

SUBJECT: New Procedures for Vessels Anchoring Outside Designated Anchorages

Dear All,

This circular is to inform all relevant parties of a recent and concerning increase in the frequency of anchoring-related incidents within Turkish territorial waters.

It has been observed that vessels sometimes fail to anchor in accordance with established regulations. Notably, instances have been identified where vessels anchoring in the Istanbul Strait Southern Entrance Anchorage Areas and the Ambarli Regional Port Authority Anchorage Areas have cast anchor outside the designated anchorage limits. This practice poses a significant risk of damage to underwater infrastructure, including cable systems, oil, and natural gas pipelines.

Following an anchoring incident, the Coastal Safety Authority (Kıyı Emniyeti) is dispatching standby tugboats to the location. It is important to note that the charges for these tugboats accrue while they are on standby pending the clarification of the situation, which may include underwater surveys and other investigations. These standby charges have reportedly reached significant amounts.

In parallel with the aforementioned, the Turkish Directorate General of Maritime Affairs has now issued a directive outlining new procedures to be implemented following any anchoring incident, irrespective of whether any damage is initially reported. Specifically, we draw your attention to the following critical points:

- **Mandatory Escort Tugboat Assignment for Anchoring Outside Designated Areas:** Critically, the latest directive stipulates that vessels anchoring outside officially designated anchorages will now automatically be assigned an escort tugboat. This measure will be implemented regardless of whether any damage to underwater infrastructure is suspected or apparent.
- **Underwater Survey Costs:** Furthermore, the costs associated with any required underwater surveys to assess potential damage are being levied against the vessel interests.
- **Vessel Delays:** These incidents and the subsequent procedures are causing considerable delays to vessel schedules and operations.
- **Demands for Bank Guarantees:** In cases of potential damage resulting from anchoring incidents, demands for substantial bank guarantees are being imposed.
- **Responsibility of Master:** The necessary monitoring and precautions against potential anchor dragging are the responsibility of the master.

➤ **Administrative Sanctions:** Sanctions will be applied in accordance with the prevailing legislation in the event of anchoring outside the designated anchorage areas.

In the light of the above, we urge all vessel owners, operators, masters, and relevant stakeholders to take careful note of these developments and to ensure strict adherence to all regulations and best practices regarding anchoring procedures. Anchoring within designated areas is strongly advised to mitigate the risks of incidents, associated costs, and potential delays.

We hope that the above may be of your assistance in the future cases.

Yours faithfully,

Ahmet Can Bozkurt & Cagdas Kircali
Omur Marine Ltd.