

OP NOTICE TO SHIPPING No. N-1-2017

Vessel Requirements



CANAL DE PANAMÁ

January 1, 2017

OP NOTICE TO SHIPPING No. N-1-2017

To: Shipping Agents, Owners and Operators

Subject: Vessel Requirements

1. Effective Date and Cancellation

This Notice is effective on the date of issue and cancels OP Notice to Shipping No. N-1-2016. A revised Notice will be issued in January of each year or when otherwise required. This Notice has been thoroughly modified to incorporate vessel requirements for the new Expanded Canal locks. Other changes in this revision include:

(1) Items *a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, I* and *j* were incorporated into the *Relevant Information for Canal Customers* section, on pages 5 to 8.

(2) Former Paragraph 3.b was eliminated.

(3) Subsection 4.e (*Panama Canal Minimum Visibility Requirements*) was modified on pages 29 and 30.

(4) Subsection 4.p (*Use of Automatic Identification System - AIS*) was modified on p. 38.

(5) Section 11 (*Definitive Phase-out of Single Hull Oil Tankers*) was modified on p. 55.

(6) Section 12 (*Admeasurement System for Full Container Vessels*) was modified on pages 55 and 56.

(7) Former Section 13.d (*Calculations of PC/UMS for Vessels not Designed to Carry Containers on Deck*) was eliminated.

(8) Section 17 (*Cargo Regulated Under Annex II of MARPOL*) was modified on p. 65.

(9) Section 25 (*Sanitary Facilities and Sewage Handling*) was modified on p. 71.

(10) Section 29 (*Maneuvering Fuel*) was modified on pages 72 and 73.

(11) Former Section 30 (*Vessel Requirements for the New Panama Canal Locks*) was eliminated.

(12) Former Annex 1 was eliminated; and Annex 2 was updated, on p. 75.

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2. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this document is to inform the shipping community of the procedures and amplifications necessary to implement the Maritime Regulations for the Operation of the Panama Canal (MROPC). **Please be advised that non-compliance with Panama Canal rules and regulations may subject vessels to unnecessary delays or denial of transit.** The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) may order deviations from these rules if special circumstances so warrant. Please refer to the Table of Contents on pages 9 through 11.

3. Organization and Responsibility

The *Executive Vice Presidency for Operations* (272-4500, fax: 272-3892), under the Executive Vice President for Operations, is the organizational department of the Panama Canal Authority responsible for the control of maritime traffic through the Canal and its terminal ports, and through which all ACP services to shipping are handled. Following is a summary of the Executive Vice Presidency for Operations' units which, due to their functions, often require contact with agents, operators and owners:

a. The *Transit Operations Division* (272-4218), headed by the Transit Operations Division executive manager, is responsible for the immediate direction of daily maritime operations, emergency response and recovery, supervision and enforcement of rules and regulations governing the navigation of the Canal, approval of new construction compliance with chocks and bitts, boarding facilities, wheelhouse design features and visibility requirements, and for ensuring that vessels arriving for transit are properly equipped. Additionally, the unit is responsible for matters involving the safety aspects of vessel traffic flow and control, vessel material conditions and inspections, hazardous cargo, Canal physical conditions, and emergency response for fires or oil/chemical spills. The responsibilities of the Transit Operations Division executive manager are exercised through the Canal port captain on duty.

b. The *Marine Traffic Control Unit* (272-4201, fax: 272-3976, ETA@pancanal.com), headed by the Traffic Management Unit manager, is responsible for processing ETA information, preparation of the daily transit schedule, monitoring and coordinating all vessel movements within Canal operating areas, and administering the Panama Canal Transit Booking System.

c. The *Admeasurement and Billing Unit* (272 4567, fax: 272 5514, OPTC-A@Pancanal.com), headed by the Admeasurement Unit manager, is responsible for ascertaining the correct Panama Canal tonnage of vessels transiting the Canal, ascertaining and auditing the Total TEU Allowance (TTA) on full container vessels and Number of TEUs Transported (NTT) on other vessels with on-deck carrying capacity, maximum number of berth on passenger vessels and the maximum displacement on warships, dredges and floating dry-docks; boarding and clearing of vessels for medical surveillance, general ship inspections, gathering information for the Ship Data Bank, and generating billing invoices for transits and related services.

- n. *Non-Self-Propelled Vessel:*** A vessel which either does not have installed means of propulsion, or has installed means of propulsion which does not function during transit. It is also referred to as dead tow.
- o. *Panama Canal Universal Measurement System (PC/UMS):*** The system based on the Universal Measurement System, 1969, using its parameters for determining the total volume of a vessel with the additional variations established by the Panama Canal Authority.
- p. *Panamax vessels:*** Vessels of 30.48 meters (100 feet) in beam or more that comply with the size and draft limitations of the Panamax locks; namely, 294.13 meters (965 feet) in length by 32.31 meters (106 feet) in beam by 12.04 meters (39.50 feet), TFW draft.
- q. *Panamax Plus vessels:*** All *Panamax* vessels authorized for TFW drafts greater than 12.04 meters (39.50 feet) up to 15.2 meters (49.87 feet) and approved for transit of the new locks.
- r. *Passenger Vessel:*** A vessel that principally transports passengers and runs on fixed published schedules. All the spaces that have been identified and certified for the use or possible use of passengers are to be included in the total volume calculation of the vessel.
- s. *Protrusion:*** Anything that extends beyond any portion of the hull of a vessel, whether it is permanent or temporary, except for the main anchors.
- t. *Published TFW Maximum Draft:*** Deepest point of immersion in Gatun Lake waters as promulgated by the Executive Vice President for Operations, taking into account the water level of Gatun Lake and other limitations deemed necessary because of restrictions in the Canal.
- u. *Safe Working Load (SWL):*** The maximum load that can be safely applied to a fitting used for mooring or towing on a vessel, tug or barge, and normally shown on a label plate adjacent to the fitting or marked upon it. The SWL should not exceed 80 percent of the design load.
- v. *TEU:*** International measure standard for a container (20-foot equivalent unit), which is 20' x 8' x 8.5'.
- w. *Tropical Fresh Water (TFW):*** Tropical Fresh Water of Gatun Lake, density 0.9954 tons/m³ at 29.4 °C. (Note: Transition to fresh water frequently alters the trim of large vessels 0.24 feet to 0.325 feet (7.5 to 10 centimeters) by the head.

(6) In the Neopanamax Locks protrusions, cargo or extensions beyond the ship's side located 16.85 meters (55.268 feet) or less above the waterline are not acceptable; however, extensions up to 4 meters (13.12 feet) beyond the hull and higher than 16.85 meters (55.268 feet) from the waterline will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to verify the minimum clearance of 1000 mm (3.33 feet) from all equipment above the lock walls (such as valve stems, bits, etc.). Protrusions of up to 5 meters located higher than 22.87 meters (75.01 feet) or up to 6.5 meters (21.32 feet) and located higher than 25.44 meters (83.44 feet) over the waterline, will also be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to verify the minimum clearance is provided from all equipment (such as light posts, valve stems). See Annexes 2 and 3.

f. *Maximum Height*

The allowable height for any vessel transiting the Canal or entering the Port of Balboa at any state of the tide is 57.91 m (190 feet) measured from the waterline to its highest point. With prior permission from the Transit Operations Division Executive Manager, height may be permitted to 62.5 m (205 feet) on a case-by-case basis, with passage at low water (MLWS) at Balboa. Maximum Height Restrictions are due to the tide and the unpredictable upward movement of water from swells, surges, waves, etc., and maintenance equipment suspended beneath the bridge at Balboa.

g. *Release from Liability*

(1) Masters of vessels will, prior to transit, be required to execute a form undertaking to release the Authority from liability in case of accident and to indemnify the Authority for damages sustained in the following instances:

(a) When a vessel transits at less than the minimum drafts established in paragraph 2.c, has a list in excess of three degrees, or is so loaded or trimmed that maneuverability is adversely affected.

(b) When a vessel has protrusions.

(c) When visibility from the vessel's navigation bridge presents a hazard, as determined by the Transit Operations Division Executive Manager. (See Section 4 of this Notice.)

(d) When the vessel's chocks, bits or other equipment does not meet Canal requirements as determined by the Transit Operations Division Executive Manager. (See Section 8 of this Notice.)

(e) When a vessel transits on a one-time delivery basis with extreme beam exceeding 32.31 m (106 feet).

(2) Pilots or boarding officers are requested to have the master of the vessel sign Form 4323, "Undertaking to Release and Indemnify", prior to docking vessels in Balboa, Cristobal and Rodman Piers when such vessels are exceeding the allowable drafts or when a vessel is to be berthed on a pier that has inadequate or absent fendering and/or lighting.

(3) A refusal to sign such release may result in a delay of transit.