

Belfast Harbour

Belfast Harbour Marine Operations Safety Plan 2021 - 2023

Belfast Harbour Commissioners are the Statutory Harbour Authority for Belfast Harbour and the Competent Harbour Authority for the waters of Belfast Harbour Pilotage Area.

The Port Marine Safety Code published in 2000 by the Department of Transport and revised in November 2016, has established an agreed national standard by which the policies, procedures and performance of harbour authorities are measured.

Belfast Harbour Commissioners are committed to managing marine safety to a standard compliant with the Port Marine Safety Code. The aim of this plan is to provide detail of the management measures in place and to set targets for performance.

As part of its compliance with the requirements of the Port Marine Safety Code, Belfast Harbour is publishing this Marine Operations Safety Plan for the period 2021-2023.

A more comprehensive overview of the structure and management of the port's Marine Safety Management and compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code in support of this plan is contained in Belfast Harbours Safety Management System Manual.

Belfast Harbour Commissioners have declared compliance with the requirements of the PMSC in March 2021.

Marine Policies

Belfast Harbour is committed to promote an active safety culture at the core of its Safety Management System in order to meet the national requirements of the Port Marine Safety Code and to comply with the guidance in “A Guide to Good Practice on Port Marine Operations”, February 2018. To demonstrate these commitments, Belfast Harbour publish the following policies:

- Navigational Safety Policy
- VTS Policy
- Pilotage Policy
- Hydrographic Policy
- Enforcement and Prosecution Policy

All policies are included within Belfast Harbour’s Safety Management System and are published on the Belfast Harbour website.

Each Marine Policy is reviewed every 3 years.

Marine Procedures

Operational procedures, processes and guidance in support of Belfast Harbour’s marine services and operations are contained within the following documents:

- Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) Manual
- Pilotage Manual
- Conservancy, within Marine Safety Management System (MSMS) Manual
- Marine Services, within MSMS Manual

The Designated Person, as identified in the Port Marine Safety Code, provides independent assurance directly to the 'Duty Holder' that Belfast Harbour's MSMS is compliant and working effectively through assessment and audit.

The Safety Management System was last externally audited in September and December 2020.

The Management of Marine Operations

This Marine Operations Safety Plan commits Belfast Harbour to undertake the management and regulation of marine operations within the scope of its powers and authority in a way that safeguards the port, its users, the public and the environment.

Belfast Harbour is committed to a positive safety culture and to continual improvement of its risk based Marine Safety Management System and safety performance.

Belfast Harbour will undertake its role and responsibilities to provide efficient services and effective regulation of shipping in support of all activities in the harbour: in particular commercial vessel movements, to facilitate the safe transit of vessels in the port.

In ensuring the continued provision of services, especially during times of disruption, Belfast Harbour will always keep the safety of its personnel, port users and vessels as a priority. Whilst at times this may mean that services, vessel movements or activities are subject to delay such commercial considerations will be secondary to the safety of navigation.

Established Management Activities

Communication, consultation and feedback are a fundamental to ensure the safety and navigational requirements are understood and are continually reviewed. The following are undertaken to ensure the maintenance of an effective Safety Management System:

- Dedicated Risk Assessments of existing marine operations and services.
- The proactive and reactive review of identified hazards to navigation and the associated risk control measures required to mitigate these risks to a level which is As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP).
- The investigation of all reported Marine Incidents and the maintenance of a comprehensive Incident Management System.

- Daily liaison between the Duty Harbour Master and Port Control in relation to the safety and effective regulation of vessel movements in the harbour and its approaches.
- Monthly Marine Safety Management meetings to review Incidents and Non Compliance.
- Marine Safety Forum – meetings every 6 months
- Towage & Boatmen Operations Liaison Group – meeting every 6 months
- Regular Pilotage meetings comprising Harbour Masters and authorised Belfast Harbour pilots.
- Regular internal and external audits and reviews of the Marine Safety Management System, its functions, procedures and performance.
- Training and Development of Marine Department Personnel - Continual Professional Development.
- Maintenance and exercising of Belfast Harbour marine emergency plans and procedures, including oil spill management and Business Continuity Plans.

Performance Objectives

	Objective	Performance Target	By When	Completion Measure	Status
1.	Navigational Incidents – determine the cause of an incident to prevent reoccurrence	No major incidents, serious injuries or serious pollution as a result of the failure of the port's Marine Safety Management System.	2021	Compliant at 01/06/2021	
			2022		
			2023		
		All reported Incidents investigated in a timely basis.	2021	Compliant at 01/06/2021	
			2022		
			2023		
		Identify opportunities for improvement and ensure policies and procedures are reviewed where appropriate.	2021	Compliant at 01/06/2021	
			2022		
			2023		
2.	Vessel Traffic Service – operational capability and delivery	Provide an effective Traffic Organisational Service and Information Service throughout the port.	2021	Compliant at 01/06/2021	
			2022		
			2023		
		Seek to ensure that Belfast Harbours VTS System operates at 99.9% availability through a maintenance, procurement and installation strategy for the VTS equipment which will add to the reliability of individual elements or to its duplication.	2021	Compliant at 01/06/2021	
			2022		
			2023		
		VTS Operators recruited and trained to industry standards	2021		

			2022		
			2023		
3.	Pilotage – provision of pilotage service including the authorisation of Pilotage Exemption Certificates (PEC)	No major incidents resulting from pilot or PEC holder error.	2021	Compliant at 01/06/2021	
			2022		
			2023		
	Authorised Pilots and PEC Holders to be trained and assessed as per procedures and protocols.	2021	Compliant at 01/06/2021		
		2022			
		2023			
4.	Marine Services – Towage services, pilot launch and mooring services	Ensure operators are compliant with national and local regulation for equipment and personnel.	2021	Compliant at 01/06/2021	
			2022		
			2023		
	Fully compliant with industry best practice and Belfast Harbour policies and procedures.	2021	Compliant at 01/06/2021		
		2022			
		2023			
5.	Conservancy – conserve the harbour and its approaches	Hydrographic Surveys - Ensure that the port and approaches have an adequate schedule of hydrographic surveys and that these are undertaken in line with the defined schedule.	2021	Port Hydrographic survey conducted 06/21	
			2022		
			2023		
	Navigational Lights – In conjunction with the Commissioners of Irish Lights to provide and maintain adequate navigational aids consistent with port user requirements to facilitate safe navigation within the port and its approaches. Report to CIL on a quarterly basis.	2021	Compliant at 01/06/2021		
		2022			
		2023			
	Wrecks and Obstructions – Investigate all reported wrecks and Obstructions in a timely basis.	2021	Compliant at 01/06/2021		
		2022			
		2023			
	Notices / Warnings – Promulgate Local Notices and Warnings to port users of changes to Navigational Aids, depths and other dangers to Navigation.	2021	Compliant		
		2022			
		2023			
6.			2021	Compliant at 01/06/2021	

	Consultation - liaison and consult with port users	Arrange regular meetings with port users to consult on any traffic management and navigational issues, safety issues, pilotage, conservancy, and leisure activity.	2022		
			2023		
7.	Contingency and Emergency Planning	Review of Emergency Plans and Procedures.	2021	Compliant at 01/06/2021	
			2022		
			2023		
		Undertake desk top / real time exercises	2021	Compliant at 01/06/2021	
			2022		
			2023		
8.	Training of Marine Personnel – to ensure required qualifications are current for all marine personnel and any ongoing professional development and training needs are identified.	Continual Professional Development to ensure all marine personnel are competent to perform their duties.	2021	Compliant at 01/06/2021	
			2022		
			2023		
		Undertake annual appraisals and training needs analysis.	2021	Compliant at 01/06/2021	
			2022		
			2023		