

Kerch Strait – risk of propeller damage

This alert is aimed at improving safety of navigation and should be taken into consideration by the vessels passing the Kerch Strait.

It can also be addressed to vessels proceeding at Port Kavkaz and its approaches, and the ones in transit by Tamanskiy waterway between the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea.



The Kerch Strait is linking the Sea of Azov in the north to the Black Sea in the south.

There is a comparatively high risk of collision with partly submerged objects which may cause damage to vessel's propeller and shaft.

On 11.06.16 a Coastal Warning was issued by the Department of the navigation safety and transport security of Russian Federation. According to Warning, in the Southern part of the Sea of Azov, on the approaches and at the entrance of the Kerch Strait there may be drifting floating objects, which present a potential danger to navigation.

All vessels must observed extreme caution when passing these areas and keep away from the drifting submerged objects.

If suspicious objects are notices, the vessels should notify the Vessel Traffic Service Kerch and Kavkaz.

Till present time the drifting floating objects have mostly been found in the Northern part of the Azov Sea and close to Kerch Strait.

In June the coast guards reportedly collected more than 50 items.

Those floating objects were made of several barrels partly filled with water and self-expanding foam, with steel wires and chains attached.

The wire ropes and chains may wrap around propeller and cause substantial damage to the propeller, shaft and gearbox.

Several accidents with damaged propellers occurred earlier this month. Two ferries in the Kerch Strait sustained damage to propellers and gearbox. The outer shell plating of hulls was scratched in places of the alleged contact with steel wires.



On 27.06.16 the Russian news portals published an article about the last known attempt to install the floats with steel wire ropes 20 m long in the navigation channel of Kerch Strait. Full text of the article in Russian is available at <http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=2769617>
Although the effort failed, new attempts should not be excluded.

Summary

In addition to the requirements of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, an utmost care must be taken to avoid contact with partly submerged objects.

Every vessel shall at all times maintain a proper look-out by sight and all available means appropriate in the prevailing circumstances and conditions so as to make a full appraisal of the situation and of the risk of contact with the suspicious object.

The vessels should proceed at a safe speed, to take proper and effective action to avoid contact with the suspicious floating object and be able to stop within a distance appropriate to the prevailing circumstances and conditions.

It should be reminded that within Port Kavkaz Seaport waters the navigation is allowed with visibility not less than five cables, and navigation in Southern District approach canal is carried out in the daytime only. More information about navigation in Seaport waters, facts about ferry zone, Tamanskiy waterway, and transit area are given in Compulsory Regulations at Sea Port Kavkaz, available for downloading from http://kavkaz.azovseaports.ru/files/3314/4197/7755/op_kavkaz_2015_eng.pdf