

Ship Assist and Harbour Towage Plan Aide Memoire

A Planning

1	Master advised nature, details, number of tugs and timings of task
2	Master considers assisted vessels characteristics and likely method of towing
3	Towing equipment checked and rigged
4	Emergency release systems checked, tested, reset and logged
5	Passage planning, tidal detail and weather checked and constraints understood
6	Rig gog if required
7	Additional planning with pilots required if a deadship tow

B Pre-towage operation

1	Operation discussed with pilot, speed constraints agreed and communication channel(s) tested including suitability of fairleads and bits and method of making fast.
2	Tug crew briefed, crew wearing correct PPE and lifejackets if working on deck
3	Environmental conditions final check, particularly visibility and sea state, and decision made to conduct operation or not made
4	Bridge equipment, including steering and internal communications checked
5	Watertight integrity checked and logged
6	Working areas properly lit and clear
7	VTS advised tugs intentions
8	Shore/DPA advised if additional persons onboard tug
9	Correct lights and shapes are ready
10	Traffic movements understood by tugmaster and alerted by VTS/pilot of the towage operation
11	Proceed to assisted vessel, following passage plan, allowing ample time to connect up
12	Contingency plans understood

C Towage operation

1	Watertight integrity maintained throughout task
2	Close liaison with pilot throughout
3	Speed and position monitored throughout – safe speed and position must be maintained
4	Crew above waterline and clear of exposed decks
5	Other traffic monitored
6	Environmental conditions monitored

D Post towage operation

1	Agree with pilot when let go, advise pilot when tow line let go and when the tug is clear
2	Heightened awareness must be maintained at all times, this is especially important when manoeuvring away from the assisted vessel
3	Gear checked, inspected for damage and stowed, husbandry as appropriate
4	Passage plan followed back to safe berth
5	Environmental conditions monitored
6	VTS advised when tug safely back at berth
7	Shore/DPA advised tug alongside and additional pax, if any, disembarked
8	Tug washed down as required

Additional references:

1. BTA/Chamber of Shipping Pilots' Pocket Guide and Checklist
2. Shipowners Club, Tugs and Tows – A Practical Safety and Operational Guide
3. MCA Safety of Tugs While Towing
4. MCA Dangers of Interaction
5. MCA Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers

Disclaimer:

This document has been produced by the British Tugowners Association and is intended as guidance only for use at the reader's own risk. It should be used in conjunction with the company's safety management system and the guidance given in the references where appropriate.

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