

GUIDE TO GOOD PRACTICE FOR ENSURING NAVIGATION SAFETY DURING AGGREGATE DREDGING OPERATIONS

It is recognised by marine aggregate operators that a consistent approach is necessary to manage risks and minimise the potential impact on the navigation of other sea users. Such an approach has been endorsed by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and Trinity House Lighthouse Service (THLS).

Members of the British Marine Aggregate Producers Association (BMAPA) have agreed with the MCA and THLS that all their recommendations and requirements, in terms of regional navigational safety, will be complied with and, in addition, that individual operators will comply with any such navigational measures that are deemed necessary by the Agency on a site specific licence basis.

1. Common (C) Measures to Ensure Navigation Safety

This section presents the standard common measures agreed when undertaking marine aggregate dredging operations in UK waters.

The measures will cover BMAPA members' operations in all licensed dredging areas in UK waters.

Marine aggregate dredging operators shall ensure that:

General Lighthouse Authority (GLA)

- C1. Prior to any dredging taking place, the Operator is to examine nautical charts and publications and notify THLS or applicable GLA if any navigational marks are present in the area of operation. The Operators shall be liable for any expenses arising from damage to or movement of such marks;
- C2. THLS or the applicable GLA must be consulted regarding any marking requirements for the operation and any potential impact on existing aids to navigation in the licensed area;

Equipment

- C3. All dredging vessels are equipped to comply with international regulations concerning the carriage of navigation equipment as contained in Chapter 5 of the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention (as amended);

Personnel

- C4. Bridge manning will comply with the Safe Manning Document and/or other requirements imposed by flag state at all times;
- C5. A duty engineer is available during dredging operations (though not necessarily in the engine room);

International Safety Management (ISM) Code

C6. The requirements of the ISM Code, and particularly any requirements for training, crew familiarisation and induction, are adhered to;

Communications

C7. The Operator is to ensure that the local mariners' and fishermen's organisations are notified before operations commence;

C8. All dredging vessels will communicate directly with the local Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) where appropriate using approved VHF means (e.g. Voice over Radio, Digital Selective Calling (DSC), Automatic Identification System (AIS) etc);

C9. Dredging vessels shall broadcast their intentions one hour before arrival in the permitted dredging area, in English. Dredging vessels should broadcast a general warning on Channel 16, then change to another inter-ship channel to provide full details, if required;

International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972, as amended (COLREGS)

C10. Vessels are to comply with the COLREGS at all times, particularly with respect to the display of lights, shapes and signals;

C11. In a potential collision situation, the Master remains responsible for deciding what action to take - for example, when to lift dredge pipe and prepare to take avoiding action;

C12. If white flares are used, the dredging vessel is to inform the local VTS, Maritime Rescue Service (MRS), Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) or the appropriate authority immediately after use;

C13. Deck or working lights are not to interfere with keeping a proper lookout;

Mandatory Reporting

C14. Dredging vessels shall comply with the appropriate mandatory reporting scheme when en route to and from the licensed dredging area;

Liaison with the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO)

C15. Details of the dredging activity should be notified to the UKHO to permit the promulgation of Maritime Safety Information and updating of nautical charts and publications;

- C16. Detailed data to enable the identification of underwater obstructions is sought from UKHO, and suitable clearance zones are set at appropriate ranges around identified underwater hazards and avoidance monitored;

Passage Planning

- C17. Passage plans are developed for all voyages and comply with the SOLAS Convention requirements;

Emergencies

- C18. In the event of power failure or dredge gear failure vessels are to report to the local VTS where appropriate. It is for the Master to decide on an appropriate course of action unless otherwise directed by the Secretary of State's Representative for Maritime Salvage and Intervention (SoSRep);
- C19. If, in the opinion of the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) in consultation with the MCA, THLS and UKHO, the assistance of a Government department, including the broadcast of navigational warnings, is required in connection with the works or to deal with any emergency arising from the failure to mark and light the works as required by a marine licence, or to maintain the works in good order or from the drifting or wreck of the works, the owner of the works shall be liable for any expenses incurred in securing such assistance.

2. Enhanced (E) Measures to Ensure Navigation Safety

In areas where there is deemed to be a higher navigational risk, measures in addition to those set out above may also be necessary. These shall be known as “enhanced measures” and will be applied on a site specific basis via marine licence conditions.

Examples of such enhanced measures are:

- E1. For dredging operations in a traffic lane of an International Maritime Organization approved Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) all vessels are to dredge parallel to and in the general direction of traffic flow in the lane.
- E2. A 500 metre ‘buffer zone’ is to be maintained in the separation zone adjacent to the edge of the traffic lane of any TSS in which the dredger will only run in the general direction of traffic flow in the adjacent lane.
- E3. The minimum working limit of horizontal visibility within the traffic lane is to be not less than one (1) nautical mile.
- E4. Dredging vessels not to wait or anchor in the traffic lanes. If necessary, e.g. for repairs, dredgers should enter the separation zone or the inshore traffic zone. Vessels are to inform VTS/MRS/MRCC if waiting for any reason.
- E5. When a new dredging area is to overlap designated anchorages a mutually agreed communication policy may be required between the dredging company and the local port/harbour authority.
- E6. Where a new dredging area is to be proximate to a wind farm, operational or under construction, a mutually agreed communication policy may be required between the dredging company and the wind farm operator.
- E7. Where a newly designated anchorage or wind farm development overlaps with or is proximate to an existing dredging area, the dredging company will be expected to cooperate to reasonable requests from the local port/harbour authority or wind farm operator to ensure that the navigation safety impact of any new development is minimised.

Where appropriate, E5 E6 and E7 may take the form of a written operational protocol.