

SAFETY BULLETIN No.1 of 2020

NEAR MISS & SAFETY OBSERVATION REPORTING REPORTING VESSELS – PERMISSION TO PROCEED

The Campaign

The PLA are launching a campaign which will run throughout 2020 to encourage reporting of near misses and safety Observations.

A near miss is an incident which occurs where no person is injured, and no property is damaged. A safety observation is a report of something which is unsafe and has the potential to cause an incident or near miss.

The PLA strongly encourages the submission of both Near Miss and Safety Observation reports as these are a very strong, pro-active way of mitigating risk and preventing the occurrence of incidents. As part of this active encouragement the PLA will release a safety bulletins every month aimed at raising awareness of safety issues that are raised throughout the Port and, where necessary, the action that has been taken. The following is the first of these bulletins.

Reporting Vessels – Permission to Proceed

The PLA have received several safety observations advising of repeat instances where Reporting Vessels are transiting the middle reaches of the River Thames in close proximity to one another, including when transiting bridge arches. This has led to instances of increased congestion in areas of the river where significant volumes of both freight and passenger traffic operate. This is clearly a safety issue.

These safety observations have been received alongside reports from London VTS that an increasing number of Reporting Vessels are failing to provide 10 minutes notice prior to departure from their berth. Whilst this is in breach of the Port of London General Directions for Navigation, it can also hinder London VTS' ability to manage the movement of traffic effectively.

In direct response to the above issues the PLA have promulgated **Notice to Mariners M6 of 2020**, reminding all river users of their obligation under the 2016 General Directions. In addition to this reminder the notice requests that all Reporting Vessels maintain a separation of approximately one bridge when proceeding in the same direction between Tower Bridge and Wandsworth Bridge.

These requirements will be actively monitored by both the Harbour Service and London VTS. This is a strong example of how Safety Observation and Near Miss reporting can allow the PLA to take mitigating action and improve safety on the Thames.

To submit a report to the PLA, the PLA App has an incident reporting feature. Download it on [Android](#) and [iOS](#). Just search for PLA in your app store. Alternatively use the following web link to find details on how to download and submit a report form: <http://www.pla.co.uk/Safety/SMS/Reporting-Navigational-Incidents-Safety-Concerns>

17 February 2020

Port of London Authority
London River House, Royal Pier Road,
Gravesend, Kent DA12 2BG

BOB BAKER
CHIEF HARBOUR MASTER



Telephone calls, VHF radio traffic, CCTV and radar traffic images may be recorded in the VTS Centres at Gravesend and Woolwich

