



Southwold Harbour Towage SOP

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Issue Date: 15/03/23 Version 1

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1.Document Control

This SOP is subject to a 5 yearly review and periodic amendment as required

Major changes will be issued as a new version with all minor amendments to that version annotated

DATE Review(R)

Amendment(A)

2. Introduction

It is unlikely that tug operations will take place within Southwold Harbour due to prevailing tidal constraints, traffic type and channel width.

It may however be the case that on occasion small commercial craft are engaged in towage operations within the Harbour.

It is not uncommon for Southwold Lifeboat to tow rescued small craft into Southwold Harbour.

3. Guidance for vessels engaged in towing operations

Within Southwold Harbour, occasional towing operations may take place.

When operations are proposed, **other than in an emergency**, a towage plan/method statement should be submitted to the Harbour Master in advance of the proposed time of commencement of the operation.

With respect to dinghy towage or occasional small boat towage within the harbour, Notification prior to departure and arrival will be deemed sufficient.

The towage plan/method statement should include the following detail:

1. Which port the barge/vessel is going to or coming from if appropriate.
2. Arrangements for recovery and streaming emergency towline
3. Communication method between towed vessel and towing vessel.
4. Confirmation that the level of qualification and training of personnel manning the towing vessel and towed vessel is at least the minimum required for the class of vessel and area of operation, including any necessary local knowledge.
5. Arrangements for lighting (to comply with Collision Regulations) if appropriate.
6. Confirmation that a general health and safety risk assessment has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of The Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Health and Safety at Work) Regulations 1997

NB: The towage plan/method statement must be completed and submitted to the Harbour Master before commencement of the operation.

For vessels coming from and going to sea, the operator must declare that the vessel(s) is(are) coded/certified for the intended area of operation.

Failure to comply with this requirement will result in delay.

Such certification will include as a minimum SCV2 or other Certificate of Compliance, Load line Exemption Certificate, and confirmation of appropriate insurance.

For tows proceeding from inland waters to sea, the operator must also declare that the towed vessel(s) are watertight, weathertight and will reach their destination safely with regard to the sea and weather conditions which are likely to be encountered en-route.

For vessels which are not certified to operate at sea, and which thus operate solely within categorised waters the operator must declare that the vessel is fit for purpose and confirm compliance with the relevant regulations for Class IX(A) vessels which relate to the carriage of Life Saving Appliances and firefighting equipment. These can be found in: -

- The Merchant Shipping (LSA) Regulations 1999, and
- The Merchant Shipping (Fire protection: Small Ships) Regulations 1988.

Additional discussion concerning towing operations may be necessary in view of prevailing weather and tidal conditions and any other special circumstances

4. Towage operations in restricted visibility

Towing in restricted visibility poses the most serious threat to the safety of the towing vessel, its crew, and other harbour users.

Restricted visibility is any occasion where visibility is, or is expected to, reduce to a distance where the towing vessel's normal ability to perform may be impaired. Such restrictions in visibility could be due to fog, mist, snow, rain, sleet or any other conditions which impair visibility.

No tug/towing vessel should be made fast to a vessel when unable to maintain sight of the adjacent shore or point of navigational relevance or significance.