

Decree No: 2024/57

Decree on signalling and passing distances for shipping during bunkering and de-bunkering

The Director of the Central Nautical Management North Sea Canal Area

Having regard to:

- Article 8.8, paragraph 1, of the Regional Port Bye-laws for the North Sea Canal Area 2023, which authorises the Mayor and Aldermen to designate fuels or energy sources requiring a specific sign, as determined by the Mayor and Aldermen, to be displayed during bunkering or de-bunkering;
- Article 8.8 paragraph 2 of the Regional Port Bye-laws for the North Sea Canal Area 2023 in which it is stipulated that for each of the designated fuels as referred to in the first paragraph of Article 8.8 of the Regional Port Bye-laws for the North Sea Canal Area 2023, the Mayor and Aldermen may establish a minimum passing distance for ships in relation to the bunkering activity;
- the 2024 Decree, issued by the Mayor and Aldermen of the municipality of Amsterdam on 9 July 2024 and published on 17 July 2024, mandating nautical powers to the Director of the Central Nautical Management North Sea Canal Area, on the basis of which the Director of the Central Nautical Management North Sea Canal Area is authorised to take decisions on behalf of the Mayor and Aldermen;
- the Beverwijk Mandate Decree regarding the Director of the Central Nautical Management North Sea Canal Area 2023, issued by the Mayor and Aldermen of the municipality of Beverwijk on 16 July 2024 and published on 4 November 2024, on the basis of which the Director of the Central Nautical Management North Sea Canal Area is authorised to take decisions under mandate on behalf of the Mayor and Aldermen of the municipality of Beverwijk;
- the Velsen Mandate Decree regarding the Director of the Central Nautical Management North Sea Canal Area 2023, issued by the Mayor and Aldermen of the municipality of Velsen on 30 January 2024 and published on 2 February 2024, on the basis of which the Director of the Central Nautical Management North Sea Canal Area is authorised to take decisions under mandate on behalf of the Mayor and Aldermen of the municipality of Velsen;
- the Zaanstad Mandate Decree regarding the Director of the Central Nautical Management North Sea Canal Area 2023, issued by the Mayor and Aldermen of the municipality of Zaanstad on 7 May 2024 and published on 16 May 2024, on the basis of which the Director of the Central Nautical Management North Sea Canal Area is authorised to take decisions under mandate on behalf of the Mayor and Aldermen of the municipality of Zaanstad.

Having considered that:

- the Director of the Central Nautical Management North Sea Canal Area is authorised to exercise the powers set forth in Article 8.8 of the Regional Port Bye-laws for the North Sea Canal Area 2023;
- the rationale behind this authority is to ensure that a vessel engaged in receiving or returning designated fuels or energy sources during bunkering or de-bunkering communicates this activity to the surrounding area by displaying a specified sign.

Additionally, a minimum passing distance, to be established for other vessels navigating near such bunkering activities, is intended to mitigate the associated safety risks;

- the internationally recognized industry guidelines and bunker checklists for bunkering or de-bunkering designated fuels or energy sources include the concept of a maritime safety zone, commonly referred to as the Marine Exclusion Zone;
- the establishment of the distance within the Marine Exclusion Zone aims, on the one hand, to minimise the risk of collision and on the other, to provide an additional safety margin within which no activities occur that could compromise the safety of bunkering or de-bunkering operations;
- the risk of collision on site is significantly influenced by factors such as the type and manoeuvring characteristics of passing vessels, their speed, and prevailing weather conditions;
- further definition of the Marine Exclusion Zone is required by the port authority from a safety point of view;
- this decision provides the detailed framework for the Marine Exclusion Zone.

Decree:

I.

In addition to Article 1.1 of the Regional Port Bye-laws for the North Sea Canal Area 2023, the following definitions shall apply to the provisions set out in or arising from this decree:

- a. bunkering activity: the bunkering or de-bunkering of a fuel or energy source of a seagoing vessel by a bunker ship, fixed bunkering installation, or mobile truck during the entire period that a bunker hose is attached.
- b. minimum passing distance: the shortest distance between a passing ship and the vessel to be (de)bunkered or the bunker ship alongside this vessel.

II.

To establish the following additional sign for a seagoing vessel during the bunkering activity of the designated fuels and energy carriers listed below:

1. between sunset and sunrise: a bright, all-round red shining light and
2. between sunrise and sunset: the international signal flag "B".

To establish the following additional sign for an inland vessel during the bunkering activity of the designated fuels and energy carriers listed below:

1. the sign and instruction of use as referred to in article 3.33 of the Rhine Navigation Police Regulations (RPR 1995).

To designate the following fuels and energy carriers to which this additional sign applies:

- a) liquid methane
- b) methanol
- c) hydrogen, gaseous and liquid

To declare into force 3.01., 3.01a., 3.02. en 3.03. of the inland Navigation Police Regulations (BPR) for the operational performing regulations of these signs.

III.

To establish the following minimum passing distances for vessels during the bunkering operations referred to in Section II:

1. for an inland vessel, at all times, at least 10 metres;
2. for an arriving, departing, or shifting seagoing vessel at maneuvering speed in the immediate vicinity of the bunkering activity, at least 20 metres at all times;
3. for all other passing seagoing vessels, a minimum of 50 metres.

IV.

To repeal the decision of the Director of Central Nautical Management North Sea Canal Area dated 29 May 2020, reference number 2020/21.

V.

This decision takes effect the day after its publication and shall be published in an Announcement to Shipping IJmond North Sea Canal Area Central Nautical Management (BASIJN).

VI.

This decree shall be cited as the "Decree on signalling and passing distances for shipping during bunkering and de-bunkering".

As adopted on behalf of the four executive boards of Mayors and Aldermen on 27 November 2024

The Director of the Central Nautical Management North Sea Canal Area



J.H.M. Mateyo

Explanation

Bunkering involves the delivery of solid, liquid, or gaseous fuels, or any other energy source, used for the propulsion of ships or for general or specific energy supply on board. Conversely, in very specific cases, such as when maintenance is required, de-bunkering may also occur, where the ship delivers back the bunkers. The bunkering or de-bunkering of liquefied methane (LNG), hydrogen, and methanol poses external safety risks to the port and its surroundings. These risks include fire and explosion. To minimise such risks and ensure safety, the Director of Central Nautical Management North Sea Canal Area is authorised by mandate to implement measures on behalf of the executive boards of Mayor and Aldermen.

Based on safety studies, a framework has been established for the safe bunkering of these fuels and energy sources. The safety measures outlined in this framework are incorporated into the bunker operators' permit conditions. Additionally, bunkering is restricted to berths designated by decree or exemption, ensuring that their risk contour does not overlap with vulnerable objects.

Beyond these measures, it was necessary to impose requirements on passing shipping. By prescribing a minimum passing distance, vessels are kept at a safe distance from a bunkering or de-bunkering site. This reduces the risk of collision and prevents passing vessels from acting as potential sources of ignition in the rare event of fuel leakage. Passing vessels will be alerted to a potentially hazardous situation through the use of the international signal flag "B" or a red light displayed aboard the seagoing vessel, and the sign for an inland vessel, referred to in article 3.33 of the Rhine Navigation Police Regulations (RPR 1995), as well as the presence of any bunker ship alongside the vessel with appropriate cone signalling. These indicators serve as a warning to maintain a safe distance from ongoing bunkering activities.

In determining the passing distances, alignment has been sought with the mooring distances prescribed in the inland Navigation Police Regulations (BPR) and the Rhine Navigation Police Regulations (RPR) concerning the management of a safe bunkering zone and berthing during bunkering activities involving liquefied methane (LNG). Safety studies have indicated that the risks associated with hydrogen and methanol are no greater than those of LNG, making these substances suitable for inclusion within the same distance framework.

The rules of the inland Navigation Police Regulations, chapter 3 on how the signs have to be shown by the ships, are applicable.

Inland navigation

The safe bunkering zone, as defined under Article 1.01, paragraph (ae) of the RPR, specifies a distance of 20 metres from the LNG bunkering connection. Given that a bunkering vessel itself is typically over 10 metres wide, a passing distance of at least 10 metres for other inland vessels has been established. This ensures the total distance exceeds the 20-metre safe bunkering zone requirement. When bunkering takes place by way of a truck from the shore, this distance is also maintained, as the receiving vessel itself is generally at least 10 metres wide. It should be noted that these passing distances relative to the bunkering connection are dynamic and transient. For static sources, such as truck-to-ship bunkering from the shore, a different distance may apply in accordance with other regulations.

The RPR further mandates a 10-metre distance from the ship being bunkered for berthing during LNG bunkering operations (Article 15.07(8)(a)). As inland vessels are highly manoeuvrable, this 10-metre passing distance is applicable in all scenarios, including during navigating within the port or when arriving at or departing from a berth where bunkering activity is taking place.

The signalling for an inland vessel to be bunkered has been aligned with the RPR.

Seagoing vessels

For passing seagoing vessels, the minimum passing distance has been aligned with Article 10.10 of the BPR, which stipulates a minimum distance of 50 metres to be maintained when passing ships loaded with hazardous materials and displaying the international signal flag "B" or a bright red all-round light. Since seagoing vessels engaged in bunkering or de-bunkering these fuels use the same signalling system, this 50-metre minimum distance has been adopted.

For arriving or departing seagoing vessels, a safety factor of two has been applied to determine the minimum passing distance compared to that for passing inland vessels. This results in a minimum passing distance of 20 metres when arriving at or departing from the vicinity of a berth where bunkering is taking place.

This adjustment accounts for the reduced maneuverability of seagoing vessels compared to inland vessels. A minimum passing distance of 20 metres is deemed sufficient under these conditions, as arriving and departing vessels operate at manoeuvring speeds, are staffed with a full bridge crew, have a pilot on board, and are often assisted by one or more tugs during manoeuvres. These factors collectively reduce the risk of collision compared to vessels navigating at higher speeds within the harbour, for which a passing distance of 50 meters is therefore prescribed.