

## Northland Regional Council

### Harbourmaster's Direction #4 – 2014/WHG

#### Whangarei Harbour – Movement of Ships over 500 Gross Tonnage

##### **Purpose**

To promote the safety of navigation in Whangarei Harbour by prescribing criteria for the safe navigation of ships over 500 Gross Tonnage (GT).

This **Harbourmaster's Direction** is issued to direct all vessels under 500 GT or under 24 metres in length to keep well clear whenever ships over 500 GT are navigating in the harbour, so that the safe navigation of the latter ships is not obstructed or otherwise impeded.

##### **Harbourmaster's Direction**

Within the defined Whangarei harbour limits, all vessels under 500 GT or under 24 metres in length are required to:

1. Avoid crossing ahead (crossing the bow) of any ship over 500 GT. If crossing the bow is unavoidable, keep at least 500 metres clear at the closest point of approach;
2. Keep clear by a minimum of 100 metres to each side and 100 metres to the stern of a ship over 500 GT;
3. When using the marked navigation channel, keep as far possible to the starboard side (right-hand side) of the channel at all times. If a ship over 500 GT approaches, leave the channel if safe to do so, so that the channel is clear for the safe navigation of the ship;
4. When a ship over 500 GT is engaged in a berthing or un-berthing manoeuvre, keep well clear (500 metres as far as possible) of the ship and any other vessels that may be assisting in this manoeuvre as well as the berth, wharf or jetty;
5. Do not anchor, stop, engage in fishing or lay fishing equipment within any part of the navigation channel marked by buoys and beacons at any time.

All vessels in Whangarei harbour are encouraged to maintain a listening watch on VHF Channel 19 (Whangarei Harbour Radio) and VHF Channel 16 (International calling and distress) to hear traffic calls relating to the movement of commercial shipping.

##### **Application**

This direction **applies to all vessels under 500 GT or under 24 metres in length, including sailing vessels, power-driven vessels and vessels under oars (includes kayaks and canoes)**, when navigating within the Whangarei Harbour limits as shown on Chart NZ5219.

##### **Background**

Whangarei Harbour hosts the deep water jetties and wharves operated by Refining NZ, Northport and the Portland cement works. All the ships visiting these facilities are over 500 GT in size. Ships of this size have considerable limitations in manoeuvring capability in close quarters, at slow speed and in shallow waters. This necessitates

the need for the full available width and extent of the navigation channel to be at the disposal of the ship to use to navigate safely.

If other vessels impede the passage of these large ships in close waters or in the vicinity of berths, wharves or jetties, their ability to take avoiding action to prevent collision is very limited, as the consequences of losing control due to slow speed or leaving the channel can be serious.

Further, large ships have 'blind zones' all around the vessel, especially over the bow and stern due to clear line of sight being obstructed from the position of the navigation bridge over the ship structure. These blind zones, which can be as much as several hundred metres, (depending on cargo on deck, configuration of the ship, etc.), means that a small vessel in the blind zone may just not be visible to the crew on the ship's navigation bridge.

The factors above necessitate the need for these large ships to navigate within harbour limits without obstruction and without being impeded in any way by all other vessels.

## **Legislation**

These Harbourmaster's Directions are issued pursuant to Section 33F(1)(c) of the Maritime Transport Act 1994 (MTA) and prescribe navigation requirements for all vessels navigating in Whangarei Harbour with respect to the movement of ships over 500 GT.

The requirement for vessels under 500 GT or under 24 metres in length to not impede the safe navigation of ships over 500 GT is also set out in Clause 2.12.3 of the Northland Regional Council Navigation Safety Bylaw 2012.

## **Penalties**

As per the provisions of Section 33F(6) of the MTA, failure to comply with a Harbourmaster's Direction is an offence and the offender may be liable to imprisonment for up to 12 months or a fine up to \$10,000.

Breach of the Northland Regional Council Navigation Safety Bylaw 2012, Clause 2.12.3, may also result in an instant infringement offence fee of \$300.

## **Liability**

Nothing in this Harbourmaster's Direction relieves the master (skipper), crew or operator of any vessel of his or her obligation to comply with the requirements of maritime rules, local bylaws and safety management systems that may be applicable.

Northland Regional Council shall not, under any circumstances or conditions, be responsible for any loss arising from the negligence of the master (skipper), crew or operator of any vessel.