

Harbourmaster SOP 001/2022 heavy weather clearance of Poverty Bay anchorages

Objective

The objective of this SOP is to ensure that timely directions are issued to vessels at anchor to prepare to depart the anchorage prior to adverse weather that may cause ships to drag their anchors onto a lee shore. Nothing in this SOP prevents a Master from taking necessary action to ensure the safety of vessel and crew.

Procedure

In the event of heavy wind / swell observed or forecasted (e.g. forecast email from MetOcean or warning received from Met Service, or heavy weather forecast in the Met Service marine forecasts):

1. Monitor conditions and a range of forecasts. Wind & seas from 080° to 220°(true) pose the most risks to ships anchored within Poverty Bay.
2. If action seems possible, consult with Eastland Port Limited Duty Pilot.
3. If clearance of the anchorage is possible within 24 hours then:
 - a. Forward MetService warning or forecast to agents for distribution to vessels. Masters take note, review forecasts, and determine if proceeding to anchorage/ remaining at anchor is a safe option or if sailing is more appropriate.
 - b. Request that agents advise ships at anchor within Harbour Limits to go on short standby.
 - c. Copy in EPL to comms.
 - d. Continue to monitor actual conditions and forecasts.
4. Action Level is defined as follows:
 - a. For HM action level is either actual or forecast average wind speed at or exceeding Beaufort Force 7 (over 28 knots), or actual or forecast average significant wave heights over 4 metres.
 - b. Decisions will be made in advance, relying on forecasts of impending weather. Observations provide a guide to the strength and timing of incoming weather compared to forecast.
 - c. While building operational picture regarding the accuracy and reliability of forecasts, the Harbourmaster will consider action levels at forecasts of 25 knots average wind or significant waves exceeding 3 metres.
5. If conditions are observed or forecast to exceed the Action Level:
 - a. HM will direct "All ships to weigh anchor and proceed to sea"
 - b. Aim to issue in a timely manner (e.g. 6 hours prior to departure)
 - c. Allow for uncertainties in the timing accuracy of the forecast – that is aiming for all ships to be clear in good time, even if the weather arrives early
 - d. . EPL to advise vessels when they may return to the anchorage. This automatically aligns return to anchorage with EPL operational planning. As there is no evidence of risks arising in practice from the return to anchorage phase.
6. Continue to monitor conditions and a range of forecasts. Consider if the HM Direction needs to be extended or cancelled. Consult with EPL Duty Pilot as appropriate.

