

MINIMUM TOWAGE REQUIREMENTS

October 2024



MINIMUM TOWAGE REQUIREMENTS – DOCUMENT RECORD

Amendment Date.	Revision No	Edit	Review	Approve	Revision History
July 2024	Initial Draft	DP	DP/KGA	KGA	Draft Document Created.
02 September 2024	01	DP	DP/KGA	KGA	Matrix updated following stakeholder consultation process involving 2 simulations sessions and 4 consultations.
10 October 2024	02	RP	KGA	KGA	DWT parameters amended. Shifting requirements updated. Towage requirements for vessels without bow thuster detailed.

INTRODUCTION

Mariners are advised that as of 0001 on the 1st October 2024 the following minimum towage requirements will be in operation within Belfast Harbour and constitute an update to Belfast Harbours Marine Safety Management System. These requirements have been produced by Belfast Harbour (The Port Authority) after a thorough process which included several consultations and workshops with the engagement of stakeholders including BLPS Ltd and all Towage operators within Belfast Harbour.

These towage requirements are effective for average wind speeds up to 20 knots. For average wind speeds in excess of 20 knots, the Towage Requirements will be assessed by the Ships Master and Pilot and confirmed with the Harbour Master or their Deputy.

It is assumed that all vessels have a bow thruster, and all manoeuvring equipment is operational and effective. Where this equipment is inadequate or defective then the towage requirement will be as given for in the next higher requirement row in the matrix unless otherwise agreed between Master, Pilot, HM or their Deputy.

These Harbour Minimum Towage Requirements are intended to be dynamic and adaptable, subject to periodic review and updates to reflect advancements in technology, changes in operational practices, and lessons learned from incidents or near misses locally, nationally or internationally.

By adhering to these requirements and the guidance provided in Belfast Harbour Towage Operations manual we aim to promote a culture of safety, professionalism, and efficiency among all stakeholders involved in towing operations within our harbour.

Thank you for your commitment to safety and compliance, together, we can uphold the highest standards of maritime safety and ensure the safe and efficient movement of vessels in and out of Belfast Harbour.

For more information on Towage please refer to Belfast Harbour Towage operations manual.

Musgrave Channel – MSW, OB1, OB2 and OB3
ARRIVALS

Channel/Berth	LOA	DWT	BOW THRUSTER	DEFECT	ORIENTATION	TOWAGE
MUSGRAVE						
OB1	<115	<7999	Y	N	N OR S	None. If no B/T or defect, then 1 tug >12t.
OB2						
OB3	<115	≥7999	Y	N	N OR S	1 tug >20t * If no B/T 1 tug >40t
MSW	115-130	<12000	Y	N	N OR S	1 tug >20t * If no B/T 1 tug >40t
	130-150	≥12000	Y	N	N OR S	1 tug >40t * If no B/T 2 tugs >40t
*Bitumen & LPG cargoes will be individually risk assessed.						
ALL SHIFTS REQUIRE THE SAME TOWAGE AS ARR/DEP WHICHEVER IS GREATER						

DEPARTURES

Channel/Berth	LOA	DWT	BOW THRUSTER	DEFECT	ORIENTATION	TOWAGE
MUSGRAVE						
OB1	<115	<7999	Y	N	N OR S	None. If no B/T or defect, then 1 tug >12t.
OB2						
OB3	<115	≥7999	Y	N	N OR S	1 tug >20t * If no B/T 1 tug >40t
MSW	115-130	<12000	Y	N	N OR S	1 tug >20t * If no B/T 1 tug >40t
	130-150	≥12000	Y	N	N OR S	1 tug >40t * If no B/T 2 tugs >40t
*Bitumen & LPG cargoes will be individually risk assessed.						
ALL SHIFTS REQUIRE THE SAME TOWAGE AS ARR/DEP WHICHEVER IS GREATER						

BERTH	MAX LOA	MAX DRAFT
OB1, OB2, OB3,	150m	8.5m
MSW	150m	8.3m

Victoria Channel West, South Quays – OB4, (D1 and D3 – as per Stormont)
ARRIVALS

Channel/Berth	LOA	DWT	BOW THRUSTER	DEFECT	ORIENTATION	TOWAGE
Victoria Channel West						
OB4	<120	<7999	Y	N	N OR S	None. If no B/T or defect, then 1 tug >12t.
	<120	≥7999	Y	N	N OR S	1 tug >20t. If no B/T 1 tug >40t
	120-140	<9999	Y	N	N OR S	1 tug >20t. If no B/T 1 tug >40t
	120-140	≥9999	Y	N	S	1 tug >20t. If no B/T 1 tug >40t
	120-140	≥9999	Y	N	N	1 tug >40t. If no B/T 2 tugs >40t
	140-160	≥9999	Y	N	N OR S	1 tug >40t. If no B/T 2 tugs >40t
	160-190	N/A	Y	N	N OR S	2 tugs >40t
	OB4 VESSELS >190 INDIVIDUALLY RA.					
D1 & D3	D1 & D3 – CARGO VESSELS AS PER STORMONT WHARF					
PROJECT VESSELS/ACTIVITIES WILL BE SUBJECT TO INDIVIDUALLY RA AND SIMULATION IF REQUIRED.						
ALL SHIFTS TO THESE QUAYS ARE REQUIRED TO TAKE THE ARRIVAL TOWAGE OR THE DEPARTURE BERTH TOWAGE, WHICHEVER THE GREATER.						

DEPARTURES

Channel/Berth	LOA	DWT	BOW THRUSTER	DEFECT	ORIENTATION	TOWAGE
Victoria Channel West						
OB4	<120	N/A	Y	N	N OR S	None. If no B/T or defect, then 1 tug >12t.
	120-140	<9999	Y	N	N	None. If no B/T 1 tug >20t
	120-140	<9999	Y	N	S	1 tug >20t. If no B/T 1 tug >40t
	120-160	≥9999	Y	N	N	1 tug >20t. If no B/T 1 tug >40t
	120-160	≥9999	Y	N	S	1 tug >40t. If no B/T 2 tugs >40t
	160-190	N/A	Y	N	N OR S	2 tugs >40t
	OB4 DEPARTURE VESSELS >190 AS PER INDIVIDUALLY RA.					
D1 & D3	D1 & D3 – CARGO VESSELS AS PER STORMONT WHARF					
PROJECT VESSELS/ACTIVITIES WILL BE SUBJECT TO INDIVIDUALLY RA AND SIMULATION IF REQUIRED.						
ALL SHIFTS TO THESE QUAYS ARE REQUIRED TO TAKE THE ARRIVAL TOWAGE OR THE DEPARTURE BERTH TOWAGE, WHICHEVER THE GREATER.						

BERTH	MAX LOA	MAX DRAFT
OB4	200m	10.5m
D1	360m	10.2m
D3	TBC	TBC

Victoria Channel West, North Quays – VT1, VT2, VT3 & VT4
ARRIVALS

Channel/Berth	LOA	WINDAGE * (LSA)	BOW THRUSTER	DEFECT	ORIENTATION	TOWAGE
Victoria Channel West						
VT3 VT3N VT3S	<140	<2500	Y	N	N OR S	None. If no B/T or defect, then 1 tug >12t
	140-180	>4000	Y	N	S	1 tug >40t. If no B/T 2 tugs >40t
	140-180	>4000	Y	N	N	VT3N 1 tug >40t. If no B/T 2 tugs >40t VT3S 1 tug >40t if VT2 not occupied. If no B/T 2 tugs >40t VT3S 2 tugs >40t if VT2 occupied.
ALL VESSELS > 180M WILL BE INDIVIDUALLY RISK ASSESSED. SHIFTS > 50M ON VT3 WILL REQUIRE THE ARRIVAL TOWAGE.						
VT1, VT2, VT4, AQR	RORO VESSEL OPERATIONS ARE SUBJECT TO TOWAGE AS AGREED BETWEEN THE VESSELS SENIOR MASTER AND THE HARBOUR MASTER.					

DEPARTURE

Channel/Berth	LOA	WINDAGE * (LSA)	BOW THRUSTER	DEFECT	ORIENTATION	TOWAGE
Victoria Channel West						
VT3 VT3N VT3S	<140	<2500	Y	N	N OR S	None. If no B/T or defect, then 1 tug >12t
	140-180	>4000	Y	N	N	1 tug >40t. If no B/T 2 tugs >40t
	140-180	>4000	Y	N	S	VT3N 1 tug >40t. If no B/T 2 tugs >40t VT3S 1 tug >40t if VT2 not occupied. If no B/T 2 tugs >40t VT3S 2 tugs >40t if VT2 occupied.
ALL VESSELS > 180M WILL BE INDIVIDUALLY RISK ASSESSED. SHIFTS > 50M ON VT3 WILL REQUIRE THE ARRIVAL TOWAGE.						
VT1, VT2, VT4, AQR	RORO VESSEL OPERATIONS ARE SUBJECT TO TOWAGE AS AGREED BETWEEN THE VESSELS SENIOR MASTER AND THE HARBOUR MASTER.					

*Windage has been calculated by determining lateral surface area using LOA and the vessels Height, once LSA determined the bollard pull is considered using the LSA and the wind speed of 20kts.

BERTH	MAX LOA	MAX DRAFT
VT3	240m	8.8m

Herdman Channel – HWN, HWS, GOTTO, SINCLAIR, POLLOCK, RW
ARRIVALS

Channel/Berth	LOA	DWT	BOW THRUSTER	DEFECT	ORIENTATION	TOWAGE
Herdman Channel						
HW	<100	-	-	-	-	No towage.
GW	<120	<7999	Y	N	N OR S	None. If no B/T or defect, then 1 tug >12t.
SW	<120	≥7999	Y	N	N OR S	1 tug >20t. If no B/T 1 tug >40t
PD	<120	≥7999	Y	N	N OR S	1 tug >20t. If no B/T 1 tug >40t / 1 tug >40t. If no B/T 2 tugs >40t
RW	120-140	<9999 / ≥9999	Y	N	N OR S	1 tug >20t. If no B/T 1 tug >40t / 1 tug >40t. If no B/T 2 tugs >40t
	140-160	≥9999	Y	N	N OR S	1 tug >40t. If no B/T 2 tugs >40t
	160-185	N/A	N/A	N/A	N OR S	2 tugs >40t. *Additional assisting tug >20t for vessels 160-185m if berthing PD in offshore wind
PROJECT VESSELS/ACTIVITIES WILL BE SUBJECT TO INDIVIDUALLY RA AND SIMULATION IF REQUIRED.						

DEPARTURE

Channel/Berth	LOA	DWT	BOW THRUSTER	DEFECT	ORIENTATION	TOWAGE
Herdman Channel						
HW	<100	-	-	-	-	No towage.
GW	<120	<7999	Y	N	N OR S	None. If no B/T or defect, then 1 tug >12t.
SW	<120	≥7999	Y	N	N	None. If no B/T or defect, then 1 tug >12t.
PD	<120	≥7999	Y	N	S	1 tug >20t. If no B/T 1 tug >40t
RW	120-140	<9999	Y	N	N	None. If no B/T or defect, then 1 tug >12t.
	120-140	≥9999	Y	N	N	1 Tug >20T. If no B/T or defect, then 1 tug >40t.
	120-140	<9999 / ≥9999	Y	N	S	1 TUG >20T. If no B/T 1 tug >40t / 1 TUG >40T. If no B/T 2 tugs >40t
	140-160	≥9999	Y	N	N OR S	1 TUG >40T. If no B/T 2 tugs >40t
	160-185	N/A	N/A	N/A	N OR S	2 TUGS >40T.
PROJECT VESSELS/ACTIVITIES WILL BE SUBJECT TO INDIVIDUALLY RA AND SIMULATION IF REQUIRED.						

BERTH	MAX LOA	MAX DRAFT
HWN/HWS	140m	7.9m / 7.6m
GW	200m	8.5m
SW	200m	8.5m

PD	185m (200m cruise)	8.5m
RW (Restricted Operations)	130m	7.9m

Stormont & SRQ
ARRIVALS

Channel/Berth	LOA	DWT	BOW THRUSTER	DEFECT	ORIENTATION	TOWAGE
Stormont Wharf & SRQ						
WTS	<100	-	-	-	-	No towage.
STN	<120	<7999	Y	N	N OR S	None. If no B/T or defect, then 1 tug >12t for vessels >100m.
ST2,3,4,5	<120	≥7999	Y	N	N OR S	1 tug >20t. If no B/T 1 tug >40t
SRQ	120-140	<9999	Y	N	N OR S	1 tug >20T. If no B/T 1 tug >40t
	120-140	≥9999	Y	N	N OR S	1 tug >40T. If no B/T 2 tugs >40t
	140-160	≥9999	Y	N	N OR S	1 tug >40T. If no B/T 2 tugs >40t
	160-240	N/A	N/A	N/A	N OR S	2 tugs >40T.
PROJECT VESSELS/ACTIVITIES WILL BE SUBJECT TO INDIVIDUALLY RA AND SIMULATION IF REQUIRED.						
ALL VESSELS > 240M WILL BE INDIVIDUALLY RISK ASSESSED.						

DEPARTURES

Channel/Berth	LOA	DWT	BOW THRUSTER	DEFECT	ORIENTATION	TOWAGE
Stormont Wharf & SRQ						
WTS	<100	-	-	-	-	No towage.
STN	<120	<7999	Y	N	N OR S	None. If no B/T or defect, then 1 tug >12t for vessels >100m.
ST2,3,4,5	<120	≥7999	Y	N	N	None. If no B/T or defect, then 1 tug >12t for vessels >100m.
SRQ	<120	≥7999	Y	N	S	1 tug >20t. If no B/T 1 tug >40t
	120-140	<9999	Y	N	N	None. If no B/T or defect, then 1 tug >12t.
	120-140	<9999	Y	N	S	1 tug >20T. If no B/T 1 tug >40t
	120-140	≥9999	Y	N	N	1 tug >20T. If no B/T or defect, then 1 tug >40t.
	120-140	≥9999	Y	N	S	1 tug >40T. If no B/T 2 tugs >40t
	140-160	≥9999	Y	N	N OR S	1 tug >40T. If no B/T 2 tugs >40t
	160-240	N/A	N/A	N/A	N OR S	2 tugs >40T.
PROJECT VESSELS/ACTIVITIES WILL BE SUBJECT TO INDIVIDUALLY RA AND SIMULATION IF REQUIRED.						
ALL VESSELS > 240M WILL BE INDIVIDUALLY RISK ASSESSED.						
LOADED DEPARTURES 10.2m OR DEEPER WILL REQUIRE TO BE INDIVIDUALLY RISK ASSESSED.						

BERTH	MAX LOA	MAX DRAFT
Stormont	240m	10.2m

Stormont Extension	240m	11.0m
SRQ	300m	8.6m

York and Barnett Docks

ARRIVALS

Channel/Berth	LOA	DWT	BOW THRUSTER	DEFECT	ORIENTATION	TOWAGE
BD YD	≤115	N/A	Y	N	N OR S	None. If no B/T or defect, then individually risk assessed.
VESSELS > 115m OR IF ≥7999 DWT TOWAGE TO BE INDIVIDUALLY RISK ASSESSED						

DEPARTURE

Channel/Berth	LOA	DWT	BOW THRUSTER	DEFECT	ORIENTATION	TOWAGE
BD YD	≤115	N/A	Y	N	N OR S	None. If no B/T or defect, then individually risk assessed.
VESSELS > 115m OR IF ≥7999 DWT TOWAGE TO BE INDIVIDUALLY RISK ASSESSED						

BERTH	MAX LOA	MAX DRAFT
BD	Normally 115m / >115m to be agreed with HM	8.5m
YD	Normally 115m / >115m to be agreed with HM	7.3m

Belfast Building Dock / Belfast Drydock

Building Dock Gate	As per H&W SOP for building dock gate movements
Building Dock	Individually Risk Assessed and where necessary subject to simulation
Drydock	Individually Risk Assessed and where necessary subject to simulation

BERTH	MAX LOA	Sill Height
BBD	Individually Assessed.	4.9m
BDD	Individually Assessed.	8.1m

Towage Providers in Belfast Harbour

BHC requires Towage Service Operators operating in the Port of Belfast to comply with the following minimum standards:

Crew Training:

Crew must be suitably qualified and able to demonstrate the competencies necessary to achieve the towage acts defined within these Towage Requirements. Evidence of training must be available and provided to BHC Harbour Master on request.

Tugs with a Bollard Pull <25 Tonnes will:

- Be equipped with twin screw propulsion or meet the requirement of a tug more than 25 tons.
- Provide appropriate and recent certification of bollard pull capability.
- Be equipped with a swivel hook with remote release or suitable winch and equipped with running gog winch arrangement; and
- Be inspected annually to the MCA code of Practice for The Safety of Small Work Boats and Pilot Boats for operation in Category 3 Waters and have no outstanding findings to such code other than those waived by BHC Harbour Master as unnecessary to operations within Belfast Harbour

Tugs with a Bollard Pull >40 Tonnes will:

- Be omni-directional and demonstrate the manoeuvring capability necessary to achieve the towage acts defined within these Towage Requirements;
- Provide appropriate and recent certification of bollard pull capability;
- Be equipped with a swivel hook with remote release;
- Be equipped with a suitable winch; and
- Hold valid Certification to the UK Ship Classification or other International Standard to operate as a Tug not engaged in Long International Voyages and have no outstanding findings to such certification other than those waived by BHC Harbour Master as unnecessary to operations within Belfast Harbour.

Towage Exemption Certificates

Under certain circumstances, vessels which call regularly to the port may be exempted from the minimum requirements. Such exemptions are subject to a procedure contained within the Port's Marine Safety Management System, and if successful will result in the vessel being issued with a Towage Exemption Certificate. Certificates are valid for wind strengths below 20 knots only. Possession of a Towage Exemption Certificate does not prevent the Master or Pilot of the vessel from using tug(s) should they deem necessary.

Shifting & Notes**Different berths not on same wharf.**

The same towage requirements will apply for vessels being shifted between different berths not on same wharf within the Port, as per departure/arrival whichever is the greater.

Shifting on same wharf.

1. Vessels which do not require towage for either arrival or departure as per BHC Minimum Towage Requirements will not normally require tug assistance for shifting.
2. Any vessel requiring 1 tug >40 tonnes bollard pull as per BHC Minimum Towage Requirements will normally require 1 tug >20 tonnes when shifting distances in excess of a ships length.
3. Any vessel requiring more than 1 tug >40 tonnes bollard pull as per BHC Minimum Towage Requirements will normally require 1 tug >40 tonnes when shifting distances in excess of 50m. (With prior agreement of the Harbour Master 2 tugs each being \geq than 20 tonnes but with a combined bollard pull of \geq 40 tonnes may replace 1 tug of not less than 40 tonnes Bollard Pull)
4. Linesmen are required for ships covered by points 1 and 2 when shifting more than a ships length. Vessels covered by point 3 are required to have linesmen for shifts in excess of 50m. Ship's crew must wear appropriate PPE for this operation including a Lifejacket

When towage is required for shifting then a pilot must be assigned to that vessel unless the Master or other attending Deck Officer holds a suitably endorsed PEC.

The Master of a vessel retains the right to ask for towage in excess of this requirement.

Cruise vessels and other marine projects will be individually risk assessed, for further details please refer to Belfast Harbour's towage operation manual.

The Harbour Master has the right to override these towage requirements at any time.



Captain K G Allen
Harbour Master
Port Operations Belfast Harbour
1st October 2024