



PLATFORM ZERO INCIDENTS

SAFETY ALERT: LOW WATER

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The inland shipping industry is confronted with a low water level for a long time. A number of ships experienced grounding because of this. In several places dredging have been done, however taking precautions is of vital importance.



POSSIBLE DANGERS

- Grounding of the ship.
- Collision with other ships.

MEASURES: FOR LOW WATER

- Make sure to have a good and thorough travel preparation.
- The captain has to be familiar with the waterway.
- Consult teletext, Elwis, etc. multiple times per day to determine the prospects of the water level for multiple days ahead.
- The weather can be of influence on the water level, therefore monitor the weather forecasts.
- Ask for additional **local** information, for instance **harbours, loading-/dischargingdocks docks**, locks and traffic posts.
- When determining the draft of the ship, keep in mind the under keel clearance. **Also during loading.**
- Keep in mind the fact that ships with limited draft, manoeuvre differently than in normal circumstances. The stopping distance is longer than usual, since the power in reverse is lower. In addition, ships run longer.
- Anticipate on situations.
- Adjust your speed timely, reduce speed. **Take into account a longer travel time.**
- Report your position timely and convey your intentions via the VHF radio. Do not rely on your navigational systems solely!
- Give way (reduce speed) in case other ships want to pass.
- **Only pass when this can be done safely. Ask your colleagues for cooperation.** Take into account your own speed, suction and gulfs.
- Take into account the suction and gulfs especially at anchored and moored ships, keep your distance. **Make sure to have enough (extra) ropes when moored.**
- Don't underestimate the possibilities and impossibilities of your ship.
- Take into account that buoys might have drifted from their original place. In addition, these devices can be askew because of the low water.
- In all cases, stay with your ship between the buoys.
- Make sure to have enough space around your ship when dropping anchor.
- Try to prevent sailing with half loaded cargo tanks, due to the stability of the ship. Make sure to have a stability calculation.
- Show some understanding toward each other, everybody is looking for the deepest parts of the river!
- **Keep in mind the fact that side rivers and canals can have deviating depths.**
- **Also keep in mind the clearance at for example locks, it could be necessary to take ballast to get under the lockdoors (like in Wezel).**

References/sources

www.elwis.de

Teletext

www.vaarweginformatie.nl

www.waterinfo.be

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