

Port of Southampton

Guidance to Berth Operators

INTRODUCTION

The Port of Southampton offers the following guidance to berth operators, highlighting the responsibilities and obligations placed upon them by national legislation, the Port Marine Safety Code, and local and national Codes of Practice. It is also important for berth operators to recognise and oversee those aspects of berth operation, which they have devolved or delegated to ships' agents, since liability remains with the berth operator in cases of non-compliance.

Port Marine Safety Code

The Code is applicable both to statutory harbour authorities and to other marine facilities which may not have statutory powers and duties. These are collectively referred to throughout the Code as 'organisations' and includes marine berths, terminals or jetties.

Conservancy Duty. Berth operators have a duty to conserve their berth so that it is fit for use and a duty of reasonable care to see that it is in a fit condition for a vessel to utilise it safely. Berth Operators should provide users with adequate information about conditions on the berth.

Notification of Depths on Berths

Whilst ABP carries out general hydrographic surveys and publishes depths in the channels and fairways, depths alongside and the approaches to berths are the responsibilities of the berth operator concerned. To ensure that up-to-date information is held by the Harbour Authority, and that vessels can be programmed safely, berth operators should arrange to have periodic surveys carried out and the results passed directly to ABP's Port Hydrographer.

Drying or NAABSA Berths

If an operator wishes to nominate their berth as a drying berth for operations they are to seek the Harbour Master's permission.

Safe operation of a berth that is declared as NAABSA (Not Always Afloat, But Safely Aground) is the responsibility of the berth operator. This responsibility includes ensuring that when inviting a vessel to take the ground alongside the berth, that it is safe and fit for the purpose:

- NAABSA berths are to be inspected regularly to ensure there are no obstructions or changes to the bed level that could damage the vessel;
- The berths are kept as reasonably flat as possible and are not known to have any obstructions on them, meaning that vessels may be able to lie safely on the soft mud/silt bottom;
- The decision as to whether it is safe for a vessel to lay on the berth is the responsibility of the vessel's master but to help them make that decision, the following advice should be given:
 - The Harbour Authority is not aware of any obstructions on the river bed on advice provided by the berth owner / operator;
 - The berth owner / operator has the responsibility that the berth has been dredged and monitored for depth and profile including the expectations that undulations may exist;
 - Masters should risk assess the use of the berth taking into account factors including, but not limited to, their vessels hull profile and any protrusions from the hull;
 - The river bed consists of soft level mud or silt at the berth;
 - The Master is advised to keep all watertight openings closed and monitor bilge levels and alarms;

- The Master is advised to tend the vessel's mooring lines and monitor its attitude and position as the tide falls to ensure the vessel lists towards the quay before taking the ground;
- Where necessary, the Master is advised to rig extra lines or beaching legs, to ensure the vessel remains upright as the vessel takes the ground.

Comply With ABP Requirements In Respect Of Dredging At the Berth and the Approaches to the Berth

A berth operator wishing to carry out maintenance dredging must comply with certain requirements in respect of licensing before the work is carried out. It is important that periodic surveys of the berth are carried out on a regular basis, to provide information to support effective maintenance of the facility; and to help to identify the most cost-effective and appropriate form of dredging and to aid anticipating any depth constraints.

Any dredging in the harbour should be covered by a Local Consent (see below). Dredging may also require a Marine Licence from the Marine management Organisation (MMO). For more information about dredging in the harbour, and to assist with any Marine Licence application, please see [Southampton's Baseline Document](#).

For information on applying for a Marine Licence please refer to the [MMO guidance](#).

Pilotage Requirements

Masters, Berth Operators and Agents should also refer to Port Users Information and Navigation Guideline (PUNG) Berth and Terminal Guidance Including Towage and Under Keel Clearance Requirements).

All commercial traffic requires a minimum UKC of 0.3m and, on an ebb tide, 0.5m for pilotage.

The Duty VTSWM & Liaison Pilot should be consulted for further guidance.