



KING'S HARBOUR MASTER CLYDE

DIRECTION No 07/22

TOWAGE OPERATIONS IN RESTRICTED VISIBILITY

1. These procedures apply to all towage operations in the port being conducted in restricted visibility. King's Harbour Master (KHM) will decide if such operations are to be conducted; his decision will be final.
2. Restricted visibility is all circumstances where visibility is, or is expected to, reduce to a distance where the tugs normal ability to perform may be impaired. This may be due to fog, mist, falling snow, heavy rainstorms, sleet or any other similar causes.
3. In circumstances where restricted visibility exists, or is likely to exist, the Master/Pilot and Tug Master shall as part of the Passage Plan and Risk Assessment process agree how the operation will be conducted, what dangers are associated with towing in restricted visibility and what risk reduction measures should be applied. When completing this assessment, the following should be considered:
 - a. Type of tug, propulsion method, towing from winch or hook and location of winch/hook.
 - b. Proposed method of towing.
 - c. Operational status of navigational aids and equipment.
 - d. Minimum speed to maintain steerage of vessel to be assisted.
 - e. Movement of other vessels in area.
 - f. Navigational characteristics of the particular area of the port including the use of information from Vessel Traffic Services (VTS).
 - g. Contingency plan should visibility deteriorate after the tow has commenced and/or if the tug has to disengage at any stage of the operation.
4. Minimum visibility for all towage operations is 400m or the assisted vessels length if greater, and such that the Master/Pilot can see the tug and the Tug Master can see the towed vessel bridge.
5. Should visibility fall below the minimum once a towage operation has commenced the Pilot shall immediately reduce speed to a minimum safe speed and if safe to do so take all way off the vessel. Following discussion with the Tug Master the contingency plan discussed and agreed at the planning stage will be implemented. This could include one or more of the following:
 - a. With all way off the vessel let go the tugs and anchor the vessel.
 - b. With all way off if required use the tugs to turn the vessel, let go the tugs and the vessel proceeds either to an anchorage or to the outer Clyde Estuary.
 - c. With all way off the vessel allow under the Pilot's instructions, the tugs to manoeuvre the vessel. This may include using tugs to maintain the vessels position at a safe location in the river/loch.

6. The agreed course of action should be fully communicated to KHM Harbour Control.
7. All towage operations in restricted visibility should be conducted with the assisted vessel maintaining minimum speed. An appropriate maximum speed of 6 knots should be considered. If a vessel's minimum speed is higher than 6 knots this will be a major factor to consider in the planning of the operation.
8. The Tug Master should immediately inform the Pilot/Master of any concerns that he may have as to the safety of his tug and crew. The Pilot and Tug Master should take immediate action to ensure the safety of both the tug and assisted vessel, if necessary, they should abort the operation as soon as it is safe to do so.
9. Any tug proceeding to a towage task should report reduced visibility to KHM Harbour Control.
10. This General Direction will be reviewed by 10 Jan 23.

Saturday 10 Sep 2022

Ian White
King's Harbour Master
Clyde Dockyard Port