

MARINER'S GUIDE TO THE FORTH

INTRODUCTION

1. The Statutory Harbour Authority's area of jurisdiction on the River and Firth of Forth ("The Forth") extends from approximately one mile west of the Isle of May upriver to Stirling. Radar surveillance by the Authority covers the area between the Isle of May and Grangemouth. **Authority's jurisdiction**
2. This publication contains information on the Forth & Tay Navigation Service operated by Forth Ports Limited (the "Authority") from its Vessel Traffic Service ("VTS") Centre at the Forth & Tay Navigation Service building, Grangemouth Docks, Grangemouth. **Scope of this publication**
3. Radar stations are located at Gullane, Grangemouth, Leith, Burntisland, and Port Edgar. Some are equipped with AIS base stations. All are linked to the VTS Centre at Grangemouth by private telephone line. **Locations of radar stations**
4. The VTS Centre is equipped with radar, VHF radio, e-mail, facsimile, telephones, radar video-recorders, VHF radio and telephone audio-recorders and local weather and tidal instrumentation. The Centre processes information and disseminates to vessels and shore stations in the Forth. **Function of VTS Centre**
5. The VTS Centre e-mail address is FTNS@forthports.co.uk. VHF radio call sign is "FORTH NAVIGATION SERVICE" and continuous watch is kept on Channel 71, with Channel 20 as a secondary working channel. **Forth & Tay Nav. Service e-mail address & VHF Channels**
6. The aim of the VTS is to ensure safe transit and enhance punctuality by providing vessels with advance information on the movements of other vessels and also other data, including weather reports, which may affect the safety of traffic within the area. To this effect, it may be necessary on occasions to hold or slow down vessels, but such regulation of movement shall usually be after liaison with the Master, Commanding Officer or Pilot of the vessel concerned. However, the Duty Officer at Forth & Tay Navigation Service will at all times make the final decision as to such regulation of movement of vessels.
7. Mariners are cautioned that the information provided by the VTS Centre comes not only from radar but from other sources which may be unsubstantiated. Unseen and unreported hazards may still confront the mariner – despite all reasonable precautions taken by the VTS Centre.

The Authority welcomes any constructive suggestion that may improve the operation of the Forth & Tay Navigation Service.

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GUIDANCE NOTES

8. Nothing in this publication absolves any Master, Commanding Officer or Pilot from the necessity of complying with the following: -

- (a) The International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea 1972 as the same may be amended from time to time. (It should be noted that where there is a conflict between the Regulations and the Authority's Byelaws and General Directions the latter shall prevail within the area prescribed.)
- (b) Forth Byelaws.
- (c) General Directions for Navigation in the Forth.
- (d) Forth Ports Limited Pilotage Directions.
- (e) Forth Ports Limited Pilotage Exemption Certificate Regulations.

9. Passage upriver to Grangemouth includes transit under two bridges, the Forth Railway Bridge and the Forth Road Bridge (for clearances at Highest Astronomical Tide see notes on Admiralty Chart 736). Speed limits applicable to areas within the Forth are to be found in the Forth General Directions and Mariners are advised that Forth & Tay Navigation Service monitors and records ship speeds in these areas.

Transit under Forth Rail and Road Bridges

10. Local Notices to Mariners are issued by Forth Ports Limited at appropriate times to inform mariners of temporary or permanent alterations to procedures for navigation in the Forth and of hazards that might arise affecting safety to navigation. The Notices are widely distributed to Shipping Agents and others, but the Forth & Tay Navigation Service can always advise in cases of doubt.

Navigation Notices to Mariners

11. (a) VHF radio communications with Forth & Tay Navigation Service are detailed in the Admiralty List of Radio Signals Volume 6. Briefly, it is required that vessels inbound to the Forth make initial VHF contact with Forth & Tay Navigation Service on Channel 71 before crossing the Eastern limit of jurisdiction of the Authority as shown on Admiralty Charts. Thereafter, vessels must maintain listening watch on Channel 71 and report to Forth & Tay Navigation Service when passing the reporting points as laid down in the General Directions for navigation as may be amended from time to time. Outbound vessels are similarly required to report upon departure and when on passage down-river.

Use of VHF channels and Radio Forth

(b) Channel 16 should be used for calling other vessels or shore station in the normal manner.

12. Prior to reaching the Eastern Limits of the Authority's jurisdiction, inbound vessels to the Forth are required to supply the following information to Forth & Tay Navigation Service:-

Information required by Forth & Tay Navigation

- (a) Name of Vessel.
- (b) Summer Deadweight Tonnage.
- (c) Country of Registry.
- (d) Maximum draught.
- (e) Cargo
- (f) Last Port.
- (g) Destination Port.
- (h) ETA at Fairway Buoy, 56° 03'.50 North, 03° 00'.00West.
- (i) Any defects which may affect the safe navigation or manoeuvrability of the vessel.
- (j) Confirmation that both anchors will be cleared and available for immediate use at all times when in the Firth of Forth.
- (k) Confirmation that a pilotage passage plan has been prepared which will be discussed and agreed with the pilot upon boarding.
- (l) Confirmation of the number of persons onboard.

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(m) Confirmation of vessel's current Security Level.

For details of statutory ETA requirements, clearance procedures, and special instructions for vessels carrying Dangerous or Polluting Goods, reference should be made to General Directions for Navigation in the Firth of Forth (Direction 5).

Vessels carrying Dangerous or Polluting Goods

13. Designated anchorage areas suitable for all normal classes of vessel are available in the Forth and application for such anchorages should be made to Forth & Tay Navigation Service for express permission prior to use of any such anchorage. In all cases it is necessary to inform Forth & Tay Navigation Service when a vessel is brought up to anchor and again before departing from the anchorage. Vessels must maintain an anchor watch and inform FTNS if the anchor drags. If the Master of a vessel has a preference for a particular designated anchorage he should inform Forth & Tay Navigation Service of his preference and every effort will be made to accommodate him at the anchorage of his choice.

Designated Anchorage Areas

14. Vessels 150m in length and over inbound passing north and south of Inchkeith Island in the compulsory pilotage area referred to in the Forth Byelaws should board their pilot at the Fairway Buoy.

Boarding and landing of Pilots

Vessels under 150m in length inbound passing north of Inchkeith Island should board their pilot at the position north of No3 deep water channel Buoy marked on the chart.

Vessels under 150m in length inbound passing south of Inchkeith Island should board their pilot at the position north east of the Narrow Deep Buoy marked on the chart

Vessels 150m in length and over inbound from the Kilo Anchorages must not proceed south of the line of 56° 05'N until the pilot is onboard and has the conduct of the vessel.

Vessels 150m in length and over inbound from the Alfa Anchorages must not proceed west of 003° 00'W until the pilot is onboard and has the conduct of the vessel. All vessels anchored at A4 and A5 should remain in the anchorage until the pilot is onboard and has the conduct of the vessel.

Vessels anchored at Inchkeith Small Vessel Anchorage and Cockenzie Small Vessel Anchorage should remain in the anchorage until the pilot is onboard and has conduct of the vessel.

Vessels anchored at or inbound passing Methil Roads should remain in position 56° 10'N 003°00'W until the pilot is onboard and has the conduct of the vessel. Outbound vessels from Methil should disembark their pilot close to position 56° 10'N 003° 00'W.

Outbound vessels having passed north of Inchkeith Island, normally disembark their pilot south of the fairway between No 4 and No 2 Channel Buoys.

Outbound vessels having passed south of Inchkeith Island disembark their pilot north of the Narrow Deep Buoy.

In times of adverse weather conditions it may prove necessary to amend the foregoing. It may also be necessary for Forth & Tay Navigation Service to restrict the movements of vessels when west of the Fairway Buoy. Mariners should always obtain clearance to approach the Pilotage boarding area from Forth & Tay Navigation Service.

15. Mariners are advised that exercises involving naval vessels frequently take place in the Forth and that any approach to such naval vessels should always be made with extreme caution.

Naval exercises

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16. Tanker masters are advised that the Authority does not permit tank washing and/or gas freeing or other like operations or discharges of any kind to take place within the Forth. In exceptional circumstances, an exemption to this rule may be allowed after prior application to the Authority.

Tanker discharging, venting, etc. not permitted in the Forth

17. Masters of liquified gas carriers are advised that the Authority does not permit venting of gas to the atmosphere while the vessel is within the Forth.

18. The Authority does not permit the transfer of oils between vessels in the Forth except with the express written permission of the Chief Harbour Master and subject to such terms and conditions as may be specified and of which the Chief Harbour Master shall be the sole judge.

Transfer of oils between vessels not permitted without permission

19. All mariners are warned that oil pollution legislation will be very stringently enforced throughout the Forth and that all reported infringements will be investigated.

20. It is the wish of the Authority that all mariners enjoy a safe transit of the Forth and, to this end, the Byelaws, General Directions for Navigation, Pilotage Service and Directions should assist.

21. The Authority considers it obligatory that all Mariners use corrected up to date charts of the Forth and advises that vessels not so equipped may experience delays.)

22. Marine incidents as specified in Byelaws 24 and 25, or any other dangerous incidents or occurrences should be reported via the following methods:

e-mail: marine.reports@forthports.co.uk

Post: Marine Manager
Forth and Tay Navigation Service
Port Office
Central Dock Road
Grangemouth
FK3 9UE

The Marine Report Form can be faxed or e-mailed to any vessel upon request and can be found on the Forth Ports Limited website at:

<http://www.forthports.co.uk/ports/marine/proformas/>

The website contains proformas relating to other activities such as diving operations and bunkering as well as general marine safety information of interest to vessels intending to visit the Forth.

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