

NAVIGATIONAL SAFETY POLICY

Through the Port of London Act 1968 (as amended), the Port of London Authority (PLA) has the primary responsibility of maintaining safe access and managing and supporting the safety of vessels, the general public and all users of the tidal River Thames, from hazards arising from marine activities within the harbour, together with a duty to improve and conserve the river and its environment.

Additionally, the PLA is committed to complying fully with the standards laid down in the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) and the management of navigation shall be in accordance with those standards. The Board of the PLA, as the Duty Holder, are collectively and individually accountable for the management of marine safety under the Code.

To this end, navigational safety will be managed according to the following objectives:

Safety Management System

- Maintain an effective marine Safety Management System (SMS) and Regulatory Framework, which meets the requirements of the PMSC and the Port's legal responsibilities, based on formal assessment and mitigation of risk, ensuring this is monitored, reviewed and audited.
- Publish a Marine Safety Plan every 3 years and report performance against the plan annually.

Pilotage

- Ensure that the operation of the Pilotage Service and PEC system is compliant with the Pilotage Act 1987, national regulations, guidelines and competency standards and that the Pilotage Service is able to respond to all properly notified pilotage requirements.

Vessel Traffic Service

- Operate the London Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) to IMO, IALA and national standards to manage the safety and efficiency of navigation, safety of life at sea and the protection of the marine environment and/or the adjacent shore area, worksites and offshore installations from the possible adverse effects of maritime traffic.

Hydrography

- Undertake such hydrographic surveys as are necessary for safe and efficient navigation within port limits through a managed survey programme of the bed of the Thames and to provide this information to river users.

Vessel Licensing

- Verify the fitness for purpose of licensed inland waterways commercial vessels by inspection, ensure effective supporting operational safety management systems and where appropriate, define and enforce minimum crew competencies.

Management of River Activities and Works

- Ensure, through an appropriate level of risk assessment that the approval of river activities and river works takes due regard of the safety of navigation and in particular:

- The Authorised Channel should not be obstructed by any permanent works, and temporary obstruction or closure of the Authorised Channel for sporting or cultural events may be permitted only in exceptional circumstances or for significant public events.
- Temporary obstruction or closure of bridge arches will only be permitted when necessary, such as to facilitate maintenance, and two-way traffic should be maintained whenever possible.
- The PLA will endeavour to maintain a 15 metre channel either side of the Authorised Channel to enable vessels manoeuvring onto or off berths and recreational vessels to remain clear of traffic navigating in the Authorised Channel.
- Where significant recreational activity takes place such as above Putney Bridge, the safety of navigation will be managed appropriately to account for this factor.

Emergency Preparedness and Response

- Ensure that appropriately detailed emergency plans are prepared in conjunction with other relevant authorities, and that such plans are published and periodically exercised.

Enforcement and Prosecution

- Develop and maintain effective investigation and enforcement procedures that comply with national requirements and best practice, identifying, promulgating and making good use of any 'lessons identified'.
- Effectively promulgate, apply and enforce byelaws, directions and procedures, responding to breaches or criminal offences, and where necessary initiating a prosecution, whilst observing the Code for Crown Prosecutors.

Consultation

- Consult as early as is practicable, and encourage comment and contribution from, users, stakeholders and beneficiaries, for assessment of risk, when changes to PLA legislation, policy and navigational markings are being considered, and to publish the feedback.

Marine Training

- Ensure that all marine personnel are competent to perform the duties allocated to them through the adoption of the levels of knowledge and skill associated with relevant international, national and local standards.

Environment

- Comply with the PLA's responsibilities to the natural, human and built environment and ensure procedures and measures are in place to minimise environmental impacts arising from its activities.

This policy was approved by the PLA Executive Committee on 19 February 2020 and will be reviewed every three years.

Robin Mortimer
Chief Executive

