

Vessel Deficiencies and Guidelines for Releases

- a.** The purpose of this section is to advise all concerned of the guidelines used by the Authority with regard to vessel deficiencies and releases. Such guidelines are necessary to ensure consistent and uniform actions by the officials responsible for their administration.
- b.** The master of a vessel is responsible for accurately declaring the arrival draft and for advising Panama Canal authorities of any deficiencies in his vessel prior to arrival and commencement of transit. These guidelines are used by ACP boarding officers and Canal Port Captains to determine the need for releases and to obtain them prior to transit. Generally, yachts, small vessels, and vessels of unusual configuration are handled on an individual basis.
- c.** The pilot may become aware of deficiencies which have been overlooked or which have developed. These guidelines may be useful in such circumstances; however, the matter should be referred to the duty Canal Operations Captain whenever practicable and a final decision will be made by the Canal Operations Captain or his designated representative.
- d.** Following is a list of the most common vessel deficiencies and the action usually taken:

VESSEL DEFICIENCY	ACTION AND AUTHORITY
1. One anchor missing or one anchor windlass inoperative in vessels with two windlasses.	Tug assistance as determined by Canal Operations Captain (COC). Release required.
2. Both anchors missing or vessel cannot anchor.	a. Tug assistance as determined by Canal Operations Captain. Release required. b. May be required to transit under tow at discretion of COC and at convenience of the Authority. Schedule so vessel need not anchor in transit. Release required.
3. Vessels which can let go anchors promptly but can not retrieve anchors.	Tug assistance as determined by Canal Operations Captain. Release required.
4. On steam propulsion vessels - One boiler inoperative in two-boiler ship. (Vessels with more than two boilers will be handled as special cases.)	Tug assistance as determined by Canal Operations Captain. Release required.
5. Bow thruster inoperative.	Special considerations for transit and docking. Tug assistance as determined by Canal Operations Captain. Release required.

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6. Chocks and bitts not satisfactory.	<p>a. The Canal Operations Captain (COC) will determine requirements which will permit transit. Release required.</p> <p>b. Fishing vessels and other small vessels under 250 ft (76 m) in length having closed chocks which in the opinion of the COC are sufficiently strong and suitable for their size and tonnage and the loads imposed may transit with a release.</p> <p>c. Any vessel having open chocks or poorly secured chocks and bitts must make arrangements satisfactory to the COC to close the chocks and bitts prior to transit. Release required, unless chocks replaced.</p>
7. Compressor or air problem.	<p>If vessel does not have 12 consecutive starts, the Canal Operations Captain may set special conditions for transit. The transit may require additional resources, transit under tow or the transit may be denied transit. Release required.</p>
8. Vessel does not have backup generator in operating condition in addition to one in use.	<p>Tug assistance as determined by Canal Operations Captain. Release required.</p>
9. No rudder angle indicator in wheelhouse or no engine indicator in wheelhouse or not functioning properly.	<p>Depending on size of vessel, the severity of the malfunction or on the availability of the indicators:</p> <p>a. Additional resources and/or restrictions at discretion of the Canal Operations Captain on a case by case basis.</p> <p>b. Denial of transit if no available indicators on the bridge deck.</p> <p>c. Transit under tow at discretion of the Canal Operations Captain and at convenience of Authority.</p>

VESSEL DEFICIENCY	ACTION AND AUTHORITY
10. No operating rudder angle indicator and/or no operating engine indicator outside of pilot house readily visible to pilot on bridge wings when required.	Additional assisting pilot may be assigned by the COC to watch indicators. Release required.
11. Pilot ladder or accommodation ladder unsafe.	Deny transit until proper pilot ladder provided. If it is not possible to rig proper pilot ladder/9-meter combination ladder, additional tug assistance to hold vessel while employees board and disembark. (May disembark while vessel is held to centerwall).
12. Running light not burning properly.	Vessel not seaworthy. Transit denied until proper lights are burning. If in Canal during darkness may require to tie up at Gamboa or anchor in Gatun Lake until daylight as determined by the COC.
13. Steering gear not operating properly or not in compliance with requirements for transit.	a. If steering gear is not operating properly prior to transit: Deny transit until repairs satisfactory to the COC are made.
	b. If steering gear cannot be repaired: May transit under special conditions as determined by the COC.
	c. If steering gear does not comply with ACP requirements for transit by design and evidence that vessel's Classification Society permits less rudder angle or more time, may transit under special conditions as determined by the COC. Auxiliary steering not meeting these criteria generally is not acceptable for use during transit.
	d. If steering gear difficulties are encountered during transit: Release required. Tug assistance as determined by the COC, provided that the COC determines this can be done with reasonable safety. Otherwise put vessel to anchor or moorings until repairs are satisfactory to the COC.

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14. One of the two steering motors operative.	<p>a. If one of the two steering motors is not operating properly prior to transit: Deny transit until repairs satisfactory to the COC are made.</p> <p>b. If steering motor cannot be timely repaired: May transit under special conditions as determined by the COC. Release required.</p>
15. No steering light when required.	<p>Before transit starts: Rig a steering light.</p> <p>After transit starts, continue transit; rig a temporary steering light. Release required.</p>
16. Whistle inoperative.	<p>Vessel is not seaworthy and should not proceed.</p> <p>Before transit starts: The whistle must either be repaired or a suitable alternate means of signaling provided.</p> <p>Required audible range for whistles is as follows:</p> <p>(1) Vessels 656 ft (200 m) or over LOA: 2.0 nautical miles;</p> <p>(2) Vessels 246 ft (75 m) or over but less than 656 ft (200 m): 1.5 nautical miles;</p> <p>(3) Vessels 65 ft (20 m) or over but less than 246 ft (75 m): 1.0 nautical mile.</p> <p>(4) Vessels less than 65 ft (20 m) but less than 246 ft (75 m): 0.5 nautical miles.</p> <p>During transit: Vessel to be anchored or moored as soon as practical until such time as whistle is repaired or a suitable substitute is provided.</p>

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17. Engine and propeller problems.	Handled on a case-by-case basis. Determine power normally available on maneuvering full speed and power actually available. COC will determine conditions under which the vessel may transit. If engines are unreliable, tug assistance will be assigned as determined by Canal Operations Captain (COC). Release required.
18. Engine telegraph inoperative	The COC will determine the special conditions for transit which may include additional resources and/or restrictions. The use of telephones, radios or voice tube without a functioning telegraph to give engine orders is not generally considered safe for transit of the Panama Canal. Release required.
19. Vessel has excessive draft.	Vessel with drafts exceeding Panama Canal Maximum Authorized draft will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Under certain conditions the transit may be permitted to begin/continue with additional resources and/or restrictions assigned to the transit. In some cases, the vessel will be required to trim or lighter before continuing the transit, and failing that, the transit may be denied, or the vessel be turned around. Release required.
	In case of disagreement concerning draft readings or in cases that the COC requires it, a draft survey performed in the area by an acceptable unbiased surveyor will have to be provided before the vessel is allowed to begin or continue the transit.
	Vessels with a deep fresh water draft in excess of 40 ft (12.19 m) will be required to trim or lighter to reduce these drafts.
	If this is not possible, transit will be delayed and vessel not allowed into Pedro Miguel Locks until sufficient stores, fuel, ballast or cargo has been discharged to achieve an acceptable draft and trim. Release required.

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20. Vessel loaded deeper than TFW marks (load line).	<p>Tug required from Cristobal Anchorage to Gatun Locks and Gamboa to sea and vice versa. Release required.</p> <p>If a vessel is overloaded so as to seriously affect her maneuverability in the Canal, transit may be denied.</p>
21. Trim:	
a. Vessel down by the head four inches or more.	Tug assistance if requested by the pilot due to bad maneuverability. Release required. Additional resources or restrictions may apply on a case-by-case basis as determined by the Canal Operations Captain.
b. Cargo vessel with over six-foot drag.	Tug entering Locks if warranted as determined by COC. Release required.
22. List 3 to 10 degrees.	Before allowing transit, establish reason for list. List must not be increasing. Tugs as deemed necessary by COC. Calculate increased draft and beam resulting from list to determine if it is safe to transit. If the list will endanger the vessel in the locks or endanger Panama Canal equipment, transit may be denied by the COC. Release required.
23. Bridge wings do not extend to side of ship.	Additional tug assistance if deemed necessary. Release required.

VESSEL DEFICIENCY	ACTION AND AUTHORITY
24. Magnetic or Gyro Compass:	
a. No gyro compass or gyro compass not operating properly.	If magnetic steering compass is satisfactory and the deviation table has been updated within the last year, vessel may transit. Release required.
b. Defective magnetic compass. Gyro working satisfactorily.	Vessel may transit. Release required.
c. No gyrocompass and magnetic compass not readily visible to pilot. Helmsman steers using periscope to standard compass.	Vessel may transit provided master makes provisions for keeping pilot informed of vessel's heading in poor visibility. Release required.

VESSEL DEFICIENCY	ACTION AND AUTHORITY
25. Deck cargo protrudes beyond side of hull.	<p data-bbox="708 380 1429 705">Panamax vessels with protrusions extending up to 32.31 m (106 ft.) of total width may, on a case-by-case basis, be permitted to transit, provided that approval is obtained in advance from the Transit Operations Division Executive Manager and that protrusions do not present a hazard or interfere with lock structures, equipment and/or operation, and the master executes a form releasing the Authority from liability</p> <p data-bbox="708 743 1422 1108">Neopanamax vessels with protrusions, cargo or extensions beyond the ship's side located 16.85 meters (55.268 feet) or less above the waterline are not acceptable; however, extensions up to 4 meters (13.12 feet) beyond the hull and higher than 16.85 meters (55.268 feet) from the waterline will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to verify the minimum clearance of 1000 mm (3.33 feet) from all equipment above the lock walls (such as valve stems, bitts, etc.).</p> <p data-bbox="708 1146 1429 1507">Protrusions of up to 5 meters located higher than 22.87 meters (75.01 feet) or up to 6.5 meters (21.32 feet) and located higher than 25.44 meters (83.44 feet) over the waterline, will also be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to verify the minimum clearance is provided from all equipment (such as light posts, valve stems). Normally, the maximum protrusion permitted is 15 ft (4.60 m) on one side only, with maximum beam not to exceed 85 ft (25.90 m) including protrusions.</p> <p data-bbox="708 1545 1429 1759">If these limits are exceeded and it is determined that the vessel may safely transit in that condition, transit requirements will be established by the COC. May require additional tug assistance in (and out of) locks, additional pilots, daylight at the locks, etc. Release required.</p>

VESSEL DEFICIENCY	ACTION AND AUTHORITY
26. Visibility obstructed by cargo or cargo gear.	<p>The view of the water surface from conning positions 1, 2 and 3 in the navigation bridge shall not be obscured by more than two (2) ship lengths or 500 meters forward of the bow, whichever is less, straight ahead to 10 degrees to either side from each of the conning positions.</p> <p>The visibility from normal conning positions is obscured by cargo gear or other permanent obstructions forward of the beam, the total arc of obstructed visibility from shall not exceed 10 degrees</p> <p>Release required and additional resources and/or restrictions may be applicable.</p>
27. Inadequate sanitary facilities.	<p>Pilot relief at Gamboa if possible, otherwise anchor in Gatun Lake. Pilot only required to make partial transit.</p>
28. One or both radars are inoperative.	<p>No vessel shall transit if it does not have at least one radar in good operational condition. Release Required.</p>
29. Winches working at slower rate than required.	<p>Extra deckhands may be assigned and tug assistance will be required at all locks. Release required.</p>
30. All other deficiencies not listed.	<p>May transit under special conditions, such as, but not limited to, additional pilots deckhands, resources, and restrictions as determined by the COC and at convenience of Authority. Release required.</p>