



SAFETY ALERT: HIGH WATER (JULY 2021)

Extreme rainfall has resulted in exceptionally high water levels. There have been more rainfall in 24 hours than usual in a whole month in some places. The river Moselle has an increase of the water level of more than 5 meters in 24 hours. The enormous water flow creates a lot of floating dirt, dangerous currents and low passageways. Conditions will not change or even worsen in the short term. Alertness is required for both sailing and moored vessels. This Safety Alert can help mitigate the risk of incidents and/or damage.



POTENTIAL HAZARDS/RISKS

- Underestimating the risks of high water.
- Unfamiliar with the risks of high water.
- Unprepared for the risks of high water.
- Ship not under control due to damage to propellers as a result of floating debris.
- Strong currents.
- Low and changing passage ways bridges.
- Breaking loose of moored ships.
- Damage to ships.

MEASURES

- Do not sail if it can be postponed until conditions are better. Stop sailing if you consider it irresponsible to continue.
- Carry out a voyage planning, make sure that the actual information about the circumstances and expectations is known. Also pay attention to blockages and availability of ports.
- Listen carefully to the VHF channels of the waterway authorities and locks for up to date information.
- Be alert to changing passage heights of bridges. Be extra alert at arch bridges.
- Make sure that there are sufficient supplies on board (including food, drinking water, fuels), because it is not always possible to leave the ship.
- Make sure that all engines, steering systems, communication and navigation equipment function without problems.
- Know the ship's maneuverability. The ship can be difficult to maneuver due to strong and changing currents. Also in bends the ship can be pushed into the bend by the current. Ballasting the ship could be necessary.
- Sail defensively! Do not overtake if it is not necessary and keep your distance from other vessels.
- Be alert to floating debris, these can cause major damage to the ship, propellers and/or rudders.
- Take into account the deterioration of fairway information, such as barrels/buoys that are no longer in position, poorly visible groynes and false echoes due to floating debris.
- Be aware of strong currents, especially at bridges and narrow passages.
- In the case of loading/discharging, extra alertness to the circumstances is necessary. Stop the loading/discharging process if you consider it irresponsible to continue.
- Keep a close eye on the situation of the moored ship, the actual situation can change quickly. For example, the accumulation of dirt between shore and ship and strongly changing water levels, which can affect the ropes. Ropes can also come loose when water levels rise. Make sure to use double mooring loops on shore bollards and dukdalfs. Please also note that bollards on the shore can fail under the conditions.
- Use extra ropes, place them at a smaller angle because of the forces on the ship.
- Place anchors spread out as much as possible. Keep in mind the likelihood of moving anchors. Make use of an anchor watch and put the engines on standby.
- Position the rudders in a straight position, it prevents the ship from being pushed to/from the shore and the risk of catching dirt is mitigated.
- Keep in mind that the ship can get stuck (e.g. overhanging parts of quays, structures of jetties) due to a strong increase in water levels.
- Make sure that your ship is not 'placed' on a flooded quay, especially when the ship is empty.
- Call for help in an emergency in time.
- Do not leave the ship unmanned in a risk area.