

The following Notice to Mariners is published for general information

## Australia – Victoria

No. 136 - 2025

### PORT OF MELBOURNE HARBOUR MASTER DIRECTIONS SECTION 3.12.3 AND 3.16.17

**Date:** 4 March 2025

**Refers:** NtM 393 – 24, NtM 162 – 24, Operational Instruction No. 04 – 2024 are hereby cancelled

**Details:** Mariners and port users are advised of a change to the minimum requirements for the arrival and departure for vessels of the following type and size:

- Container vessel - LOA  $\leq 310$  m and with a beam  $> 42.9$  m to  $\leq 48.2$  m
- Container vessel - LOA  $> 310$  m to  $\leq 337$  m and with a beam  $\leq 45.6$  m
- Low powered vessels
- Vessels equipped with a mechanical or software-based engine or shaft power limiter

Here attached amendments to ***Harbour Masters Directions, section 3.12.3 and 3.16.17*** for the current minimum requirements.

For further information, please email the [BerthAllocator@ports.vic.gov.au](mailto:BerthAllocator@ports.vic.gov.au) or contact Melbourne VTS on 9644 9700.

**Charts & Publications affected:** Harbour Master's Directions – Melbourne Edition 13.1, September 2023, section 3.12.3 and 3.16.17

**Further notice:** No further notice will be issued.



**Stephen D'Souza**  
Acting Harbour Master

### 3.12.3 Tidal stream restrictions

Masters of vessels are advised that tidal stream limits apply to vessels when transiting the Fairway Through Port Phillip Heads. Transit restrictions relate to the periods of strong tidal flows and apply as follows:

- for low-powered vessels and vessels unwilling or unable to override or disable power limiters and unable to achieve a sea speed of 12 knots or more, transit is restricted during periods when adverse tidal stream is over 3 kt and when non adverse tidal stream is over 5 kt. Restrictions may be amended subject to the approval of the Harbour Master for an individual vessel. Pilots are to assess the vessel on her first arrival and departure to the port prior to requesting dispensation.
- for tankers with a draught of <11.6 m constrained to the Great Ship Channel, transit is restricted during periods when the flood and ebb tidal streams are over 3 kt
- for tankers with a draught of 11.6 m to 14.0 m, transit is restricted during periods when the flood and ebb tidal streams are over 3 kt
- tankers with a draught >14.0 m are to transit the Heads at slack water ebb with a tidal stream of <1 kt and swell height <2 m
- all vessels (except tankers) with a draught deeper than 12.1 m
  - inbound transit restricted during periods when the flood and ebb tidal streams are 5 kt and over
  - outbound transit restricted during periods when the flood tidal stream is 5 kt and over, or the ebb tidal stream is 4 kt and over
- container vessels with a LOA >310 m to ≤337 m and / or beam >42.9 m to ≤48.2 m:
  - inward and outward transit is restricted to tidal stream ≤2.5 kts
  - tidal stream limit can be increased to ≤3.0 kts for vessels not constrained to the Great Ship Channel, subject to risk assessment carried out by the Master and the Pilot, with permission from the VTS.

These restrictions are summarized in Table 3 (i).

**Table 3(i) Tidal Stream Limits**

Tidal stream limits			
The designated vessel type is not permitted to transit the Fairway Through Port Phillip Heads during periods when the rate of the tidal stream reaches the following limits.			
Vessel type	Inbound or outbound	Tide flooding	Tide ebbing
Low powered vessels <sup>1</sup> and vessels with power limiters unable to achieve 12 knots or more	In	5 kt	3 kt
	Out	3 kt	5 kt
Tanker draught <11.6m constrained to the Great Ship Channel	In and Out	3 kt	3 kt
Tanker draught <sup>1</sup> 11.6 m to ≤14.0 m	In and Out	3 kt	3 kt
Tanker draught >14.0 m	In	1 kt	1 kt
Non-tanker draught >12.1 m	In	5 kt	5 kt
	Out	5 kt	4 kt
Container vessels with a LOA >310 m to ≤337 m and / or beam >42.9 m to ≤48.2 m:	In and Out	2.5 <sup>2</sup> kt	2.5 <sup>2</sup> kt
<sup>1</sup> Subject to Pilot's assessment and adverse tidal stream			

This notice is a direction of the Harbour Master pursuant to section 232 of the *Marine Safety Act 2010* (Vic)  
The requirements of section 232(2) have been taken into account.

<sup>2</sup> Tidal stream limit can be increased to ≤3.0 kts for vessels not constrained to the Great Ship Channel, subject to risk assessment carried out by the Master and the Pilot, with permission from the VTS.

### **3.16.17 Requirements for container vessels with an LOA ≤310m and with a beam >42.9 m to ≤48.2 m OR vessels with an LOA >310 m to ≤337 m and with a beam ≤45.6 m**

This section applies to arrival and departure for container vessels of the following size:

- length overall ≤310 m and with a beam >42.9 m to ≤48.2 m.
- length overall >310 m but ≤337 m and with a beam ≤45.6 m.

a. In addition to the requirements specified in the Harbour Master's Directions, the following minimum conditions shall apply to container vessels which fall in this category, irrespective of the terminal they are calling:

- ♦ A maximum trim of 2.5 m by the stern. Vessels shall not be trimmed by the head.
- ♦ The Pilot must have a clear view both ahead and astern as per SOLAS Regulation 22 of Chapter V and meet the IMO navigation visibility requirements.
- ♦ Vessels shall berth head out only.
- ♦ Vessel must have an effective bow thruster capable of being operated at 100% of the rated capacity.
- ♦ Vessel must have bollards suitable for 68 t tugs.
- ♦ Tidal streams: inward and outward transit through the Fairway Through Port Phillip Heads is restricted to:
  - Tidal Stream ≤2.5 kts.
  - Tidal stream limit can be increased to ≤3.0 kts for vessels not constrained to the Great Ship Channel, subject to risk assessment carried out by the Master and the Pilot, with permission from VTS.

b. Container vessels calling at Swanson Dock, in addition to the above and noting the additional risk profile of these vessels transiting the Yarra River and Swanson Dock approaches/entry and exit, must also comply with the following:

i. Pilotage requirements:

- For vessels with LOA equal to or greater than 325 m but less than 337 m:
  - Vessel shall apply for a permit for first two arrival and departures to ensure suitability in accordance with the conditions detailed in this section and reviewed by the Harbour Master for approval
  - Two Pilots (both Class 1O) must be onboard for arrival and departure (i.e. from Breakwater to berth and vice versa)
  - The Pilot shall use a Portable Pilot Unit approved by the Harbour Master
  - The Pilot with the conduct of the vessel must have conducted simulator training for this size of vessel, or
  - Must have observed two transits in and two out, and undertaken a check pilotage of a vessel of this size
- Pilot endorsement for these size vessels is subject to the conditions detailed above, to the satisfaction of the Harbour Master

ii. Maximum steady wind restrictions:

- For vessels with LOA less than 325 m:
  - 20 kt for the river transit (Breakwater gauge) and
  - 15 kt for berthing and unberthing (South Wharf gauge)
- For vessels with LOA equal to or greater than 325 m but less than 337 m:
  - 15 kt for the river transit (Breakwater gauge) and
  - 15 kt for berthing and unberthing for wind in North or South quadrant (45 degrees either side of True North or South).
  - 10 kt for berthing and unberthing for wind in East or West quadrants (wind 45 degrees either side of True East or West)

This notice is a direction of the Harbour Master pursuant to section 232 of the *Marine Safety Act 2010* (Vic)  
The requirements of section 232(2) have been taken into account.

iii. Swanson Dock configuration for vessels of this size berthing and unberthing:

- Vessels with a beam greater than 32.5 m are not permitted to berth at 1 West Swanson
- Vessels with a beam greater than 42.9 m are not permitted to berth at 1 East Swanson
- Vessels with a beam greater than 45.6 m must berth at 3 East/West Swanson
- East Swanson southernmost 160 m is to be unoccupied for Arrival and Departure, crane booms up
- West Swanson southernmost 50 m (for vessel with LOA less than 325 m) or southernmost 200 m (for vessels with LOA equal to or greater than 325 m) is to be unoccupied for arrival and departure, crane booms up
- Vessels with an air draught greater than 43 m, arriving and departing East Swanson Dock, when passing between 2 vessels, all crane booms being passed are to be raised at East Swanson Dock
- Vessels with an air draught greater than 43 m, arriving and departing West Swanson Dock, when passing between 2 vessels, all crane booms being passed are to be raised at West Swanson Dock
- For the departure from Swanson Dock, SW 33 is to be unoccupied

For vessels that do not meet the criteria **in this section**, Shipping lines/Agents may apply for an Over Dimension permit by email to the Berth Allocator ([BerthAllocator@ports.vic.gov.au](mailto:BerthAllocator@ports.vic.gov.au)). Applications will be considered on their merit.