

LITTLEHAMPTON HARBOUR TOWAGE GUIDELINES

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Notwithstanding anything contained in these guidelines, towage requirements for individual vessels remains the responsibility of the Master after due consultation with the Duty Harbour Master or (if under pilotage) the Pilot. The harbour authority may, in certain circumstances in line with inclusions in the Collision Regulations and the harbour's Pilotage Directions (www.littlehampton.org.uk/pilotage), use their powers to direct a vessel to take a tug in the interest of the vessel and the port's safety.

Note that RNLI lifeboats and club sailing dinghies (when towed by registered club RIBs) are exempt from these guidelines.

Pilotage is mandatory for tows where the combined tonnage exceeds 60GT. Pilotage is likely to be also required for tows where the length of tow is greater than or equal to 20 meters from the bow of the towing vessel to the stern of the towed vessel so such cases should therefore be discussed with the Duty Harbour Master. A Pilot should be booked with 24 hours' notice, but more urgent needs can be considered.

Before any vessel engages in towage within harbour limits, a towage plan must be discussed with the Duty Harbour Master before committing to enter the harbour or departing moorings.

If it is necessary to provide towage assistance in an emergency, the towage provider should inform the Duty Harbour Master of their intentions as soon as it is safe to do so. Emergency situations must be reported to HM Coastguard via CH16 or 999 and then the Duty Harbour Master via CH71 or 01903 721 215.

Further Guidelines:

- **Towage Configuration for small craft** - If weather conditions allow, switching tow configuration from stern tow to alongside tow before entering the harbour should be preferred to ensure full control in the harbour's rapid tidal flow and narrow channel. It is strongly advised that vessels do not enter the harbour in a stern tow configuration during the flood tide as they are more likely lose control of the vessel under tow should they need to slow or stop without space to turn head to tide. Elsewhere, when navigating with the tide, an alongside or composite tow configuration should be favoured wherever possible and is mandatory for navigating pinch points such as bridges.
- **Commercial Tows** - Paid for towage services should only be provided by commercial operators, whose vessels are fit for purpose and registered with Littlehampton Harbour Board and where vessels' crews have received appropriate training and are appropriately certified. The harbour's Small Commercial Vessels Management Policy and registration form can be viewed at www.littlehampton.org.uk/commercial-vessels-registration.

- **Tows Under Pilotage** - If under pilotage, a towage plan must be agreed by the Tug Master, Pilot and Master of vessel under tow prior to the operation and notified to the Duty Harbour Master. Particular attention should be given to weather forecasts, number / suitability (bollard pull) of assisting vessels, command / communication procedures, tug assist methods, speed, abort positions, lay by berths, anchorages and turning areas.
- **Towing Equipment** - Operators should ensure all lines wires shackles and fixed equipment and emergency releases are fit for purpose and meet all the required standards necessary. All masters of towing and assisting craft are reminded of their responsibility to ensure the watertight integrity of their vessels. Procedures should be put in place when planning the tow to ensure that crews do not let go the towing gear in such a fashion that there is a danger of it fouling propulsion systems, or endangering personnel.
- **Defects** - A vessel with defects or without anchors may be required to take a tug to enter, depart or be relocated within the harbour. All defects are to be reported to the Duty Harbour Master prior to arrival or getting underway.
- **Dead Ships** - Vessels without main engines will be required to take a tug to enter or depart the harbour. The number of tugs required will depend on the environmental influences envisaged during the operation.
- **Jack-Up or other Barges** – When passing through the Footbridge or other such pinch points, such vessels should be pushed by primary tug in composite configuration with a suitable secondary tug rigged beam on the bow for steerage. Barge shifts in pinch points (such as through/under bridges or otherwise narrower channels such as the harbour entrance or at Arundel) should also only be undertaken against the tidal flow. For barges transiting the narrows, a tow from ahead with a break tug astern can also be considered if wave conditions render composite or alongside arrangements unsafe.
- **Towing in Fog** - The harbour operates a fog procedure and ceases all harbour entries under towage in restricted visibility of less than half a nautical mile (926 metres).

Further Reading:

- Guidelines for Safe Harbour Towage Operations:
<https://eurotugowners.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/STP-Guidelines-First-Edition-February-2015.pdf>
- UK Standard Conditions for Towage and Other Services (1986):
[https://www.clarksons.com/uk-standard-conditions-for-towage-and-other-services-\(revised-1986\)/](https://www.clarksons.com/uk-standard-conditions-for-towage-and-other-services-(revised-1986)/)