



SAFETY ALERT: SAILING IN ICE

Ice is an obstacle for any vessel, even an icebreaker and an experienced captain is advised to have a healthy respect for the power of ice in all its forms. It is very easy and extremely dangerous to underestimate the hardness of ice. The first questions, concerning risky activities, like sailing in ice, 'is it necessary to sail under these circumstances?'. If sailing in ice is necessary, the risk of accidents and / or damage can be reduced by taking various measures. This Safety Alert can be used as support for this.



POSSIBLE DANGERS/RISKS

- Underestimating the risks of sailing in ice.
- Unfamiliarity with the risks of sailing in ice.
- Start sailing in ice without preparation.
- Ship not under control, because of getting stuck in the ice.
- Damage to the ship from the ice.
- Fatigue, as sailing in ice sailing can be a tiring task.
- Technical failure of propulsion systems, steering gear and means of communication.

MEASURES

- Don't start navigating until the conditions are better.
- Do not sail into the ice if an alternative and perhaps longer, open water route is available.
- Make sure that the latest information about circumstances and forecasts is known, see also at the bottom of this alert under References / sources.
- Consider suddenly changing conditions, such as ice build-up and / or drifting ice.
- Make sure there are sufficient supplies on board (including fuel, drinking water).
- Make sure that all propulsion systems and steering gear function without any problems.
- Test the reliability of the means of communication and navigation before sailing.
- Ensure good visibility on all sides and keep the windows of the wheelhouse free of ice.
- Make sure that there is enough crew, and that sufficient rest is enjoyed beforehand, and where possible during sailing.
- Sail into the ice at a low speed to get the first impact; once in the ice, the speed can gradually be increased to maintain the barge's progress and control. Excessive speed almost always leads to ice damage.
- Keep the barge moving – even if it is very slow, but try to keep the movement going.
- Try to 'cooperate' with the ice movement and its weaknesses, but do not work 'against the ice'.
- Know the manoeuvring properties of the barge.
- Sailing backwards could lead to damage to the propellers and rudders.
- In case of an empty barge, take into account the possibility of blocking propellers and steering gear through the ice.
- If applicable: it is important to strictly follow the instructions of the captain of the icebreaker, or of a specially designated convoy leader.
- In case of emergency: call for help in time!

References/Sources:

www.vaarweginformatie.nl, www.elwis.de, www.visuris.be, www.voies-hydrauliques.wallonie.be, www.doris.bmk.gv.at