

SAFETY BULLETIN No.02 of 2022

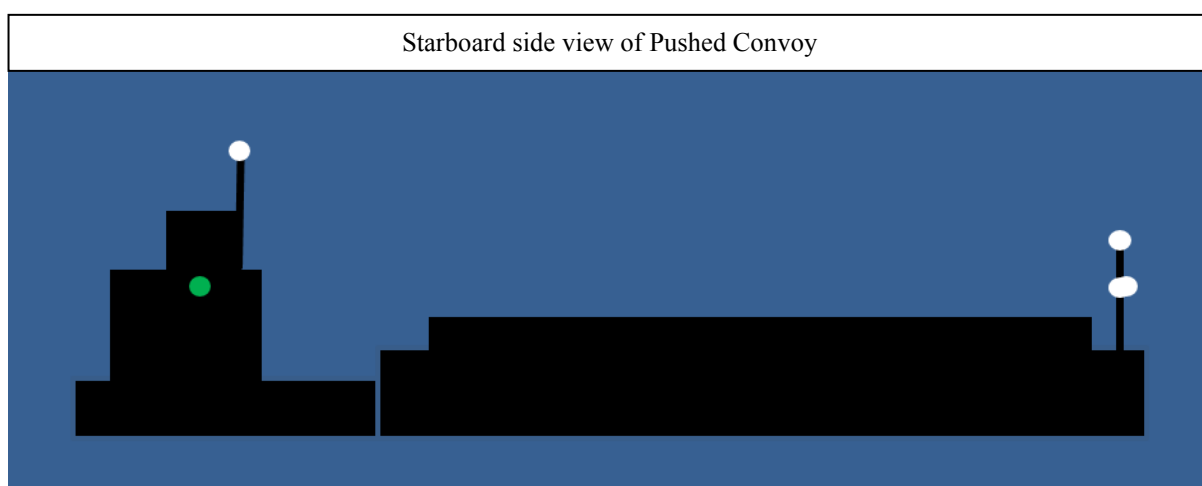
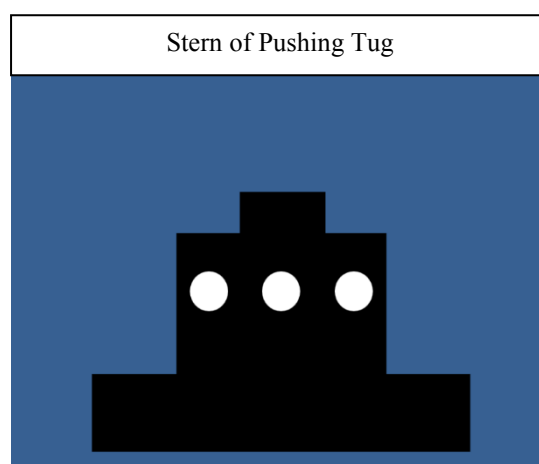
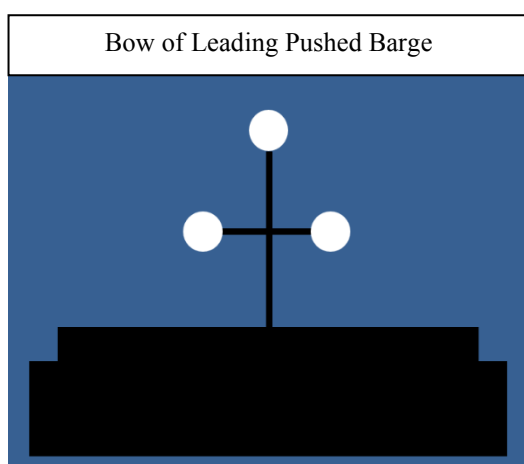
LIGHTING ARRANGEMENTS FOR PUSHED BARGE CONVOYS

The Port of London Authority (PLA) has received several near miss reports where vessels crossing the channel have been unable to easily discern the presence of a barge being pushed ahead in darkness, resulting in a close quarters situation. Although there were several factors involved in these incidents, lighting arrangements have been identified as a contributory factor.

We take this opportunity to highlight changes to lighting arrangements that were introduced in the [PLA General Directions of 2021](#). Under General Direction 31, the previous lighting arrangements were modified to introduce additional lights to be displayed on the bows of barges being pushed ahead and on the stern of the pushing tug.

The diagrams below indicate the new arrangements:

N.B. These diagrams are provided for illustrative purposes only and are not to scale.



To summarise the new lighting arrangements in General Direction 31:

- The leading barge of the convoy, or the barge on the port side of the head of the convoy, should display three masthead lights arranged in an equilateral triangle with a horizontal base. The top light must be placed no lower than the top of the hatch coamings. The two lower lights shall be about 1.25 m apart and about 1.10 m below the top light.
- A single masthead light should be displayed at the bow of any other barge in the convoy whose full width is visible from ahead (i.e., if two barges are secured alongside one another being pushed ahead, the port hand barge should display the three masthead lights in a triangle and the starboard barge should display a single masthead light).
- Any barge whose full width is visible from astern should display a stern light (i.e., if there are two barges secured alongside being pushed ahead, the barge not directly ahead of the pushing tug should display a stern light)
- A tug pushing a barge or convoy of barges ahead should display:
 - sidelights
 - a single masthead light (higher than the topmost light at the bow of the leading barge)
 - three stern lights in a row
- A tug pushing ahead must never display the lights for towing astern – this causes confusion to other river users

We strongly encourage all owners and operators of tugs to adopt the new lighting arrangements for pushed convoys as soon as practicable, and in any case by 31st December 2025. Compliance with these lighting arrangements will form part of the inspection criteria for PLA Licensed Vessels.

20/01/2022

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