



# PORT OF LONDON

# PORT ENTRY GUIDE



PORT OF LONDON  
AUTHORITY

A summary of the principal rules and regulations governing navigation within the Port of London.

**USE OF VHF** - Vessels over 20m LOA, passenger vessels and tugs engaged in towing, are required to maintain listening watch on VHF as follows:

VTS CALL SIGN	VHF CHANNEL	AREA COVERED
“London VTS”	69	Outer limits to Sea Reach No.4 Buoy
“London VTS”	68	Sea Reach No.4 Buoy to Crayfordness
“London VTS”	14	Crayfordness to Teddington

**REPORTING** - Vessels over 40m LOA or over 50 gt and tugs engaged in towing, must report to the relevant VTS when passing Waypoints as indicated on approved charts. They must also inform London VTS before the vessel navigates the Thames and obtain clearance from the relevant VTS centre so to do.

On arrival at the outer limits, vessels are required to report on Ch 69 that they "Comply with the navigational safety requirements of PLA General Directions". This signifies that: appropriate charts and navigational publications are corrected to date, a passage plan has been prepared, the vessel complies with the ISM code (or, if not subject to this code that there are no deficiencies or defects to crew or to equipment / machinery for navigation / propulsion / manoeuvring) and that appropriate mooring assistance has been arranged."

**PILOTAGE** - The requirements for compulsory pilotage in the Port of London are contained in the PLA’s Pilotage Directions. The services of a pilot can be obtained through your Agent, or by calling the following pilot stations on VHF Channel 9, NE Spit Pilots (Ramsgate), Sunk Pilots (Harwich), Sheerness Pilots (Warp / Oaze) and London Pilots.

**NAVIGATION WITHIN PORT LIMITS** - Masters must advise London VTS which approach channel they intend to use. Vessels with a draught of 6.0 metres or less should use the Barrow Deep or Princes Channel, waiting when necessary for sufficient height of tide to transit these channels. Any vessel uncertain of its position should call the relevant VTS station immediately. Large scale charts of the river may be obtained through local Agents.

**“SPECIFIED VESSELS”** - Are defined in PLA General Directions and covers vessels carrying quantities of explosives, or flammable or toxic substances in bulk or non gas-free following discharge of such cargoes. These vessels are required to display a red flag by day and an all round red light by night. All vessels should maintain a half-mile separation from specified vessels. Permission is required from the Harbour Master before reducing that separation or overtaking a specified vessel.

**RESTRICTED VISIBILITY** (less than 0.5 nautical mile) - All vessels over 40m LOA must have an operational radar to navigate in restricted visibility. Additionally, all unpiloted vessels or vessels without a valid Pilotage Exemption Certificate holder in charge, having a draught in excess of 4.0 metres, are not permitted to navigate in Restricted Visibility.

Vessels so prohibited, must proceed to nearest safe anchorage and wait until visibility improves to more than 0.5 nautical mile, or the arrival of a PLA pilot, if so requested.

**DANGEROUS NAVIGATION** - Masters are advised that navigating without due care and attention, or navigating in a manner liable to injure or endanger persons, other vessels or structures such as berths or jetties (this includes damage caused by wash or draw off due to excessive speed), is an offence liable to prosecution. The Harbourmaster will vigorously investigate any such infringements.

**INCIDENTS** - Vessels must advise the Harbourmaster immediately (through the relevant VTS station) if involved in any of the following incidents: Collision, sinking, fire, grounding, pollution, damage to ship or structure, foul or lost anchor.

**ANCHORING** - Except in an emergency, vessels must only anchor in designated anchorages as shown on approved charts. An effective bridge watch should be maintained whilst at anchor.

**DEFECTS** - Vessels with structural, mechanical or equipment defects affecting their ability to navigate safely, must inform the Harbourmaster of the defect. Such vessels shall not move without having obtained the consent of the Harbourmaster.

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURES** - When a Port Emergency or Major Incident is in progress, the Master of every vessel must for the duration of the incident:

- Minimise transmissions on VHF.
- Proceed with caution when near the incident and follow directions as given by London VTS or the on-scene co-ordinating vessel.
- Give assistance as required.

**AREAS OF SPECIAL CONSIDERATION** - Masters are advised that extra care must be taken when navigating in the following areas:

<b>Pilot boarding and landing areas</b>	NE Spit, Sunk, Oaze Deep, Warp and Gravesend
<b>Thameshaven, Coryton and Canvey Island</b>	Oil and gas jetties. Tanker traffic warning lights at Canvey and Cliffe will be exhibited when specified vessels and large tankers are manoeuvring in the area.
<b>Tilburyness</b>	Large vessels manoeuvring for Tilbury Dock and riverside Northfleet Hope berths.
<b>Broadness, Stoneness and Jenningtree Point</b>	Beware of unusual tidal sets. All vessels must navigate on the correct side of the fairway when rounding the points.

**YACHTS AND SMALL RECREATIONAL VESSELS** -Masters are advised that the Thames and Medway are popular areas for recreational vessels.

**These vessels may not be monitoring the appropriate VTS VHF channel.**

**TIDE TABLES, CHARTS, BYELAWS, GENERAL DIRECTIONS AND PILOTAGE DIRECTIONS, NOTICES TO MARINERS** - Masters of vessels are advised of the importance of using approved charts of a suitable scale, which are corrected up to date. Copies of the relevant Byelaws and General Directions for Navigation, Notices to Mariners and other published advice should also be obtained and studied before navigating the Thames.

These documents may be obtained through local UK shipping Agents and/or downloaded from the PLA website at [www.portoflondon.co.uk](http://www.portoflondon.co.uk)