

Northland Regional Council

Harbourmaster's Direction 1 – 11

Bay of Islands Harbour Navigation Criteria – Waitangi Sector Light

Background

The Bay of Islands has become a popular destination for cruise ships in the summer season. The ships normally arrive between October and April, with the busy period being January and February. Vessels over 500 Gross Tonnage are subject to compulsory pilotage within the pilotage area. Local communication and navigation procedures are carried out by a licensed pilot in accordance with agreed harbour procedures.

The pilot boards the vessel around 3 nautical miles out from Tapeka point, and in line with the Waitangi sector light. The ship proceeds inbound on the sector light to anchor within the Bay of Islands pilotage area at a position decided by the pilot.

The Waitangi Sector light has fixed Green, White and Red sectors, visible for 15 nautical miles from Waitangi, and on a line 034/214 degrees true. Chart NZ 5125 shows the details and position.

In recent years problems have been experienced with other vessels anchored in the way of the cruise ships. For navigational safety these large ships, with drafts of up to 10 metres, are required to stay within the sector light approach.

Vessels at anchor in way of the cruise ships create a navigational risk as they are unable to pick up their anchor in time, and in many instances do not realise a ship is approaching.

Legislation

These directions are issued pursuant to section 650C (3)(a) and (b) of the Local Government Act 1974 and describe navigation requirements for all vessels navigating in the Bay of Islands Harbour area.

Definitions

“Bay of Islands Harbour Pilotage Area” has the same definition as contained in Maritime Rule Part 90, Pilotage Areas.

“Bay of Islands Harbour” is described by the Harbour limits as specified on chart NZ 5125 between Cape Wiwiki and Cape Brett.

“Vessel” has the same meaning as “ship” in the Maritime Transport Act 1994.

“GT” means Gross Tonnage.

Purpose

To promote the safety of navigation by prescribing criteria for anchoring within the sector light approach route.

Application

This direction applies to all vessels when navigating in the Bay of Islands Harbour.

Vessel Anchoring Requirements

- No vessel may anchor within any sector of the Waitangi Sector light, from the 10 metre depth contour line adjacent to Hermione Rock, out to 3 nautical miles from Tapeka point towards Ninepin Island when a vessel over 500 GT is moving within the harbour. That is either approaching to pick up a pilot, approaching to drop anchor or picking up anchor to depart the harbour.
- Any vessel anchored in this area shall keep a sharp lookout for approaching or departing vessels. If one is observed, the anchored vessel should immediately pick up anchor and move away from the limits of the sector light.
- If the Northland Regional Council pilot vessel approaches and signals any vessel that she is impeding the safe navigation of another ship, the vessel shall immediately pick up anchor if anchored, and move away from the limits of the sector light.
- If any vessel is in doubt as to whether a vessel over 500 GT is moving, or likely to move within the harbour, anchoring within the sector light limits should be avoided.

Duty of master of a vessel under 500 GT

All persons are reminded that, as per the Northland Regional Council Navigation Safety Bylaw, the master of a vessel under 500 GT must not allow the vessel to impede the navigation of any vessel of 500 GT or more if the vessels are in a pilotage or harbour area.

Limitations

Nothing in this Harbourmaster's Direction relieves the master of his or her obligation to comply with the requirements of Maritime Rules, local bylaws and Safety Management Systems.

Liability

Northland Regional Council shall not, in any case, be responsible for any loss arising from the negligence of the master or crew of any vessel.