



Marine Notice 3/2014
Supersedes 12/2008

Anchoring off Australian ports

The purpose of this Marine Notice is to remind Masters of the precautions to be taken when anchoring off Australian ports.

Vessels, mainly bulk-carriers, may be required to anchor off some Australian ports whilst waiting for their turn to berth.

Masters should apply the basic tenets of good seamanship and common sense when anchoring in off-shore and exposed anchorages.

Selecting an anchor location / position

At some ports, there are designated anchorages; these are shown on large-scale charts. Therefore, the port authority or vessel traffic service (VTS) may instruct the Master to proceed to a specified anchorage.

Where anchorages are not designated, the Master should select an anchor position taking into account the following:

- ample swinging room is left from charted dangers and other anchored vessels;
- good holding ground is sought whenever possible. Recommendations may be found in Admiralty Sailing Directions and commercially available port entry guides; and
- an adequate length of cable is veered.

Watch-keeping

The attention of Masters is drawn to the requirements of Part A of the *Seafarers' Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Code* (STCW Code) section A-VIII/2, part 4-1, provision 51, regarding vessels at anchor.

It is essential that routines are in place to check the vessel's position regularly. Use of GPS, visual bearings and radar ranges is recommended.

Prevailing and forecast weather, tides and tidal streams, proximity of land and hazards, proximity of other vessels at anchor and traffic

congestion at the anchorage should all be taken into account, when deciding on the position checking routine.

Weather

The Master should be aware of the particular meteorological conditions which may affect the vessel at anchor.

It is essential that the Master monitors current weather forecasts and warnings. Weather forecast services are listed in the *Admiralty List of Radio Signals Volume 3 Part 2*. Information on weather forecast services can also be found in the *Australian Seafarers Handbook*. The Australian Bureau of Meteorology provides coastal forecasts and warnings on its internet site: www.bom.gov.au.

Machinery

Where possible, the main engines, steering gear and windlasses should not be dismantled or immobilised whilst at anchor, as conditions may deteriorate at short notice.

If repairs are essential to any of these machinery items, the relevant port authority or VTS should be advised of the situation. Such actions should be recorded in the vessel's deck log book.

Ballast

At all times, the ballast condition should be such that the vessel's propeller is fully immersed, adequate seagoing stability is maintained and that the vessel's forward draught is maintained in accordance with the requirements of the vessel's stability book.

In the event that deteriorating weather is forecast, the Master should make a timely decision to take on heavy weather ballast before conditions become severe enough to prevent ballasting operations.

Getting underway

The Master should assess the forecast wind and sea conditions and if necessary leave an anchorage, to avoid the risk of dragging anchor and possibly grounding. The Master should not wait for instructions from a VTS or port authority, (whether in a designated anchorage within port limits or not) if the Master considers the safety of the vessel requires such action. Masters are also to pay due regard to any instructions a VTS or port authority may provide them.

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