

Thames AIS – Mandatory carriage requirements and vessels operating in the Thames AIS mandatory carriage area on a temporary basis

The Port of London River (Amendment) Thames AIS Byelaws 2006 came into force on 1st June 2007. Byelaw 57A mandates the carriage of Thames AIS or AIS A transponder equipment on certain categories of vessels operating above Victoria Deep Water Terminal (the Thames AIS mandatory carriage area).

The following vessels when operating above Victoria Deep Water Terminal are required to carry and operate Thames AIS or AIS A:

- a) Vessels of more than 40m in length overall,
- b) Vessels having a gross tonnage of more than 50 tonnes (other than Pleasure Vessels having a gross tonnage of more than 50 tons, but which are under 40m in length overall),
- c) Tugs engaged in towing, or about to tow one or more vessels,
- d) Class IV, V and Class VI Passenger Vessels, and
- e) Specified Vessels or vessels carrying Marine Pollutants in Bulk.

It is recognised that on occasions vessels which do not normally operate on the river above Victoria Deep Water Terminal may have cause to temporarily navigate inside the Thames AIS mandatory carriage area.

To this end the PLA has made provision for a limited number of portable Thames AIS transponder equipments to be made available on a loan basis to vessel owners or operators for the duration of their temporary operations in the Thames AIS mandatory carriage area.

However, it should be noted that Portable Thames AIS transponder units will:

- a) be issued on a first-come-first-served basis,
- b) take approximately 3 hours to fit and test,
- c) normally only be available for hire for a maximum of 7 consecutive days up to a total of 25 days in one calendar year (applications beyond these limits will be considered subject to availability).

Vessel owners and operators are advised to liaise with the PLA at the earliest opportunity should a portable Thames AIS transponder be required.

Portable Thames AIS transponder equipment is available from the PLA on a commercial basis in accordance with guidelines available on the Port of London Authorities website www.portoflondon.co.uk/navigation.

For further advice contact the Deputy VTS Manager via telephone +44(0)1474 562242 or via e-mail kevin.gregory@pla.co.uk.

It is an offence to navigate a vessel identified by Port of London River (Amendment) Byelaw 57A in the Thames AIS area without an operational Thames AIS or AIS A transponder.