

Circular From WOE**Date: 14 July 2023**

Panama Canal – Implements Disruption Charge for Harbour

Movements by the Panama Canal Authority

The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) has announced the implementation of a disruption charge for harbour movements under [Advisory to Shipping No. A-23-2023](#), which is effective on 01 July 2023. This charge will be applied to vessels navigating the channel of the Canal and those in harbour movements that present deficiencies or conditions.

The decision to levy the disruption charge stems from the shared waterway between the ports located at both terminals of the Canal, which necessitates the need for fair compensation for any disruptions caused by deficient vessels.

The disruption charge will be classified as either low or high, depending on the type of deficiency and the vessel's location at the time the deficiency is reported or detected. The ACP has provided a list of deficiencies that may trigger the application of the disruption charge, including missing or inoperative anchor or anchor windlass, non-compliant chocks and bitts, problems with essential equipment such as air compressors or starting air systems, and inadequate navigation equipment.

Furthermore, deficiencies related to safety and environmental concerns, such as gas leaks, fumes, oil spills, or fuel non-compliance, will also be subject to the disruption charge. The ACP clarifies that this list is not exhaustive, and vessels may present other deficiencies not explicitly mentioned that could also result in the application of the charge.

To ensure a smooth process, the ACP emphasises the importance of reporting any known deficiencies or conditions prior to the vessel's arrival. Vessel operators are required to provide this information in the "visit remarks" section of the vessel's visit itinerary in the Panama Maritime Single Window (VUMPA). Timely reporting allows the ACP to assess and plan accordingly, minimising disruptions and potential charges.

Vessels that develop deficiencies while navigating the Canal will have a grace period of 30 minutes from the time the deficiency is reported or detected to correct the issue and avoid the disruption charge. It is important to note that the disruption charge will be applied in addition to other applicable maritime service

charges, such as tugs and pilotage fees.

For dead tows and dead ships involved in harbour movements before transit, only the disruption charge for transit will be applied based on the dimensions of the vessel. A "dead tow" refers to a vessel without installed means of propulsion, while a "dead ship" is a vessel with non-functioning means of propulsion during transit or port manoeuvres.

To assist vessel operators and address any enquiries, the ACP has made available the tariffs, vessel deficiency matrix, and frequently asked questions on their [website](#).

Members requiring further guidance should contact the [Loss Prevention Department](#).

Source of Information: The West of England P&I Club