceding a public holiday for any opening required over a weekend or during a public holiday period.

(5.3) BOW CREEK – LEAMOUTH/CANNING TOWN FOOTBRIDGE

Vessels with an air draught of greater than 4.9m will advise London VTS on VHF Channel 14 or by telephone: [\(+44\) \(0\) 203 260 7711](tel:+442032607711) of a requirement for the bridge to be raised, giving an estimated time of arrival (ETA) at the bridge with a minimum notice period of 60 minutes whereby it will be ensured that no alarms are activated regarding operation of the bridge. If there are any issues likely to impact on the bridge operation, London VTS must be informed at this stage and confirmed as resolved at the 15 min confirmation communication exchange. 15 minutes before arrival at the bridge the vessel will confirm its ETA to London VTS.

(5.4) HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE

As part of the ongoing stabilisation and repair works at Hammersmith bridge, control lights have been installed either side of the bridge. The bridge control lights will display one of two signals: a green arrow or a red cross. *(see (2) under this section for the meaning of these signals).*

- (5.4.1) In the event of a bridge closure, an exclusion zone of 15 metres upriver and downriver of the bridge will be implemented. Mariners are advised that there is no set time duration of a closure as engineers investigate the cause of the alarm. All mariners are advised to have an abort and contingency plan available for a closure which may last longer than the tidal window available.

BUNKERING OPERATIONS

- (1) As per the PLA General Directions (GD9), a Bunker Vessel, or any Vessel receiving bunkers pumped from a shore side facility or road tanker, must notify London VTS of the type of bunkers being transferred, and report to London VTS immediately before, and on completion of, Bunkering. Masters of vessels are reminded that bunkering operations within the Port of London are also subject to the following conditions.

(2) **NOTIFICATION AND REPORTING**

The Master of a vessel of more than 50 GT (other than one which normally navigates solely within the limits of the Port of London) intending to receive bunkers, shall give notification in writing or by VHF radio to London VTS not less than 2 hours in advance of the intention to bunker. The notification should state:

- a) the location the bunkering will take place;
- b) the type of bunker oil to be transhipped; and
- c) the expected time that bunkering will commence.

Additionally, Masters of all such vessels shall also report by VHF to London VTS immediately before bunkering is about to commence, and on completion of bunkering.

(3) **CHECKLISTS**

The Masters of all vessels of more than 50 GT intending to receive bunkers, shall complete a bunker checklist in conjunction with the supplying party, with all questions answered accurately.

(4) **PRECAUTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY ALL RECEIVING VESSELS**

The Master of all vessels receiving bunkers shall ensure that:

- a) scuppers are firmly closed
- b) vessel is securely moored or safely at anchor
- c) any special instructions issued by the Harbour Master have been complied with
- d) bunker pipes which are not in use are effectively blanked
- e) bunker hoses have sufficient play and are adequately supported
- f) bunker hose connections have been provided with a good seal
- g) there is a well-tightened bolt in every bolt hole in the bunker hose connection flanges
- h) there is a sufficiently large overflow container under the bunker hose connection(s)
- i) cargo-handling or other operations in progress will not hazard the bunker operations or vice-versa
- j) there is an agreed communication system established between the vessel receiving bunkers and bunkering barge.

(5) **PRECAUTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY, SUPPLYING VESSEL, ROAD TANKER OR TERMINAL**

The Master of a bunker barge, the driver of a road tanker or a terminal providing bunkers, is not to begin bunkering unless it has been ensured that:

- a) scuppers are firmly closed;
- b) the bunkering vessel is securely moored;

- c) any special instructions issued by the Harbour Master have been complied with;
- d) the bunker hoses are properly maintained and in good condition.

(6) **BUNKER VESSELS**

Vessels which are both Intra-port Vessels and Bunker Vessels must notify London VTS of the type and amount of bunker cargo they are carrying aboard prior to every instance of getting Underway.

(7) **REPORTING OF OIL SPILLS**

The master of any Vessel involved in an oil spill must immediately report to London VTS. Information to be reported includes reporting location, type of oil, approximate quantity, and action taken to limit and control the spill.

(8) **BUNKERING OPERATIONS AT ANCHORAGES INCLUDING TONGUE ANCHORAGE**

Bunkering at Anchorages, including those outside Port Limits but within the London VTS Area (Tongue Anchorage), may only be conducted by vessels/companies which have been approved by the Harbour Master. Other organisations wishing to carry out bunkering operations outside of port limits but within the VTS Area should contact the Harbour Master (harbourmaster@pla.co.uk). **Bunkering in the Margate Road anchorage is not permitted.**

(9) All vessels intending to enter the London VTS area, which are to be involved in ship-to-ship bunkering operations, shall provide standard pre-arrival and departure notifications via the PISCES system. Vessels carrying dangerous or polluting goods are required to declare them in advance of their arrival and departure.

(10) In addition to the standard VTS reporting requirements, not less than 2 hours before bunkering commences, vessels intending to receive bunkers in Anchorages must notify London VTS of their intention to bunker and provide the following information in that notification:

- a) The location the bunkering will take place
- b) The type and quantity of bunkers to be received
- c) The expected time that bunkering will commence

(11) Vessels must report to London VTS before the commencement of bunkering operations and give positive confirmation to VTS that their bunker checklists have been completed. Vessels must not commence bunkering operations without the permission of London VTS. Vessels must report to London VTS on completion of bunkering operations detailing the exact type and quantity of bunkers.

(12) **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

Bunkering operations must not commence or must be suspended if the local weather conditions exceed Beaufort Force 6, sea / swell heights in excess of 2 metres, and constant winds exceeding 27 knots. However, London VTS or the Master of the bunkering vessel may direct, that bunkering operations be suspended in less adverse conditions if deemed necessary. All vessels anchored for the purpose of bunkering are required to have their main engines available at immediate notice. In addition, they are required to exhibit code flag 'Bravo' by day and an all-round red light by night. Whilst bunkering operations are in progress a 100m domain intrusion zone will be established around the vessel, which will be monitored by London VTS and by the vessel taking bunkers.

- (13) For a list of bunker suppliers operating in the Port of London visit: pla.co.uk/port-business-directory#B

CARGO OPERATIONS

- (1) For a full list of Cargo Handlers operating within the Port of London visit: pla.co.uk/port-business-directory#C

NEW

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

- (1) Vessels wishing to exceed the speed limits defined in Thames Byelaw 16, a certificate of compliance issued by the Harbour Master is required.
- (2) A certificate of compliance will only be issued when a vessel operator can demonstrate compliance with the relevant provisions of the High Speed Craft Code and the Small Commercial Vessel Code together with the International Safety Management Code, and the carriage and use of AIS.
- (3) Further details of the requirements to be met for the issue of a certificate of compliance can be obtained from the Harbour Master by emailing highspeed@pla.co.uk
- (4) If, as a result of compliance with a mandatory speed limit, a planing vessel produces unacceptable wash at 12 knots, the master should reduce speed further to ensure that the vessel produces safe levels of wash.
- (5) A certificate of compliance for the purposes of this byelaw is not to be taken as compliance for the purposes of any other requirement in PLA byelaws, general directions or provisions in the Act.
- (6) *See also sections SPEED LIMITS and WASH AND DRAW-OFF.*

CHARTS AND PUBLICATIONS

- (1) The Tidal Thames is covered across various publications including Admiralty Sailing Directions and Admiralty Charts, as well as our own Charts developed by our Hydrographic department. Visit pla.co.uk/hydrography to view our Hydrographic information. Our Hydrographic products are available for purchase from the PLA Shop: pla.co.uk/shop
- (2) The PLA has produced a Mariners' Passage Planning and Routeing Guide which is available to download from our website: pla.co.uk/mariners-passage-planning-and-routeing-guide
- (3) To acquire Admiralty Charts and other publications covering the Thames produced by the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office, visit: *admiralty.co.uk
- (4) Mariners should ensure nautical publications are always kept up to date, as well as ensuring they always carry the latest and most appropriate scale chart for the area in which they are navigating. To access all Port of London Chart Correction Advices (CCAs) visit: pla.co.uk/charts-surveys and for Admiralty Notices to Mariners (NTMs) see: *admiralty.co.uk/maritime-safety-information/admiralty-notices-to-mariners
- (5) For any queries, please contact PLA Hydrographic Service at: pla.co.uk/Hydrography or call [+44 \(0\)1474 562207](tel:+44201474562207)
- (6) Charts are available to download in pdf format from our website, although these must not be used for navigation: pla.co.uk/charts-surveys

CIVIL ENGINEERING

- (1) For a full list of Civil Engineering providers visit: pla.co.uk/port-business-directory#C

NEW

COMBINED SEWER OUTFALLS (CSO)

- (1) As part of the new Tideway Tunnel, some of the existing sewer outfalls have now been joined together into combined sewer outfalls (CSOs). The seven sites, located from the Lower Pool to Barn Elms Reach, are also now further into the river, closer to or in the navigation channel. All river users should familiarise themselves with the locations of these sites and the effects of a foul water discharge into the Thames. For more information read our Notice to Mariners (P6-24): pla.co.uk/notices/P6-24
- (2) In the event of a discharge, flashing warning lights on each site will be activated, London VTS will issue a warning and include the CSO status on their routine navigational broadcasts on VHF 14. The current discharge status of each CSO can also be checked via our website: pla.co.uk/cso-status
- (3) The warning lights consist of two lights mounted vertically in front of a black backboard, flashing yellow with an alternating 1 second pattern, visible day and night with a range of up to 200 metres.

- (4) For more information, to assist with planning your passage past these sites and on the risks to navigation from each CSO discharges site, visit: [*tideway.london/contact-us/document-library/cso-discharges-risk-to-navigation/](https://tideway.london/contact-us/document-library/cso-discharges-risk-to-navigation/)

NEW

CRAFT TOWAGE OPERATIONS

- (1) The PLA has produced a Code of Practice for Craft Towage Operations on the Thames, provided for the guidance of Tug Masters, tug crews and those involved or associated with craft towage operations. It may also be of interest to other river users in providing an insight into the specialist work, and in some cases, the navigational limitations of tugs and tows
- (2) The term 'craft' in this context applies to a wide range of both routine and non-routine tows, including dumb barges, jack-ups, dead-ship vessels and many more.
- (3) For more information visit: pla.co.uk/code-practice-craft-towage-operations-thames
- (4) For a full list of operators providing craft towage visit: pla.co.uk/port-business-directory#C



CRITICAL DEPTHS

- (1) Up to date information regarding critical depths along the Tidal Thames is available here: pla.co.uk/hydrographics/data/navinfo/critlist.pdf

DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES IN BULK

- (1) For rules and regulations covering the transport of dangerous substances in bulk within the Port of London, visit our website: pla.co.uk/dangerous-substances-in-bulk-byelaws
- (2) See also section *GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR NAVIGATION*.

DIVING

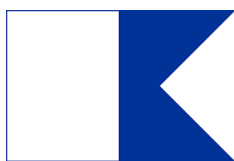
- (1) The Port of London Authority employs commercially qualified divers who are in demand for many different tasks. For more information visit: pla.co.uk/marine-services
- (2) **Permission to Dive**
Thames Byelaw 20 requires diving contractors to obtain permission from the Harbour Master prior to undertaking any diving activity in the Thames. To obtain permission, the diving supervisor is required to fill in and submit the diving permit to work form, together with copies of documents stated in the checklist. These documents shall be submitted to the Harbour Master: HMDiving@pla.co.uk with at least 2 working days' notice. Further details are available on our website: pla.co.uk/commercial-diving

(3) Depending on the location of the proposed diving operations, a Notice to Mariners and Speed Reduction may be required. See section *NOTICES TO MARINERS and SPEED REDUCTIONS*.

(4) **Vessels involved in Diving Operations**

Thames Byelaw 33, in addition to the signals required by Rule 27(d) or (e) of the International Collision Regulations, requires a vessel supporting any diving activity permitted by the harbour master under byelaw 20 to:

- a) by night, exhibit conspicuously an illuminated rigid replica of the International Code Flag ‘A’ not less than 1 metre in height; and
- b) by day, exhibit conspicuously a red flag not less than 1 metre square in a position as close as possible to the diver’s point of entry into the water.



International Code Flag ‘Alpha’



Rectangular Red Flag

NEW

DRAUGHT CALCULATIONS

- (1) The water density of the Thames varies between berths and throughout the river. Density measurements also vary at different times of the day and year, and are significantly affected by local variations in salinity, temperature and by the weather.
- (2) Information regarding observed water density readings is available at: pla.co.uk/water-density-readings. These are provided to serve as a guide only for water densities that may be encountered on the Thames. The PLA accepts no responsibility as to their accuracy. It is recommended that for density values to be used for draught or freshwater allowance calculations, that in situ measurements are taken at the location of the vessel or terminal.
- (3) It is the Master’s responsibility to ensure they are aware of these variations and to submit their vessel’s actual deepest draught, taking into account water density.
- (4) Agents, berth and ship operators are reminded of the importance of supplying the correct vessel draught at the time of ordering a Pilot via PISCES. Accurate detail is critical and where this information is incorrectly provided, or frequently changes, there is an increased likelihood of a delay in the provision of a pilot.
- (5) In the event of any change in draught, agents, berth and ship operators are reminded to update PISCES with the correct information in reasonable time. Failure to do so may result in a delay to the vessel.

DREDGING

- (1) A dredging licence is required for any works involving dredging. Dredging is defined as including any operation to cleanse, scour, cut, deepen, widen, dredge or take up or remove material from the bed and banks of the Thames. Bed levelling, ploughing and hydrodynamic dredging fall within this definition.
- (2) For information on how to obtain a dredging licence visit our website: pla.co.uk/dredging
- (3) For a full list of Dredging Services offered within the Port of London, visit: pla.co.uk/port-business-directory#D

DRONES

- (1) The Port of London Authority has the responsibility to ensure safety to all of those using the Tidal Thames and as such need to be notified, at least 3 working days in advance, about any intended drone flight over the river. For more information about the use of Drones on the Tidal Thames visit: pla.co.uk/drone-operations

DRYING OUT FACILITIES

- (1) The PLA has two drying out facilities in the upper district; Strand-on-the-Green Grid and Isleworth Drawdock.
- (2) Isleworth Drawdock is a stretch of vertical river wall with regularly spaced piles and a riverbed suitable for taking the ground (for appropriate vessels), that is directly accessible by road. Isleworth is practically unlimited in the size of vessel it can accommodate.
- (3) Strand-on-the-Green grid is a timber grid suitable for smaller vessels, but without road access. The grid is limited to flat bottomed vessels of 25m length, 9m beam and a displacement of 200 tons. There is a tide board on the upriver pile of the grid, and it should be noted that there is no direct shore access at this facility.
- (4) For more information including charges for using our Drying Out Facilities visit: pla.co.uk/drying-out-facilities.

EBB TIDE FLAG WARNING SYSTEM

- (1) **Between Teddington and Putney**, an Ebb Tide Flag Warning System is provided by the PLA to help indicate the speed of the fluvial flow to small boat users. It is similar to the red and yellow board system used by the Environment Agency above Teddington but on the Tideway it only applies to the ebb tide.
- (2) The flag status is updated every day at 6 am and 6 pm by taking the lowest tide reading for the Richmond tide gauge for the preceding 12 hours. The parameters for each flag colour are as follows:
 - If the value is 2.6 metres or above, then the flag is RED.
 - If the value is 1.7 metres or above but less than 2.6 metres, then the flag is YELLOW.
 - If the value is 0 or above but less than 1.7 metres, then the flag is GREEN.
 - If the value is less than 0 then the flag is BLACK.
- (3) To check the current status of the ebb tide flag warning system visit our website: pla.co.uk/
- (4) Prior to boating, rowers and paddlers are expected to have completed a risk assessment which ensures an adequate Passage Plan. The Ebb Tide Flag Warning System is a key element of any risk assessment and thus should be always monitored and adhered to. Those boating in contravention of the Ebb Tide Flag Warning advice would be in breach of the Tideway Code.
- (5) For more information on the meaning of the different flag colours refer to the Tideway Code: pla.co.uk/tideway-code

ECOLOGY

- (1) The Tidal Thames and Estuary is internationally recognised for its environmental importance for ecology. It is home to hundreds of thousands of over wintering and migratory birds, 115 different species of fish, 4 special protection areas and 9 sites of special scientific interest (SSSI). The Thames is important for marine mammals, including the harbour seal, grey seal and harbour porpoise. These species can be found throughout the estuary, including in Central London. Further information is available on ZSL's State of the Thames report: [*www.zsl.org/what-we-do/projects/state-of-the-thames-2021](http://www.zsl.org/what-we-do/projects/state-of-the-thames-2021)
- (2) For guidance on the local ecology of the Tidal Thames visit: pla.co.uk/poster-ecology-tidal-thames
- (3) For guidance on invasive species visit: [*nonnativespecies.org/non-native-species/](http://nonnativespecies.org/non-native-species/)
- (4) For guidance on Marine Mammals on the Thames and how to report sightings, visit: pla.co.uk/get-involved
- (5) If you spot what you think is a stranded seal or another marine mammal on the banks of the Thames, please report it to the London VTS using the details in the [Contact Us](#) section.

EMERGENCY MOORINGS

- (1) Vessels requiring the use of an emergency mooring should contact London VTS using the relevant VHF channel or telephone number for the area they are in.
- (2) Vessels must not use moorings without permission from the Harbour Master (via London VTS) or the mooring owner.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- (1) The Port of London Authority is a Category 2 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. In addition to supporting Category 1 responders, we will co-operate with other organisations in the planning, response and recovery for emergencies and support initiatives with implications for the Tidal Thames. For more information about our Emergency Planning function, visit: pla.co.uk/emergency-planning
- (2) For routine Emergency Planning, Contingency Management and Resilience Issues, please contact the PLA by phone: [+44 \(0\)1474562200](tel:+44(0)1474562200) or email us at emergencyplanning@pla.co.uk

EMISSIONS REDUCTION

- (1) Air quality and emissions to air from vessels is a health and environmental priority in the UK and has been identified as being one of the top issues for ports in Europe. The operation of vessels on the Tidal Thames provides only a small percentage of the London atmospheric emission inventory, accounting for 1% of the capital's emissions. However, the river's overall contribution to London's emissions is likely to increase as emissions from road vehicles fall due to tightening legislation, and use of the river grows. The Pla's goal is to achieve Net Zero emissions on the river by 2040.
- (2) To read about our Air Quality Strategy for the Tidal Thames, visit our website: pla.co.uk/air-quality
- (3) To view our plan for supporting the decarbonisation of river-based emissions, visit: pla.co.uk/net-zero-river-plan

ENVIRONMENT

- (1) The Port of London Authority is a harbour authority, a licensing authority and a landowner. This means we have certain commitments to provide environmental stewardship and champion environmental best practice. In our own Act we are required to maintain and improve the conservancy of the river and estuary.
- (2) Find out about our work looking after the environment of the Tidal Thames, including habitat management, driftwood collection, Thames Barrier navigation and more by visiting: pla.co.uk/environment/. You can also contact our Environment team at environment@pla.co.uk or by phone: [\(+44\) \(0\)1474 562200](tel:+44(0)1474562200)

EVENTS

- (1) The Thames is home to globally renowned events like the University Boat Race, traditional barge and cutter races and the Great River Race. To find out more about events on the river, visit: pla.co.uk/river-events to view our River Events calendar.
- (2) As per the Thames Byelaws (Byelaw 9), a person must not organise or promote a boat race, regatta, stunt, procession, exhibition, firework display, air race or other river event on or over the Thames except with the consent of the Harbour Master. For event organiser guidance visit: pla.co.uk/event-organiser-guide

EXCLUSION ZONES

- (1) As per the PLA General Directions (GD17), no vessel is to enter any Exclusion Zone shown on PLA charts or established in the Thames from time to time by the PLA. **Vessels must also not approach within 60 metres of any Berthed tanker, or oil or gas jetty in the Thames. Vessels must not approach within 50 metres of any wind turbine tower unless for the purposes of construction or maintenance.** Exclusion Zones in place on the Thames are described below:

(1.1) LAMBETH REACH

No person or vessel, shall, except in an emergency, or with the written permission of the Harbour Master, enter into an area within 70 metres of the northern bank of the river Thames between Westminster Bridge and 200 metres below Lambeth Bridge, as shown on charts, except as provided below. This restriction shall not apply to licensed passenger vessels approaching or departing from Westminster Pier. However, these vessels shall avoid entering into the area described, as far as safe navigation permits and at no time may they approach closer than 15 metres to the northern riverbank, as marked by yellow special marker buoys and shown on PLA charts.

(1.2) ALBERT EMBANKMENT

An Exclusion Zone is established in the vicinity of Albert Embankment. The Zone extends from the upstream side of Vauxhall Bridge to the lower side of Lacks Dock extending from the embankment for a distance of 15 metres into the river. No vessel shall, except in an emergency or with the written permission of a Harbour Master, navigate within or enter the Exclusion Zone.

(1.3) RICHMOND LOCK & WEIR

Mariners should not enter the Richmond Lock, Weir and Footbridge Exclusion Zone whilst the weirs are in the lowered position or when they are being operated. Only when the weir gates are fully raised, and the Closed Arch Signs have been removed is it permitted to navigate into the navigation exclusion zone and through Richmond Footbridge No. 2 or No. 3 arches. Only those vessels manoeuvring on or to the lock island berths, vessels engaged in emergency operations or smaller vessels wishing to utilise the boat rollers in No. 1 arch are exempt from this requirement.

- (2) **Additional Exclusion Zones may be implemented from time to time, and Mariners will be notified by a Notice to Mariners or by London VTS.**

EXHAUST GAS SCRUBBERS

- (1) The PLA does not have any specific restrictions on the use of exhaust gas scrubbers in the Port of London. Masters of vessels fitted with these systems should consult UK national regulations. Questions regarding the use of scrubbers should be directed to the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) via their agents.
- (2) Individual berth operators may have their own restrictions on the use of scrubbers, agents/owners are therefore, advised to contact any berth operators directly for advice.

FILMING

- (1) All filming activity (and all commercial still photography) on the Tidal Thames requires a filming licence. This includes all filming involving boats and vessels and filming on piers and other structures in the river. We can also advise on the possibilities for safe filming activity on the Thames foreshore (i.e. the part of the river exposed at low tide). For more information visit: pla.co.uk/filming-photography-and-events-tidal-thames

FORESHORE PERMITS

- (1) Anyone searching the Tidal Thames foreshore from Teddington to the Thames Barrier - in any way for any reason - must hold a current foreshore permit from the Port of London Authority. This includes all searching, metal detecting, 'beachcombing', scraping and digging. For more information about Thames Foreshore Permits including how to apply for a permit, visit: pla.co.uk/thames-foreshore-permits

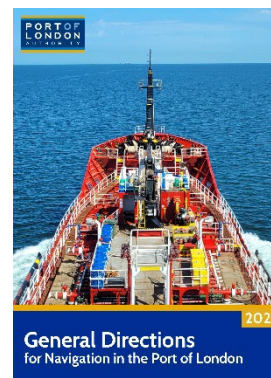
NEW

GANGWAY ANGLE CALCULATOR

- (1) The PLA have produced a Gangway Angle Calculator to assist Masters of ships planning to use specified jetties, piers or berths with checking if their gangway / accommodation ladder arrangements are likely to comply or not with certain applicable regulations and guidance. For more information visit: pla.co.uk/gangway-angle-calculator

GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR NAVIGATION

- (1) In order to maintain and enhance safety of navigation on the Thames, it is important that Masters and watchkeepers are familiar with current Thames Byelaws, General Directions and Notices to Mariners. It is therefore vital that owners/agents ensure that all such publications and relevant information are promptly distributed to vessels as appropriate.



- (2) It is the duty of the Master of a Vessel to which a General Direction applies to comply with that General Direction. However, the giving of a General Direction does not diminish or in any other way affect, the responsibility of the Master in relation to his Vessel, Persons on board, its cargo or any other person or property (Section 116 of the Act).
- (3) Failure by the Master of a Vessel to comply with a General Direction constitutes an offence, and renders that person liable, on conviction, to a fine up to level 5 on the standard scale.
- (4) However, it is a defence for the Master of a Vessel to prove that he had reasonable grounds for supposing that compliance with the General Direction in question would be likely to imperil his Vessel or that in the circumstances, compliance was impracticable (Section 117 of the Act).
- (5) The PLA General Directions are available to download from our website: pla.co.uk/general-directions-navigation-port-london

GREEN TARIFF

- (1) Vessels visiting the Port of London that can show that they go beyond basic environmental requirements under the Environmental Ships Index (ESI) are eligible for a discount on port charges. The discount is automatically applied to eligible vessels.
- (2) For the details of the discount and eligibility, visit pla.co.uk/rates-charges.

HOUSEBOATS

- (1) Living afloat in a houseboat on the Tidal Thames can be a great lifestyle, but requires careful consideration, especially for individuals new to the river. More information is available on our living afloat page: pla.co.uk/living-afloat

NEW

HOT WORKS

- (1) Vessels wishing to undertake hot works (including burning, welding or other work involving naked flames) must seek permission from the berth operator and a notification to London VTS must be made prior to commencement and on completion of any hot works via the relevant VHF channel for the area, confirming that permission has been obtained from the berth operator.
- (2) Masters are advised to ensure the works are thoroughly risk assessed prior to commencement, with all due care and consideration given to the location, weather conditions, access and environmental impacts.
- (3) See also section on [London VTS](#).

HYDROGRAPHY

- (1) The Port of London Authority (PLA) has the busiest port hydrographic department in the UK. The department also has dedicated survey craft fitted with multibeam echo sounder systems.
- (2) For more information about our Hydrographic department including a full range of services available visit: pla.co.uk/hydrography

INTRA-PORT VESSEL REGISTRATION

- (1) General Direction 32 details the requirement for **all commercial intra-port vessels** on the Tidal Thames to be registered with the Port of London Authority, regardless of any other registration, licence or certificate held.
- (2) A dedicated portal is available to allow owners and operators to register their vessels: ipvr.pla.co.uk/home
- (3) For more information, including a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) visit: pla.co.uk/intra-port-vessel-registration

LARGE VESSELS WEST OF MARGARETNESS

- (1) Large vessels intending to transit West of Margaretness point are required to follow specific procedures detailed in the General Directions for Navigation (GD28). Limits to vessel size are as follows:
 - (1.1) **GALLIONS REACH – LONDON CITY AIRPORT**
Vessels with an air draught greater than 45 metres, intending to transit Gallions Reach in the vicinity of London City Airport.
 - (1.2) **BUGSBYS REACH – LONDON CABLE CAR**
Vessels with a length overall greater than 130 metres and/or an air draught greater than 55.1 metres, intending to transit the London Cable Car in Bugsbys Reach.
- (2) For more information refer to the General Directions: pla.co.uk/general-directions-navigation-port-london.

LONDON GATEWAY PORT

- (1) DP World London Gateway Port is an independent Statutory Harbour Authority, sited within the boundaries of the PLA, is the UK's most integrated logistics hub featuring a state-of-the-art deep-sea port and rail terminal on the same site as an expansive land bank for the flexible and fast development of logistics facilities and warehouses. Vessels arriving at London Gateway Port are advised that London Gateway Port have their own Vessel Information Guide which is available to download from their website: *dpworld.com/london-gateway/-/media/project/dpwwg/dpwwg-tenant/europe/london-gateway/media-files/port-services-info/london-gateway-information-guide-for-shipmasters.pdf

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE ENDORSEMENT

- (1) In July 2012 the PLA's Thames Byelaws were implemented, which require the master of any commercial vessel between 40m and 13.7m length overall and those vessels under 13.7m length overall, which are engaged in passenger carriage or towing to hold a Local Knowledge Endorsement (LKE) for the Tidal Thames. This also applies to MCA Boatmaster Licence holders.
- (2) More information about LKEs is available at: pla.co.uk/local-knowledge-endorsement
- (3) For further queries contact LKE@pla.co.uk

LOCAL TRAFFIC CONTROL

- (1) Local Traffic Control is typically conducted from a PLA Harbour Service Launch under the following circumstances:
 - a) Arrival and Departure of Large Vessels at certain locations such as Tower Bridge Upper and Greenwich Ship Tier
 - b) Major events and filming operations
 - c) Bridge Arch Closures
 - d) Emergency Situations
- (2) The implementation of Local Traffic Control will be announced on the VHF channel for the relevant sector and the Harbour Service Launch will display blue flashing lights for the duration.
- (3) Mariners intending to transit the area under Local Traffic Control are required to make contact with the attending Harbour Service Launch(es) on the VHF channel for the relevant sector and must follow any instructions given by the officers in attendance.
- (4) In the event of Local Traffic Control taking place whereby a Harbour Service Launch is unavailable, this may be carried out by London VTS, in which case this will be broadcast on the relevant VHF channel.
- (5) *See also section RIVER CLOSURES.*

LONDON VTS

- (1) Three Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) sectors are operated in the Port of London, each can be contacted as per the details below:

| Area | VHF | | Telephone | Limits |
|---------|------|-----------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Main | Secondary | | |
| Estuary | 69 | 18 | +44(0)1474 560311 | Outer Limits to Sea Reach No. 4 |
| River | 68 | 20 | +44(0)1474 560311 | Sea Reach No. 4 to Crayfordness |
| Barrier | 14 | 22 | +44(0)203 2607711 | Crayfordness to Teddington |

- (2) Navigational Broadcasts including traffic information, cautionary areas, navigational and tidal information are issued every 30 minutes as per the below:

| Area | VHF | Timings |
|---------|-----|-----------------------------------|
| Estuary | 69 | 15 and 45 minutes past every hour |
| River | 68 | 00 and 30 minutes past every hour |
| Barrier | 14 | 15 and 45 minutes past every hour |

- (3) For more information about London VTS visit: pla.co.uk/vessel-traffic-services
- (4) See also sections *LOCAL TRAFFIC CONTROL*, *REPORTING REQUIREMENTS*, *SPEED REDUCTIONS* and *VHF CARRIAGE REQUIREMENTS*.

MARINE ENGINEERS

- (1) For a full list of Marine Engineers operating within the Port of London, visit: pla.co.uk/port-business-directory#M

MARINE SERVICES

- (1) The PLA's dedicated Marine Services team provide essential support to commercial and leisure users of the river. They ensure channels are clearly marked with lights and buoys and provide a base for boat lifts and repairs. For more information visit: pla.co.uk/marine-services

MARINE SURVEYORS

- (1) For a full list of Marine Surveyors operating within the Port of London, visit: pla.co.uk/port-business-directory#M

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

- (1) For all media enquiries visit: pla.co.uk/media

MOORINGS

- (1) A full list of Visitor Moorings and Marinas on the Tidal Thames is available on our website pla.co.uk/visitormoorings. You must obtain permission from the berth or mooring owner/provider before using any facility. Due to the tidal nature of the river Thames, the majority of marinas have restricted access at certain times of day. You should contact marinas directly to confirm appropriate lock in times.
- (2) The PLA also own and manage some visitor moorings – to make enquiries, please call [+44 \(0\)1474 562421](tel:+44(0)1474562421) or email VisitorMoorings@pla.co.uk
- (3) There are various moorings for cruise ships and superyachts along the Tidal Thames as detailed below:
 - a) London Cruise Terminal (Tilbury)
 - b) Greenwich Ship Tier (Vessels up to 238m length)
 - c) George's Stairs Tier – downriver of Tower Bridge (Vessels up to 110m length)
 - d) Tower Bridge Upper – upriver of Tower Bridge (Vessels up to 158m length)
- (4) For further details on the PLA's Central London Cruise Ship and Super Yacht Moorings including how to contact, visit: pla.co.uk/port-business-directory#C
- (5) For information regarding depths at ship tiers and moorings visit: assets.pla.co.uk/hydrographic-services/navinfo/TIER_DEP.pdf
- (6) Booking enquiries for cruise ships and superyachts should be made via Capital Cruising's website: * capitalcruising.co.uk/london/london-moorings/

NAABSA BERTHS

- (1) The Port of London Authority has published a procedure detailing the safe operation of NAABSA (Not Always Afloat But Safely Aground) Berths in the Port of London.
- (2) The safe operation of berths declared as NAABSA is the berth operator's responsibility. The responsibility shall encompass that the vessel and the ground alongside the berth is safe and fit for purpose. The safe operation of the vessel is the responsibility of the vessel Master.
- (3) Any berths wishing to operate as NAABSA berths will need to declare compliance with the requirements detailed in the NAABSA procedure. To do so, berth operators should complete the NAABSA Berth Compliance Declaration form available on the website and submit to the Harbour Master for review.
- (4) The NAABSA Berth compliance declaration is valid for 12 months from the date indicated by the Harbour Master. The operator must submit a new declaration of compliance 30 days before the expiry date. Failure to renew the NAABSA status may result in delays and possible cancellations to vessel bookings.

- (5) A list of Approved NAABSA Berths in the Port of London as well as further information on NAABSA is available on our website: pla.co.uk/naabsa-berth-procedure-0

NABSO

- (1) Notices to Agents, Berth and Ship Operators (NABSO) provide essential, up to date information and advice to those supporting navigation and commercial shipping in the Port of London. Subjects will include (but not be limited to) advice on PLA procedures and/or requirements and notification of new and updated rules and regulations for navigation.
- (2) To view our current NABSOs visit: pla.co.uk/notices-mariners
- (3) *See also section NOTICES TO MARINERS and NAVIGATION WARNINGS.*

NAVIGATION WARNINGS

- (1) Navigation Warnings serve as a mechanism for the expeditious dissemination of essential, safety critical, navigational information to river and estuary users. The scope of such warnings encompasses various scenarios, including but not limited to:
- a) Displacement of navigational aids from their designated positions.
 - b) Occurrence of severe or significant meteorological phenomena posing hazards to navigation.
 - c) Malfunction or impairment of essential maritime equipment such as lights, fog signals, buoys, and navigational aids situated along primary shipping lanes.
 - d) Presence of maritime obstructions such as wrecks, reefs, rocks, and shoals, which pose potential risks to major shipping routes.
 - e) Emergence of drifting hazards, including derelict vessels.
 - f) Unforeseen alterations or closures of established navigational pathways.
 - g) Anomalies affecting radio navigation systems, maritime safety information services delivered via radio or satellite, or related communication infrastructure.
 - h) Identification of zones necessitating avoidance due to ongoing search and rescue operations or anti-pollution initiatives.
- (2) Navigation Warnings supplement the Notice to Mariners system by providing short term vital information. Navigation Warnings are time critical and will never last more than four days – where a danger continues to exist, it will become a Notice to Mariners with greater detail provided.
- (3) Navigation Warnings are promulgated through emails, a red banner on our website and through our social media channels. To ensure you receive Navigation Warnings, sign up to any of our Notice to Mariners email lists by visiting our website: pla.co.uk/email-subscriptions
- (4) *See also sections NABSO and NOTICES TO MARINERS.*

NON-TIDAL THAMES

- (1) The Environment Agency is responsible for the navigation on the non-tidal river Thames upriver of Teddington Lock, for more information visit: *[gov.uk/guidance/river-thames-locks-and-facilities-for-boaters](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/river-thames-locks-and-facilities-for-boaters)
- (2) For information about inland waterways, visit the Canal & River Trust's website: *canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/canal-and-river-network

NOTICES TO MARINERS

- (1) Notices to Mariners provide essential, up to date information and advice to those supporting navigation and commercial shipping in the Port of London. Subjects will include (but not be limited to) advice on PLA procedures and/or requirements and notification of new and updated rules and regulations for navigation.
- (2) If you are carrying out works on the Tidal Thames, you may be required to have a Notice to Mariners issued. Contact our Harbour Master team via email at harbourmaster@pla.co.uk to discuss if this is applicable to you.
- (3) To view our current Notices to Mariners and subscribe to updates visit: pla.co.uk/notices-mariners
- (4) *See also sections NABSO and NAVIGATION WARNINGS.*

PASSENGER PIERS

- (1) For river services on the Thames visit Transport for London's website visit: *tfl.gov.uk/modes/river/?cid=fs083

PERSONAL WATERCRAFT

- (1) The Thames Code for Personal Watercraft (PWC) highlight all the important information relevant to the use of Personal Watercraft on the Tidal Thames. Visit pla.co.uk/thames-code-personal-water-craft to access the code.
- (2) **Remember: Do not use a PWC upriver of Lower Hope Point or enter restricted areas.**

PILOTAGE

(1) Pilotage is compulsory in the London Pilotage District as detailed in the table below:

| Pilotage is compulsory at all times for the parameters listed against each area. ≥ greater than or equal to LOA as defined in the Pilotage Directions 3(1) f | Compulsory Pilotage (Pilot or PEC) | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | West of the Margaretness Limit | West of Sea Reach No. 1 | East of Sea Reach No. 1 |
| All vessels including Tugs & Tows | ≥ 40m LOA or ≥ 4m draught | ≥ 80m LOA | ≥ 90m LOA |
| | | ≥ 50m LOA and ≥ 5m draught | ≥ 50m LOA and ≥ 6m draught |
| All Vessels including Tugs & Tows which are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passenger Vessels • Specified Vessels • Carrying marine pollutants in bulk | ≥ 40m LOA or ≥ 4m draught | ≥ 50m LOA | ≥ 50m LOA |

(2) **PILOTAGE IN RESTRICTED VISIBILITY**

During periods of Restricted Visibility, Pilotage is compulsory for all vessels between 50m LOA and 90m LOA with an Operating Draught ≥ 4m (≥ 5 metres East of Sea Reach No.1).

(3) **VESSELS EXCEPTED FROM COMPULSORY PILOTAGE**

UK Warships and vessels in the long term service of HM Customs & Excise, Border Force and Trinity House in any part of the London Pilotage District. For more information visit: pla.co.uk/pilotage-directions-port-london

(4) **PILOT BOARDING AREAS**

There are various Pilot Boarding Areas for the Port of London dependant on the size and draught of the vessel. A visual guide of the various Pilot Boarding Areas is available at: pla.co.uk/pilot-stations-boarding-and-landing-areas (This information is also available on charts and in the Admiralty Sailing Directions). For accurate details, include other operational information visit: pla.co.uk/vessel-traffic-services

(5) **PILOT SERVICE IN BAD WEATHER**

The operation of Pilot Boarding Areas may be affected by weather conditions. To view the operational status of Pilot Boarding Areas for the Port of London visit: pisces.pla.co.uk/pilot-stations.html

(5.1) The operational status of Pilot Boarding Areas is colour coded as follows:

| Colour Code | Meaning |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Green | On Station (Operating Normally) |
| Amber | Pilot Station Restricted |
| Red | Off Station (Not in Service) |

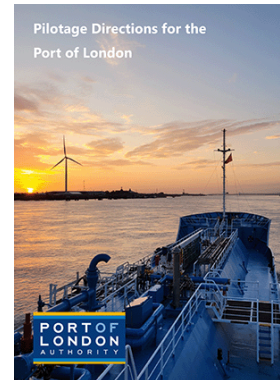
- (5.2) For Larger/Deep Draught Vessels, if the Sunk Pilot Station goes 'Off-Station', there is the potential to utilise the NE Spit Station Via the Long Sand Head and DW Route, with relevant charges for the use of these routes being applied.
- (5.3) In times of adverse weather, and when normal pilot stations are Off Station, there are options should the master of the vessel wish to embark/disembark their pilot at Dover rather than wait, or over-carry them to the next port. Acceptance of these additional charges for pilot boarding outside their normal district must be confirmed by the agent and/or the Master.
- (5.4) In extreme weather circumstances where all stations are off and with Pilot Agreement, a Pilot may overcarry to a Continental port, following the provisions of *Section 19 of the Pilotage Act 1987* and UKMPA legal advice. The agent must ensure they have advised the ships master and confirmed they can suitably accommodate the Pilot on board during the extended voyage. All arrangements to repatriate the pilot must be performed via the Agent.
- (5.5) The use of a Pilot joining at the Continental port during foreseen adverse weather conditions, with Pilot agreement is an option. Again, the Agent must ensure they have advised the ship's master and confirmed they can suitably accommodate the Pilot on board during the extended voyage, and all arrangements to transport the Pilot to the Continental port in question must be organised by the Agent.
- (5.6) All of the aforementioned options are technically outside of a PLA Pilots' Authorisation and are undertaken on a voluntary basis.
- (5.7) For further details refer to the Port of London Authority Charges, *Pilotage Charges*: pla.co.uk/rates-charges
- (6) Contact details for the various Pilot Stations are detailed below:

| Pilot Station | Callsign | VHF | Telephone |
|--|-------------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| <i>North East Spit (Ramsgate)</i> | <i>North-east Spit Pilots</i> | Ch 09 | +44(0)1843 583786 |
| <i>Sunk (Harwich)</i> | <i>Sunk Pilots</i> | Ch 09 | +44(0)1255 243111 |
| <i>Warps and Sea Reach No. 1 (Sheerness)</i> | <i>Sheerness Pilots</i> | Ch 69 | +44(0)1795 561207 |
| <i>Gravesend</i> | <i>Gravesend Pilots</i> | Ch 09 | +44(0)1474 560311 |
| <i>Dover</i> | <i>Dover VTS</i> | Ch 74 | +44(0)1304 206063 |

- (7) For further information about our Pilotage Service and details on how to order a Pilot visit: pla.co.uk/pilotage.
- (8) See also section *PILOTAGE DIRECTIONS*.

PILOTAGE DIRECTIONS

- (1) The Port of London Authority (PLA), as a Competent Harbour Authority within the meaning of the Pilotage Act 1987, and in the exercise of its powers under Section 7 of that Act, gives Pilotage Directions to the Masters of vessels in the London Pilotage District.
- (2) In order to maintain and enhance safety of navigation within the Thames, it is important that Masters and watchkeepers are aware of current Port of London Byelaws, Directions and Notices to Mariners. It is therefore vital that owners/agents ensure that all such relevant information and publications are promptly distributed to vessels.
- (3) It is the duty of the Master of a vessel to which a Pilotage Direction applies to comply with that Direction. Failure by the Master of a vessel to comply with a Direction constitutes an offence, and renders that person liable, on conviction, to a fine up to level 5 on the standard scale. However, it is a defence for the Master of a vessel to prove that he had reasonable grounds for supposing that compliance with the Direction in question would be likely to imperil his vessel or that he had a reasonable excuse for his act or failure to act.
- (4) The Pilotage Directions for the Port of London are available to download from our website: pla.co.uk/pilotage-directions-port-london



PILOTAGE EXEMPTION CERTIFICATES

- (1) For information on how to apply for a Pilotage Exemption Certificate (PEC), visit: pla.co.uk/pilotage-exemption-certificates.

PLA CHARGES

- (1) For a full list of the published rates and charges for services provided by the PLA, including Terms and Conditions for services provided visit: pla.co.uk/rates-charges

NEW

POLLUTION PREVENTION & RESPONSE

- (1) For guidance on pollution prevention, visit: pla.co.uk/pollution-prevention
- (2) In readiness for any pollution incident, the PLA-managed Thames Oil Spill Clearance Association (TOSCA) provides a 24-hour response to oil spills between Tower Bridge and Canvey Island. Response to pollution incidents upriver of Tower Bridge is managed by Marine Services and the Harbour Service. For more information visit: pla.co.uk/tosca

PORT BUSINESS DIRECTORY

- (1) The Port Business Directory includes links to all services, facilities and terminals available in the Port of London. For more information visit: pla.co.uk/port-business-directory

NEW

PORT LIMITS

- (1) The Port of London Authority's Statutory Harbour Authority Area (SHA), spans the entirety of the Tidal river Thames, from the Teddington Obelisk on the Surrey bank just downriver from Teddington Lock, to the North Sea as pictured below.
- (2) This is described as in Schedule 1 of the Port of London Act 1968 (as amended) but in general terms includes the Tidal Thames from Teddington, encompassing both banks up to mean high water springs, eastward to Foulness Point in the north and Warden Point in the south. In the estuary the limits extend from Foulness point to Gunfleet Old Lighthouse, thence to a position 3 miles north of Margate, and back to Warden Point. The port limits exclude the river Medway, the Southend Foreshore and certain other creeks and rivers.
- (3) The London Pilotage District extends beyond the SHA limits as shown on our website: pla.co.uk/pilot-stations-boarding-and-landing-areas
- (4) The London VTS area extends beyond the SHA limits as shown on our website: pla.co.uk/vessel-traffic-services

NEW

PORT OF TILBURY

- (1) Forth Ports Port of Tilbury & Tilbury 2 is another major port on the river Thames. It is also the largest multi-modal port in the Southeast. Vessels arriving at the Port of Tilbury & Tilbury 2 are advised that Forth Ports have their own Marine Guidelines and Vessel information which is available to download from their website:
[*forthports.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/POTLL-PMSC-OP-09-06-Ports-of-Tilbury-and-Tilbury-2-Marine-Guidelines-and-Port-Information.pdf](https://forthports.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/POTLL-PMSC-OP-09-06-Ports-of-Tilbury-and-Tilbury-2-Marine-Guidelines-and-Port-Information.pdf)
- (2) The dimensions for the Lock at the entrance to the Port of Tilbury are detailed below:

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Length of Lock | 304.8 m (1,000 ft) |
| Width at Impounded Level | 33.5 m (110 ft) |
| Depth on outer sill below chart datum | 7.3 m (23.85 ft) |
- (3) The period during which the Tilbury lock system can be operated is dependent on three factors:
 - a) The height of water above the lock sills.
 - b) The construction of the lock pierheads.
 - c) Depth of water in lock approach.
- (4) The variation between Neap and Spring tides, together with abnormal tidal conditions caused by strong winds and also limitations imposed by siltation in the approach channels and lock entrances, do not permit any definite times relative to each H.W. to be laid down. For this reason, the following information can only be of a general nature and is intended to assist mariners approaching the Port of Tilbury to obtain some indication of the time they should arrive at Gravesend in order to dock on a particular tide.

- (5) Sill depths and lock dimensions are shown above. To find the level of water over the sill at any time, add the sill depth below chart datum to the height of the tide at the time required.
- (6) The height of tide can be estimated by using tables of predicted hourly heights. For our online Tide Prediction Tool visit: tidepredictions.pla.co.uk/
- (7) More precise information can be obtained from the Port of Tilbury by telephone [\(+44\) \(0\)1375 852456](tel:+44201375852456) or via email marine.department@potll.com

RECREATIONAL USERS

- (1) The leisure boating area of our website includes all the necessary information to safely navigate the Tidal Thames. For more information visit pla.co.uk/leisure-boating
- (2) We have a separate dedicated website for our partnership programme that supports the development of Watersports on the Tidal Thames and inland waterways of London, Kent and Essex. For more information visit: activethames.co.uk/
- (3) We have produced a **Recreational Users Guide** which can be downloaded from: pla.co.uk/recreational-users-guide. To order a large scale hard copy, printed on waterproof paper email us at Marine.Compliance@pla.co.uk or Corporate.Affairs@pla.co.uk
- (4) For a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) regarding recreational river use, visit pla.co.uk/contact-us#FAQs.

NEW

REPORTING ETA/ETD

- (1) Reporting vessels are required to report their movements to London VTS as indicated below:
 - (1.1) **INWARDS (All Ships)**
 - a) 24 hours before arrival; pass ETA and draught to Agents/Owners for onward transmission to the Port Control Centre (PCC) at Gravesend. Where ships from near ports cannot give the above notice, an ETA should be passed within one hour of departure from the last port of call. Notifications should be sent using the port's on-line booking service (PISCES).
 - b) In addition, Agents /Owners of vessels bound for the Port of Tilbury should contact the Marine Co-ordinator, telephone (01375) 852456.
 - c) On passing the first Waypoint; pass all information not previously passed through agent and pertinent to the vessel's arrival in the Port by VHF to PCC. Pass compliancy report in accordance with GD 13 and report security level.
 - d) On passing each Waypoint; report by VHF to PCC for confirmation of onward clearance.
 - e) On passing Sunk Head Tower Buoy or if using the Fisherman's Gat, on passing the London Arrival/Departure arc or the North East Spit Buoy INWARD - declare an ETA for Knock John No 1 buoy. They are to report again when passing Black Deep No 5 Buoy, or if using the Fisherman's Gat the Outer Fisherman's Buoy giving an updated ETA for Knock John No 1 Buoy.

(1.2) **INWARDS (Ships requiring Pilots)**

- a) A request for a pilot, including ETA at the pilot station should be passed to the PCC (Shipcon), with the 24 hours' notice of arrival.
- b) A CONFIRMED order for a pilot must be given at least 8 hours before arrival at the Sunk Pilot Station or 6 hours before arrival at the NE Spit or Warp pilot station.

(1.3) **OUTWARDS or SHIFTING BERTH (All Ships)**

- a) 24 hours before proposed movement in the river; pass ETD and draught to Agents/Owners for onward transmission to the PCC. Notifications should be sent using the port's on-line booking service (PISCES).
- b) Immediately prior to commencement of movement in the river; pass all information pertinent to the vessel's movement in the river by VHF to PCC and request permission to proceed.
- c) On passing each Waypoint; report by VHF to PCC for confirmation of onward clearance.
- d) On passing Sea Reach No 4 Buoy or, if departing the Medway ports, on passing the wreck of the Richard Montgomery, OUTWARD- declare the channels beyond Sea Reach No 1 buoy which they intend to use for navigation and, if planning to use the Princes Channel, make a specific declaration if planning to use the Princes Channel DW route.
- e) On passing Sea Reach No 1 buoy or the Medway buoy, and planning to use the Knock John Channel OUTWARD- report ETA for Knock John No 4 buoy.

(1.4) **OUTWARDS or SHIFTING BERTH (Ships requiring Pilots)**

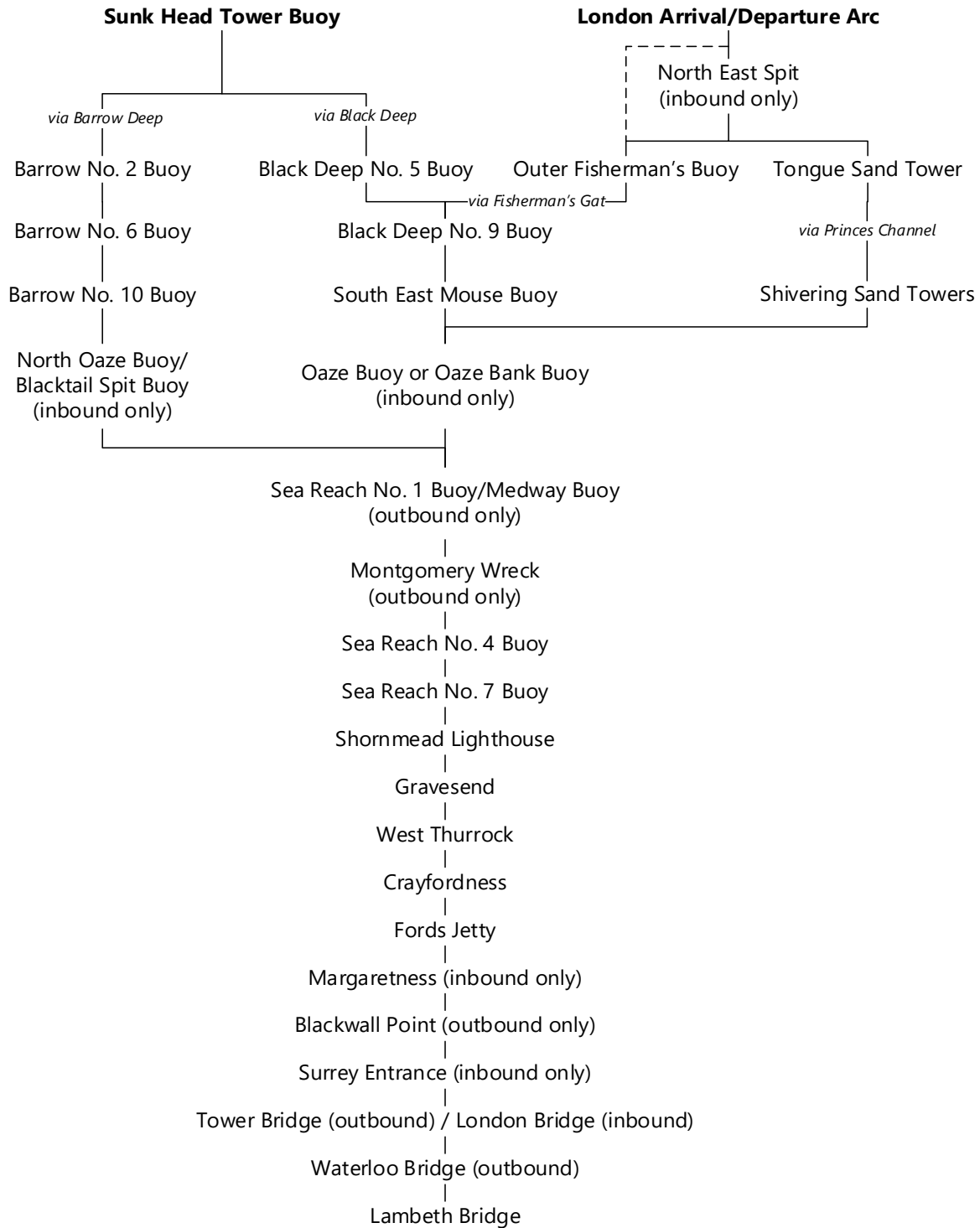
- a) A request for a pilot should be passed to the PCC with the 24 hours' notice of departure is given.
- b) A CONFIRMED order for a pilot must be given to PCC at least 6 hours before departure or movement (unless the services of a River Pilot only is required as far as Gravesend or Sea Reach 1 when 4 hours' notice is required).

(2) Further information is also available in our website: pla.co.uk/vessel-traffic-services

(3) See also section *LONDON VTS and REPORTING POINTS*.

REPORTING POINTS

- Below is a diagram depicting all reporting points for the Port of London. These reporting points are also detailed on nautical charts and publications.
- See also section *REPORTING ETA/ETD* and *REPORTING VESSELS*.



For vessels using the inshore passages in the estuary:



REPORTING VESSELS

- (1) Vessels of more than 40 metres in Length Overall, Commercial Vessels of gross tonnage of more than 50 tonnes which ordinarily also navigate outside the Thames; and tugs engaged in towing, or about to tow one or more vessels are required to report their movements to London VTS on the relevant VHF channel for the area. For full details of the requirements for reporting vessel movements in the Thames refer to our General Directions (GD7): pla.co.uk/general-directions-navigation-port-london

RICHMOND LOCK & WEIR

- (1) The Port of London Authority owns and operates Richmond Lock and Weir, which is also the base for the upper Thames harbour service patrols between Putney and Teddington Lock. For more information about Richmond Lock & Weir, including charges for using the lock, visit: pla.co.uk/richmond-lock-weir
- (2) For current information please contact the Lock Foreman on [+44 \(0\)208 940 0634](tel:+442089400634)
- (3) See also section *EXCLUSION ZONES*, 1.3 Richmond Lock & Weir for information about exclusion zones in this area.

RIVER CRUISES

- (1) For a list of the various River Cruise operators and other passenger vessel operators, visit: pla.co.uk/port-business-directory#R

RIVER WORKS

- (1) Under Section 66 of the Port of London Act, a River Works Licence is required for any works in the River Thames, riverward of the mean high-water springs mark and regardless of ownership of the riverbed, including any works under the river or overhanging the river. This process ensures that all developments in the river are assessed for their potential effect on safety of navigation and the environment. For more information visit: pla.co.uk/licensing
- (2) For queries regarding River Works Licensing contact the Licensing team: lic.app@pla.co.uk

SAFETY

- (1) Through the Port of London Act 1968 (as amended), the Port of London Authority has the primary responsibility of maintaining the safety of navigation and supporting the safety of vessels, the general public and all users of 95 miles of the Tidal Thames.
- (2) It should be noted that, vessel operators are required to have their own Safety Management System. Terminals, Berths and Marinas are required to comply with Port Marine Safety Code.

- (3) The PLA's management of navigational safety is in full compliance of standards set in the Port Marine Safety Code. Our Navigational Safety Policy is available at: pla.co.uk/navigational-safety-policy.
- (4) For any Safety related queries, contact us via email at Marine.Compliance@pla.co.uk or by phone [\(+44\) \(0\)1474 562200](tel:+44201474562200)

SEWAGE DISCHARGE

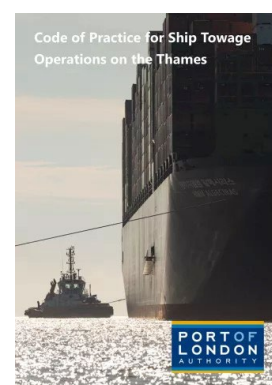
- (1) Discharge of untreated sewage is prohibited. Vessels should adhere to UK and International regulations for the discharge of sewage, including the Thames Byelaws (Byelaw 49), and PLA General Directions (GD10). Vessels should also adhere to any restrictions/requirements of the berth owner/operator.
- (2) PLA Byelaw 49 came into force on 1 January 2015. The Byelaw prevents the discharge of sewage into the Thames from specified vessels, consistent with the continuing improvement of the Thames environment, particularly with Thames Water's project to stop the discharge of untreated sewage into the river, and brings the Thames into line with a number of other UK harbours and inland waterways. For further information visit: pla.co.uk/byelaw-49-prohibition-discharge-sewage-thames

SHIP AGENTS

- (1) For a full list of Ship Agents and Brokers operating on the Thames visit: pla.co.uk/port-business-directory#S
- (2) For cruise ship agents, visit: pla.co.uk/port-business-directory#P

NEW SHIP TOWAGE OPERATIONS

- (1) The PLA has produced a Code of Practice for Ship Towage Operations on the Thames, aimed to provide guidance for Masters, Pilots and tug crews involved or likely to be involved in ship towage operations on the tidal Thames. Ships' agents are also recommended to make themselves familiar with the content of the Code, and in particular the application of Part Two - the Guidelines for the Utilisation of Ship Towage Tugs on the Thames. For more information visit: pla.co.uk/code-practice-ship-towage-operations-thames
- (2) All Ship Towage Tugs operating in the Port of London must undergo a safety and compliance inspection by the Harbour Master in order to be licensed for ship towage operations under the Port of London Vessel Licensing Byelaws 2014.
- (3) A full list of all Ship Towage Tugs (including operational information) which are licensed to operate in the Port of London is available on our website: pla.co.uk/ship-towage-tugs



- (4) The towage operators contact details are available on our website: pla.co.uk/port-business-directory#T

SPEED LIMITS

- (1) Speed limits are imposed on various sections of the Tidal Thames and other areas as detailed below:

| Speed Limit | Location | Exceptions |
|-------------|---|---|
| 8 knots | Tidal Thames above Wandsworth Bridge | <p>The following vessels are permitted to exceed the 8-knot speed limit for operational or training purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) search and rescue b) fire service c) law enforcement d) Public or recreational safety e) Security or police purposes f) Harbour Master vessels <p>Only if the observance of this limit would be likely to hinder that use of the vessel.</p> <p>Other vessels, such as vessels engaged in escorting a rowing boat in training or other recreational activities must be approved by a Harbour Master.</p> |
| | Deptford Creek | |
| | Bow Creek (River Lea) | |
| | Barking Creek (River Roding) | |
| | Dartford Creek (River Darent) | |
| | Holehaven Creek (Canvey Island) | |
| | Vange Creek (Canvey Island) | |
| | Pitsea Creek (Canvey Island) | |
| | Leigh Creek (Canvey Island) | |
| | Hadleigh Ray (Canvey Island) | |
| | Benfleet Creek (Canvey Island) | |
| | Easthaven Creek (Canvey Island) | |
| | Yantlet Creek | |
| 12 knots | Tidal Thames from Margaretness Limit to Wandsworth Bridge | <p>If the vessel falls within the exceptions described under the 8-knot speed limit exceptions.</p> <p>Where the Harbour Master has issued a certificate of compliance, which allows the vessel, subject to continued compliance with the International Collision Regulations (as modified by these byelaws), to navigate up to but not exceeding a speed of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) 25 knots through, on or over the water in the area of the Thames between Wandsworth Bridge and Lambeth Bridge; and ii) 30 knots through, on or over the water in the area of the Thames between St Saviour's Dock and the Margaretness limit. |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | | <p>The master of a power-driven vessel operating under a valid certificate of compliance referred to above, must ensure that it does not exceed a speed of 15 knots through, on or over the water when navigating through the Thames Barrier in the designated No Anchoring Area, provided that this does not apply if the vessel falls within the exceptions described under the 8 knot speed limit exceptions.</p> <p>Other vessels, such as vessels engaged in escorting a rowing boat in training or other recreational activities must be approved by a Harbour Master.</p> |
|--|--|---|

- (2) For further details on Speed Limits read the Thames Byelaws which are available on our website: pla.co.uk/port-of-london-thames-byelaws
- (3) See also sections on *CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE* and *WASH AND DRAW-OFF*.

NEW

SPEED REDUCTIONS

- (1) When a reduction on vessel traffic speed is required, the term Speed Reduction or “Proceed at Slow Speed” is used by London VTS in appropriate broadcasts.
- (2) As a guide, requests for reduction in speed are appropriate for activities such as diving, salvage, heavy lifting, working on the waterline from scaffolding or pontoon/small boat, and bunkering operations. They may also be appropriate where the mooring facilities are limited e. g. when the vessel overhangs the berth or when a vessel is about to take the ground at a NAABSA (Not always Afloat but Safely Aground) berth.
- (3) A request for a reduction in speed of passing traffic should not be sought as an alternative to good seamanship such as the proper tending of lines and moorings in a tideway.
- (4) When London VTS has agreed to broadcast a reduction in speed:
 - i) The activity requiring the speed reduction will be identified in the broadcast, from which Mariners should judge the speed appropriate to the circumstances.
 - ii) The person responsible for the request must ensure that the vessel or installation concerned is displaying the international code flags “Romeo Yankee” by day and illuminated rigid replica by night. Failure to do so will result in the termination of the broadcast.
 - iii) London VTS should be informed as soon as there is no longer the requirement for a speed reduction and the Romeo Yankee signal removed. The speed reduction broadcast by London VTS will also be terminated.



‘Romeo’



‘Yankee’

TERMINALS DIRECTORY

- (1) For a full list of all Terminals on the Tidal Thames visit: pla.co.uk/berths-terminals

THAMES AIS

- (1) Thames AIS is a key navigational safety tool to improve the situational awareness of vessels navigating on the Tidal Thames and to provide additional safety critical information to London VTS.
- (2) The system was revised in 2023 after a consultation resulted in a new approach and subsequent revision of the Thames AIS Technical Requirements Specification which serves as an appendix to Thames Byelaw 12 – Thames AIS Carriage Requirements.
- (3) For full details on Thames AIS visit our website: pla.co.uk/vessel-traffic-services#ais

THAMES BARRIER CONTROL ZONE

- (1) The Thames Barrier is one of the largest movable flood barriers in the world. The Environment Agency runs and maintains the Thames Barrier as well as London's other flood defences.
- (2) 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 the General Directions (GD17).
- (3) 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):
 - a) **Spans B to G** are open to navigation subject to the restrictions in the General Directions.
 - b) **Spans C, D, E and F** are 61m wide with a depth of 5.8m below Chart Datum.
 - c) **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.
 - d) **Spans A, H, J and K** are permanently closed to navigation.
- (4) 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.

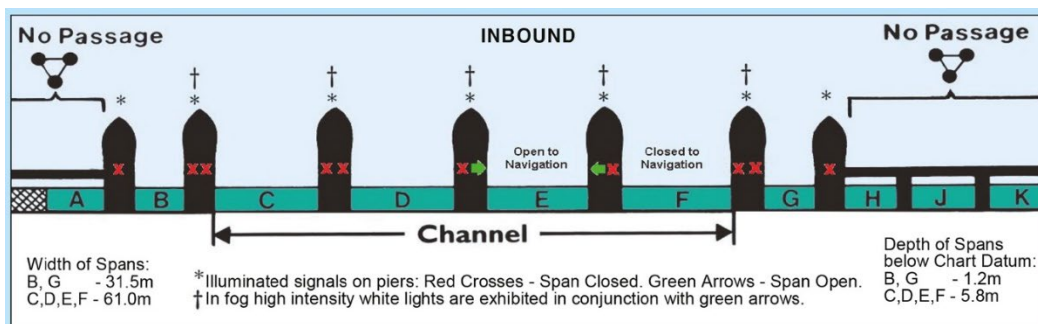


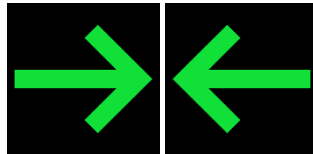
Figure 3: Diagram of Thames Barrier showing navigational spans and signage

(5) **NAVIGATION LIGHT SIGNALS AND SHAPES**

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. The signals displayed depending on the navigational status are as follows:

(5.1) **SPANS OPEN TO NAVIGATION**

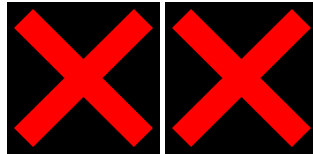
Green Arrows will be exhibited from the ends of piers either side of the span(s) open to navigation. The arrows point inwards towards the span open to navigation from a particular direction.



Green Arrows - Span Open

(5.2) **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.

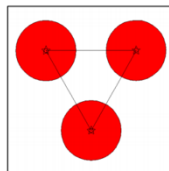


Red Crosses - Span Closed

(5.3) **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:

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



Three red discs/lights – Span Permanently Closed

(5.4) **FOG LIGHTS**

High intensity fixed white lights are situated at the ends of piers 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 and are operated in conjunction with 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.

(6) **BARRIER CLOSURES**

The Thames Barrier will be closed under the following circumstances:

- a) **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.
- b) **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.
- c) **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.

- (6.1) **Note:** 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.

(7) **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.

- (7.1) **Note:** 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.

THAMES BYELAWS

- (1) The Port of London Authority in exercise of its powers under sections 162, 167 and 168 of the Port of London Act 1968 makes the Thames Byelaws, also known as the Port of London Thames Byelaws 2012. The byelaws relate to the management and regulation of marine operations and navigation in the Port of London.
- (2) Any person navigating on the Tidal Thames is required to follow these Byelaws. Failure to comply with these regulations is a criminal offence and may result in enforcement. To read the Thames Byelaws, visit our website: pla.co.uk/port-of-london-thames-byelaws.

THAMES GREEN SCHEME

- (1) The Thames Green Scheme is an independent environmental performance indicator for UK inland waterways commercial and services operators to demonstrate their environmental performance for elements including on air quality, carbon, energy, water quality, litter, and waste. Read more about the green scheme on our website: pla.co.uk/thames-green-scheme

THAMES VISION 2050

- (1) Launched in 2022, the Thames Vision 2050 is the development strategy for the Tidal Thames running from Teddington Lock, through the heart of London out to the commercial port and estuary. The Vision is built around three interconnected themes, centred on the role the river plays for people and the environment. For more information about the project, visit: pla.co.uk/thames-vision-2050

TIDES & TIDAL INFORMATION

- (1) The Thames from the Teddington Lock to the North Sea is a tidal river. Our Hydrographic department have produced a collection of tidal information which is available on our website: pla.co.uk/tidal-information
- (2) Information on our website includes:
 - a) Live tides
 - b) Tide Prediction Tool
 - c) Tide tables (readable and downloadable)
 - d) Tide Differences
 - e) Definitions and notes
- (3) For any queries, please contact PLA Hydrographic Service at: pla.co.uk/hydrography or call [+44 \(0\)1474 562207](tel:+44201474562207)

TIDEWAY CODE

- (1) Navigating any type of small recreational vessel on the Tidal Thames, or Thames Tideway as it is also known, requires knowledge of the river and how it operates. The Tideway is by far the busiest inland waterway in the UK which, coupled with a fast-flowing tide and many bridges, piers and moorings, creates a challenging waterway on which to navigate.



- (2) The Tideway Code – aimed at both rowers and paddlers – has been produced by the Port of London Authority (PLA), Thames Regional Rowing Council (TRRC) and Paddle UK to advise both new and existing users who plan to navigate anywhere along the Tidal Thames between Teddington Lock and the Sea. You can download a digital copy of The Tideway Code at: pla.co.uk/tideway-code.

NEW

VESSEL IMMOBILISATION

- (1) It remains for the Master to decide it is safe to immobilise the vessel, taking account the berth or anchorage, and all parameters of wind and tide both existing and forecast for the period of immobilisation. The Master should adhere to any restrictions/instructions from the berth owner/operator.
- (2) Please inform London VTS 30 minutes prior to, and on completion of immobilisation, on the appropriate VHF channel so that an overview of the situation within port limits is maintained.

VESSEL LICENSING

- (1) The Port of London Authority, through powers granted to it by the Port of London Act 1968 (as amended) is responsible for the licensing of inland waterways vessels operating commercially on the Tidal Thames. Vessels operating 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, another navigation authority or local authority.
- (2) For information about Vessel Licensing, including how to apply for a commercial vessel licence visit: pla.co.uk/vessel-licensing-and-surveys#licensing. For our Vessel Licensing Byelaws visit: pla.co.uk/port-of-london-vessel-licensing-byelaws.
- (3) For a list of Frequently Asked Questions about Vessel Licensing visit our website: pla.co.uk/vessel-licensing-and-surveys#licensing

VHF CARRIAGE REQUIREMENTS

- (1) The following vessels must have an operational VHF radio readily available for communication with London VTS at all times when Underway or at anchor in the Thames:
 - a) Commercial Vessels of more than 7.0 metres in Length Overall; and
 - b) Pleasure Vessels of 13.7 metres or more in Length Overall, except:
 - i. narrow boats more than 13.7 metres in Length Overall navigating between Brentford and Teddington; and
 - ii. Vessels under oars.
- (2) Other exceptions apply, for more details refer to the General Directions (GD12): pla.co.uk/general-directions-navigation-port-london

WASH AND DRAW-OFF

- (1) As the master of a power-driven vessel on the River Thames, you bear a responsibility for the safety of passengers, crew, fellow river users, and the environment. The disturbance caused by your vessel moving through the water, known as "wash," and the interaction between vessels, known as "draw-off," can pose significant dangers.
- (2) **Vessel Wash:** Wash, essentially the waves produced by a vessel displacing water, varies in size and intensity based on vessel size, speed, hull shape, and water conditions.
- (3) **Draw-Off (Vessel Interaction):** Draw-off occurs as a result of a single vessel in motion passing moored vessels in close proximity, resulting in hydrodynamic forces that can pull nearby vessels from their moorings. There is an increased risk of draw-off where berths lie close to the channel edge.
- (4) **Dangers Include:**
 - a) Risk to houseboat occupants, including falling items.
 - b) Damage to smaller vessels, which may capsize.
 - c) Hazards to divers due to turbulence.
 - d) Environmental harm from disturbed ecosystems.
 - e) Disruptions in navigation and potential shoreline damage.
 - f) Noise pollution affecting marine life.
 - g) Erosion of coastal areas.
- (5) The Port of London Authority (PLA) receives numerous incident reports annually, with a substantial portion being wash complaints in specific areas. Legal consequences can include fines, and reporting offenses is encouraged to improve safety. Various factors influence vessel wash, emphasising the need for vigilance and compliance with regulations to ensure safety and protect the environment.
- (6) To report a Wash or Draw-off incident, visit our website: pla.co.uk/near-miss-and-safety-observations. Houseboat residents should submit wash or draw-off reports via the following online form with as much information as possible: pla.co.uk/houseboat-wash-reports

WASTE DISPOSAL

- (1) For information regarding Waste Disposal in the Tidal Thames area, visit: pla.co.uk/waste-management-plan
- (2) For a list of Waste Disposal providers, visit: pla.co.uk/port-business-directory#W

WATER SAFETY

- (1) We are committed to reducing the number of people who drown in the Tidal Thames, either accidentally or intentionally.
- (2) As a founder member of the Tidal Thames Water Safety Forum (TTWSF), we work alongside HM Coastguard, RNLI, London Fire Brigade, Metropolitan Police (Marine Policing Unit), London Ambulance Service, City of London Corporation, Transport for London and City of London Police.
- (3) Together we are working to make the river a safe place for all users, including dog walkers and joggers on the foreshore, who may become stranded due to the river's fast-moving tides, and people visiting riverside pubs and restaurants.
- (4) For more information on Water Safety visit: pla.co.uk/watersafety

NEW

WEIGHTED HEAVING LINES

- (1) Masters and crews of vessels visiting the Thames are required to use properly constructed heaving lines for all mooring and towing operations. **The use of 'weighted' heaving lines is both prohibited and extremely dangerous.** These may cause serious injury or a fatality to those on the receiving end, either ashore or onboard a tug or mooring boat.
- (2) The MCA has issued a policy on reporting and management of inappropriately weighted heaving lines. The Port of London Authority reports all instances of dangerously weighted heaving lines to the MCA. This may result in enforcement action being taken against the vessel.
- (3) Masters of vessels and Agents are reminded that heaving lines with inappropriate weighting, such as pieces of metal, are **not to be used under any circumstances.** This dangerous practice is causing unacceptable risk to tug crews and shore mooring teams, and appropriate enforcement action will be taken as necessary.
- (4) Shore mooring teams and tug crews have instructions to cut off weighted "monkeys' fists" or any other added weights from heaving lines, where used. The weighted "fist" or added weight will be retained as evidence in the event of proceedings being taken against the vessel and/or individuals involved.
- (5) The use of messenger rope is also strongly discouraged as this type of rope is significantly heavier than standard heaving line rope (<12mm diameter).

NEW

WORKS OVERSIDE

- (1) Vessels wishing to undertake maintenance works outside (including painting) are required to notify London VTS 30 minutes prior to works commencing, and again on completion of works once all persons are back onboard.
- (2) Works outside must be undertaken in daylight hours only and must be thoroughly risk assessed prior to commencement, with all due care and consideration given to the location, weather conditions, access and environmental impacts.
- (3) The Master must ensure that permission from the berth operator is in place. For maintenance at anchorage, permission from the Harbour Master must be obtained.

FIGURES

Figure 1: Extract from PLA Chart 316 showing notes of bridge clearance heights at main navigational span 8

Figure 2: Extract from PLA Chart 316 showing bridge clearance height at main navigational span of Westminster Bridge 9

Figure 3: Diagram of Thames Barrier showing navigational spans and signage 40

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