

Ports of Tees and Hartlepool Towage Licence Requirements

Published: 1st May 2025

PD Teesport Limited is the Statutory Harbour Authority (the “**Authority**”) for the ports of Tees and Hartlepool (the “**Port**”). Any towage provider proposing to provide general towage services within the Port must be licensed by the Authority to do so. In order for the Authority to issue a general towage licence the prospective provider must meet the requirements set out in this document.

1. Professional Standards and Qualifications of the Towage Provider and its Personnel

All personnel engaged in the provision of towage services and working on tugs must:

- be trained and qualified in accordance with the minimum national standards (where applicable) and competent to perform the work for which they have been engaged by the towage provider;
- have carried out Port familiarisation¹.

All personnel whose roles involve the operation of a tug must be properly and adequately trained to operate the tug in accordance with Good Industry Practice and applicable laws. Masters engaged in towage operations must hold a Ship Assist Towage endorsement under the Voluntary Towage Endorsement Scheme (or equivalent).

The towage provider must maintain a schedule of personnel engaged in the provision of towage services and working on tugs, which is to be provided to the Authority’s Harbour Master annually, on request and immediately whenever the Master changes.

2. Equipment Employed by the Towage Provider

All tugs and other equipment utilised by the towage provider in the provision of towage services must be fit for purpose, in a good state of repair and maintained in accordance with Good Industry practice and applicable laws. Notwithstanding the generality of this requirement, tugs engaged in the provision of towage services must:

- be classified by a member society of the International Association of Classification Societies and operated within the member society rules;
- have suitable equipment on board to display Port Electronic Navigational Charts at the conning position.

The towage provider must provide vessel details to the Authority’s Harbour Master for approval prior to any tug being brought into service (see Section 7 Licence Assessment).

¹ Details of local conditions in the Port’s pilotage district, including bathymetric charts, are available from the Authority’s Harbour Master.

3. Service Availability

Where a towage provider wishes to be licenced to provide general towage services at the Port then the towage provider must make the towage services available to all users of the Port on an equal basis, at all berths, day and night throughout the year and in particular must maintain a fleet as follows:

- a minimum of 4 tugs to be operationally available, appropriately manned and based in the Port;
- a minimum of 2 tugs to be permanently manned and immediately available in an emergency;
- a minimum of 2 tugs with fire-fighting capability (FiFi class 1) (minimum of 1 to be permanently manned and immediately available in an emergency);
- a minimum of 1 tractor tug to be operationally available;
- a tug fleet to provide a suitable towage service for all classes of vessel regularly using the Port².

Up to 2 tugs may be temporarily relocated to provide towage operations in another port with the prior approval of the Authority's Harbour Master, subject to fulfilling expected towing requirements at the Port.

Any compromise to service availability must be notified to the Authority's Harbour Master immediately.

For non-emergency towage operations, tugs are to be available at 2 hrs notice.

The towage provider must have a user account for the Authority's Port Community System and monitor for updates.

The towage provider must maintain a schedule of approved tugs, which must be provided to the Authority's Harbour Master annually, on request and immediately whenever changes occur, such schedule to contain the following information:

Name;
IMO number;
Bollard pull;
LOA;
Beam
Location (i.e. Home port).

4. Health, Safety and Environment

The towage provider must have and maintain its own published safety policy, safe systems of work and risk assessments which have been developed in accordance with Good Industry Practice and applicable laws. Without prejudice to the generality of this requirement the towage provider must:

- carry out towage services in accordance with the Port Marine Safety Code and any applicable policy of the Authority from time to time concerning the health and safety of operations in the Port;

² Details of vessels regularly using the Port are available from the Authority's Harbour Master.

- adhere to the requirements of the International Ship and Port Security Code as applied by the Authority;
- share copies of audits (company and vessels), under the safety management system of the International Safety Management Code, with the Authority's Harbour Master;
- have a drug and alcohol policy in place;
- participate in the Authority's Harbour Master's Marine Services Safety Forum where requested;
- demonstrate a strategy to reduce carbon footprint in line with the Authority's ESG strategy.

Self-mooring operations are only permitted at berths that have been assessed in accordance with (i) the Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers and (ii) Port Skills & Safety SiP005 – Guidance on Mooring Operations, both current as at the time of towage service provision.

Tug movements, including to and from moorings, and waiting periods alongside moorings must follow a procedure to ensure adequate under keel clearance at all times.

5. Compliance with Laws and Regulations

The towage provider must comply at all times with:

- all applicable legislation, statutory orders, regulations, binding guidance and codes of practice which apply to the towage provider's business or the towage services;
- the Authority's own byelaws and regulations relevant to the towage provider or its operations from time to time. Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing this shall include all regulations issued by the Authority in relation to navigational safety;
- all lawful directions of the Authority's Harbour Master (or their assistants or representatives) concerning operations within the Port.

The towage provider must ensure that its personnel engaged in the provision of towage services at the Port:

- have a good working knowledge of the Authority's byelaws, directions, contingency plans and guidelines which are relevant to provision of the towage services; and
- have a working understanding of general marine terminology in order to carry out the towage services in compliance with the directions of the Authority's Harbour Master (or their assistants or representatives).

6. Insurance

The towage provider must have in place and maintain the following policies of insurance in relation to its towage services and related activities:

- protection and indemnity insurance in respect of third party liability risks (including cargo damage, pollution and wreck removal) and for levels of cover as would normally be taken out by a prudent towage provider working under the same conditions as the towage provider (as reasonably determined by the Authority from time to time in the case of doubt); and
- such other insurance policies as are required by applicable laws,

(the "Insurance Policies").

The towage provider must not take or omit to take any action which would invalidate any of the Insurance Policies in respect of any claim.

7. Licence Assessment

A prospective towage provider must contact the Authority's Harbour Master before attempting to undertake any towage services. Each tug intended to be used in the provision of towage services at the Port should be separately registered and licenced with the Authority prior to use to enable the Authority to ensure that the tug and its proposed crew complies with these licence requirements. Changes in vessels employed will need to be approved in advance under the same process.

Before granting a licence, the Authority will undertake an assessment of the prospective towage provider's compliance with the above conditions. The prospective towage provider shall submit all documents and information necessary for the Authority to verify compliance with the above conditions, and will promptly comply with any reasonable further request by the Authority for additional documents and information.

After any licence has been granted, the Authority shall be entitled to audit the towage provider's ongoing compliance with these licence requirements at any time on reasonable prior notice to the towage provider. The towage provider must cooperate with the Authority during such audit and agrees to give access to all relevant records, personnel and information in its control in connection with the towage services and to provide all assistance necessary to enable the Authority to carry out such an audit.

8. Non-compliance with Port Towage Requirements

Where a licenced towage provider fails to comply with the requirements set out in this document, tiered sanctions will be imposed appropriate to the severity of the breach. Such sanctions will include verbal warning, written warning and suspension or non-renewal of towage licence.

All sanctions will be recorded in accordance with the Authority's Policy Statement on Enforcement, a copy of which can be found at www.pdports.co.uk/marine-information/port-marine-safety-code/.

9. Definitions

In these licence requirements:

"Good Industry Practice" means the exercise of that degree of skill, care and diligence which would reasonably and ordinarily be expected of a highly skilled and experienced person carrying out towage services under materially the same conditions as the towage provider;

"towage" means assistance given to a waterborne vessel by means of a tug in order to allow for a safe entry or exit of the port or safe navigation within the port by providing assistance to the manoeuvring of the waterborne vessel;

"tug(s)" means any vessel used by the towage provider in its provision of the towage services.

10. Review

The Authority will review these requirements annually. The Authority may alter these licence requirements at any time on not less than three months' notice to interested parties.

Effective from 1st August 2025