
STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

1978 No. 1914

MERCHANT SHIPPING

SAFETY

The Mersey Channel (Collision Rules) Order 1978

Made - - - - 20th December 1978
Laid before Parliament 3rd January 1979
Coming into Operation 11th March 1979

At the Court at Buckingham Palace, the 20th day of December 1978

Present,

The Queen's Most Excellent Majesty in Council

Whereas The Mersey Docks and Harbour Company, being the body having authority over the waters of the River Mersey and the sea channels or approaches thereto which are for the time being buoyed on both sides, have made application in pursuance of section 421(2) of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894(a) as extended by section 2 of the Mersey Channels Act 1897(b) for the rules set forth in the Schedule hereto to be made by Her Majesty in Council as regards vessels navigating in the said River and the sea channels or approaches thereto:

Now, therefore, Her Majesty, in exercise of the powers aforesaid and of the powers conferred by section 738(1) of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894 and of all other powers enabling Her in that behalf is pleased, by and with the advice of Her Privy Council, to order, and it is hereby ordered, as follows:—

1.—(1) This Order may be cited as the Mersey Channel (Collision Rules) Order 1978 and shall come into operation on 11th March 1979.

(2) The Interpretation Act 1889(c) shall apply for the interpretation of this Order as it applies for the interpretation of an Act of Parliament and as if this Order and the Orders hereby revoked were Acts of Parliament.

(3) The Mersey Channel (Collision Rules) Order 1960(d) as amended by the Mersey Channel (Collision Rules) (Amendment) Order 1970(e) are hereby revoked.

2. The Rules set forth in the Schedule to this Order shall have effect and shall apply to all vessels navigating in the River Mersey and the sea channels

(a) 1894 c. 60.
(d) S.I. 1960/977.

(b) 1897 c. 21.
(e) S.I. 1970/160.

(c) 1889 c. 63.

or approaches thereto between the Rock Lighthouse and the furthest point seawards to which such channels or approaches are for the time being buoyed on both sides.

N. E. Leigh,
Clerk of the Privy Council.

SCHEDULE

Preliminary

1. In these Rules, except where the context otherwise requires—

“Collision Regulations” means the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 set forth in the Schedule to the Collision Regulations and Distress Signals Order 1977(a) as amended(b)

and the several words and expressions to which meanings are assigned by the Collision Regulations shall have the same meanings as in those Regulations.

2. Every vessel navigating in any part of the River Mersey or in the sea channels or approaches thereto between the Rock Lighthouse and the furthest point seawards to which such sea channels or approaches respectively are for the time being buoyed on both sides shall comply with—

(a) these Rules, and

(b) the Collision Regulations, except in so far as compliance with these Rules requires otherwise.

Rules Concerning Marks, Lights, Etc.

3.—(1) The lights prescribed by these Rules shall be exhibited from sunset to sunrise, from sunrise to sunset in restricted visibility and in all other circumstances when it is deemed necessary and during such times no other lights shall be exhibited, except such lights as cannot be mistaken for the lights specified in these Rules or do not impair their visibility or distinctive character, or interfere with the keeping of a proper look-out.

(2) The marks and shapes prescribed by these Rules shall be exhibited from sunrise to sunset.

(3) The lights and shapes specified in these Rules shall comply with the provisions of the Collision Regulations.

4. A power driven vessel when being towed shall, if under power, notwithstanding anything contained in Rule 24(e) of the Collision Regulations, exhibit the lights prescribed by Rule 23 of the Collision Regulations:

Provided that a power driven floating crane shall not be required under this paragraph to exhibit the light prescribed by Rule 23(a)(ii) of the Collision Regulations.

5. A power driven floating crane when under way shall exhibit the lights prescribed by Rule 23(a)(i), (iii) and (iv) of the Collision Regulations, but shall not be required to carry the light prescribed by Rule 23(a)(ii) thereof.

6. A vessel of 20 metres or over in length, when at anchor, shall, in addition to the requirements of Rule 30 of the Collision Regulations, carry aft

(a) S.I. 1977/982.

(b) S.I. 1977/1301; 1978/462, 1059.

where it can best be seen one ball at a height of 4.5 metres lower than the forward ball.

7.—(1) A vessel, when lying at, or attached to another vessel lying at, any Jetty or Stage to the northward of a straight line drawn from the south end of the Liverpool Landing Stage to the south end of the Woodside Ferry Stage, shall exhibit the lights prescribed by Rule 23 of the Collision Regulations or, as the case may be, Rule 25 thereof :

Provided that a power driven floating crane shall not be required under this paragraph to exhibit the light prescribed by Rule 23(a)(ii) of the Collision Regulations.

(2) A vessel, when lying at any Jetty or Stage to the southward of the said line, or when moored head and stern to buoys permanently fixed, shall exhibit where they can best be seen one white all round light forward and at or near the stern a second white all round light. The forward light shall be 4.5 metres above the after light provided that a vessel under 50 metres in length may carry one such light only, fixed where it can best be seen.

8. A vessel exceeding 200 metres in length when under way or at anchor shall, in addition to the lights prescribed by Rule 23 or Rule 30 of the Collision Regulations, exhibit where they can best be seen three red all round lights spaced vertically two metres apart.

9. A vessel wishing to warn ships of an unmarked underwater obstruction shall display the lights or shapes provided for in Rule 27(b) and (d) of the Collision Regulations; additionally, such vessel may use her searchlight to warn on-coming ships as provided for in Rule 36 of the Collision Regulations.

Steering and Sailing Rules

10. For the purposes of Rule 9 of the Collision Regulations (navigation in narrow channels), the fairways of the River Mersey and the sea channels or approaches thereto between the Rock Lighthouse and the furthest point seawards to which such sea channels or approaches respectively are for the time being buoyed on both sides shall be taken to be narrow channels.

11. A vessel shall not navigate to come into or leave the Main (i.e. The Queens and Crosby) Channel seaward of a line drawn on a true bearing of 071 degrees from the Rock Lighthouse (i.e. a line drawn from the Rock Lighthouse to the west pierhead of the Gladstone River Entrance) at such a time or in such a manner as to hamper traffic passing up and down the Main Channel.

12. A power driven vessel under way, when about to turn round, i.e. alter her course more than 12 points (135 degrees), shall indicate the same by four short and rapid blasts on the whistle followed, after a short interval, if turning with her head to starboard by one short blast or, if turning with her head to port by two short blasts. The giving of the signal so prescribed shall not relieve a vessel of her obligations under the Collision Regulations or these Rules :

Provided that a vessel of less than 50 metres in length shall not be required to give the signal so prescribed unless she is towing one or more vessels and the distance from her stem to the stern of the last vessel towed is 50 metres or more.

Launching of Vessels

13.—(1) A shipbuilder or other person (hereinafter called “the shipbuilder”) shall not launch a vessel into any part of the River Mersey to the northward of a straight line, drawn from Eastham Ferry Slip to the north west corner of the North Dock at Garston, unless the requirements of this Rule have been complied with.

(2) At least three clear days before the date fixed for the launch the shipbuilder shall, in addition to giving any other notice required by law, give to the Secretary of The Mersey Docks and Harbour Company at the Port of Liverpool Building, Liverpool, notice in writing of the place, day and hour proposed for the launch.

(3) Upon receiving such notice The Mersey Docks and Harbour Company shall publish within the Port of Liverpool a notice to mariners giving particulars of the place, day and hour proposed for the launch, and prescribing the area which is to be kept clear as provided by these Rules (hereinafter called the “launching area”). The launching area shall be bounded on the shore side by the line of the shore between a point 600 metres or such other distance as in the opinion of the Marine Surveyor to the said Company may be necessary, to the southward and another point 300 metres to the northward, of the river end of the launchway, and on the remaining three sides by straight lines so drawn as to include an area of a size sufficient, in the opinion of the said Marine Surveyor having regard to the vessel’s tonnage and to other relevant circumstances, in the interests of safety of vessels using the river.

(4) At least three hours before the time proposed for the launch the shipbuilder shall mark the launching area by anchoring at each angle thereof in the river a mark boat suitably dressed with flags in rainbow fashion from stem to stern.

(5) Ten minutes before the time proposed for the launch the shipbuilder shall cause each mark boat to exhibit a red flag measuring 2 metres long by 1.5 metres broad and inscribed with the word “LAUNCH” (hereinafter called a “launching flag”) in large white letters thereon, at such a height being not less than 6 metres above the hull of the mark boat, as to be clear of and to fly well above and distinct from all other flags thereon.

14. If the vessel is not launched within thirty minutes of the launching flags being first exhibited the shipbuilder shall take steps to prevent the vessel being launched upon that day.

15.—(1) The shipbuilder shall cause each mark boat to continue to exhibit the launching flag until the vessel has been launched and is under control, or, if the vessel is not launched, until there remains no risk of the vessel coming off the launchway of her own accord.

(2) As soon as the vessel is under control or there remains no risk of the vessel coming off the launchway, the shipbuilder shall cause the mark boats to be withdrawn.

16. The shipbuilder shall take means to bring up the vessel which has been launched and to have her under control within the launching area.

17.—(1) A vessel anchored or moored, prior to the day of the launch, within the launching area, or in such a position as to swing into it, shall be removed not later than 1 a.m. on the day of the launch.

(2) A vessel shall not on the day of the launch, except for a purpose in connection with the launch, be anchored or moored within the launching area, or in such a position as to swing into it, until after the mark boats have been withdrawn.

(3) A vessel shall not, except for the purpose of leaving the launching area or for a purpose in connection with the launch, be navigated within the launching area whilst the launching flags are exhibited.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This Note is not part of the Order.)

This Order, made on the application of The Mersey Docks and Harbour Company, revokes the Mersey Channel (Collision Rules) Orders 1960 and 1970 and makes new Rules concerning the lights and signals to be exhibited and the steps for avoiding collision to be taken by vessels navigating in the River Mersey and the sea channels or approaches thereto which take account of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 (set out in the Schedule to the Collision Regulations and Distress Signals Order 1977).

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