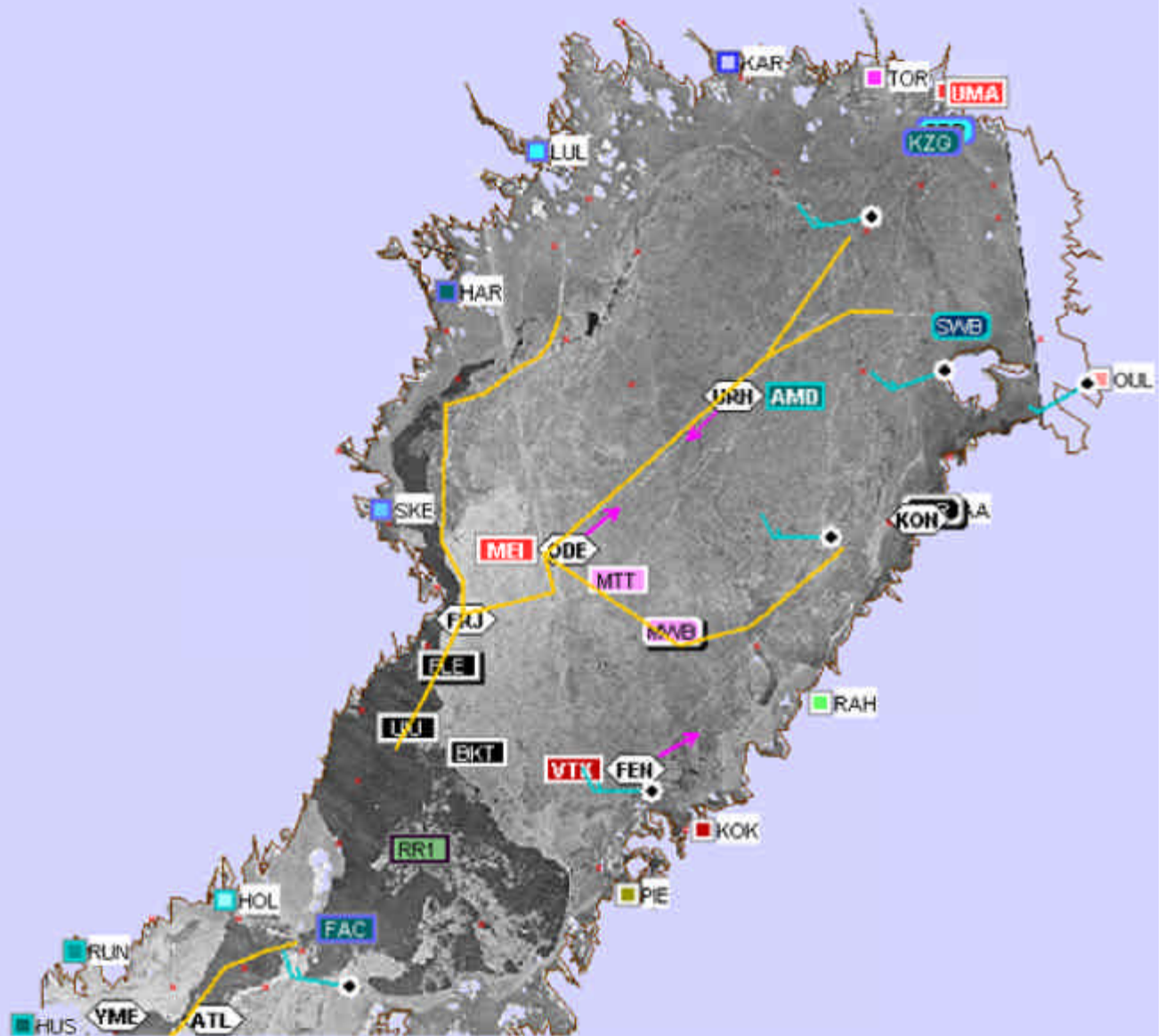


# Rules for Winter Navigation

Instructions to the industry, ship owners and charterers



Finnish Maritime  
Administration

# RULES FOR WINTER NAVIGATION

The Finnish Maritime Administration (FMA) has laid down the following rules in collaboration with the Finnish industry, ship owners, shippers and charterers.

All parties are aware of their responsibility for the Finnish winter navigation and strive to engage modern vessels with sufficiently high propulsion power and ice-going characteristics and manned by competent crews for their import and export shipments.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of these rules is to jointly ensure the efficiency of Finnish merchant shipping and to reduce its total costs in winter time without lowering the standard of service.

## MONITORING OF ICE CONDITIONS

The FMA Winter Navigation Department follows the development of ice conditions on the Finnish coast by means of data collected from various sources and by providing timely icebreaking services and applying an apt traffic restriction policy to ensure safe and efficient traffic to Finnish ports.

## THE NATURE OF THE WINTER

Whether the winter season as a whole will be hard, normal or mild can be judged only in January-February. The Winter Navigation Department informs all parties about the winter conditions and also strives to advise on necessary precautions.

## CLASSIFICATION OF WINTERS

Winters are classified as mild, average and severe. In mild winters there is ice in the Bay of Bothnia and in the approaches to ports in the Sea of Bothnia. The whole sea area east of the Porvoo longitude in the Gulf of Finland is covered with ice. In average winters all sea areas along the Finnish coast are ice-covered. The southern ice edge runs north of latitude 59 N. The winter of 2003 was also classified as average, although ice thickness and harsh winds made it seem severe. In severe winters the Baltic Sea is covered with ice for several weeks.

## THE PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS

Traffic restrictions are imposed by the Winter Navigation Department when ice conditions become more difficult. From then on icebreaker assistance is given only to vessels which meet the requirements set out in the restrictions. Some of the restrictions are imposed because of safety considerations; some are caused by the need to improve the efficiency of vessel traffic.

## PLACING OF RESTRICTIONS

**Bay of Bothnia:** The first restriction – ice class I and II, 2000 dwt – is normally placed in early December. The restrictions are then gradually tightened up. During both average and severe winters the maximum restriction has been ice class IA and 4000 dwt, which is usually supplemented by a cargo restriction of 2000 tonnes loaded and/or unloaded cargo per port.

**Sea of Bothnia:** The first restriction is normally ice class I and II and 1300 dwt. In average winters, the maximum restriction is ice class IA and 2000 dwt but in the port of Kaskinen it is ice class IA and 3000 dwt.

**Gulf of Finland and Archipelago Sea:** The first restriction is ice class I and II and 1300 dwt. The tightest restrictions are normally ice class IA and IB combined with 2000 dwt, and IC combined with 3000 dwt. However, in spring 2003 a situation arose when vessels of ice class IC were refused entry to the ports of Hanko and Koverhar altogether.

East of the Porkkala longitude the tightest restriction in a normal winter is usually ice class IA, and 2000 dwt.

Traffic restrictions enter into force five days after their date of issue, except for relaxations, which enter into force immediately.

#### EXEMPTIONS

The granting of exemptions is tied to icebreaking resources. In mild winters exemptions are granted more often, as icebreaker assistance is easier to arrange. The Winter Navigation Department may, however, grant an exemption to a vessel even if the winter is classified as average, although the vessel does not meet the requirements completely. Exemptions are always granted for one voyage only.

Applications for exemptions are made by e-mail to [winternavigation@fma.fi](mailto:winternavigation@fma.fi). The date of the intended voyage, destination, name of vessel, deadweight, engine output, year of build and ice class should be stated.

**As a rule, exemptions are not granted to vessels more than 20 years of age nor to vessels carrying transit goods.**

#### EXCEPTIONS

Tugs and tug/barge combinations are not entitled to assistance. In difficult ice conditions, river vessels may also be refused assistance.

In exceptional circumstances, the head of the Winter Navigation Department may refuse a vessel assistance or postpone it, although the vessel formally meets all requirements. This is usually caused by repeated reports from the icebreakers that the vessel is not suited for winter navigation. Such a vessel could cause unacceptable delays to other vessels.

**All reports about the ice-going vessels calling at Finnish ports are studied carefully at the Winter Navigation Department. Any shipper uncertain of the ice-going capability of a certain vessel may contact the Department for additional information.**

#### PRIORITIZATION

Vessels in danger are always assisted first. There is no prioritization among other vessels, but the order of assistance may be altered for reasons of traffic efficiency.

## TRAFFIC INFORMATION

For icebreaking services to be timely and efficient, ship owners and/or agents should enter data about the schedules and changes in schedule of their vessels into PortNet.

## ICEBREAKING SERVICES

Icebreaking services have been contracted out. To ensure traffic to all 23 winter ports a total of nine icebreakers is needed. Information on icebreaker phone numbers and ship reporting obligations is published in the brochure 'The Finnish Icebreaking Service' and on the web at [www.fma.fi/e/functions/icebreaking](http://www.fma.fi/e/functions/icebreaking). Ice reports are broadcast on the radio on a daily basis.

## THE ICE SERVICE

Information on ice conditions is also available from the Institute of Marine Research, Ice Service, phone +358 (0) 9 685 7659.

Ice charts and ice reports: fax/phone 0200-2668.

## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The Winter Navigation Department will make a large customer satisfaction survey each spring. Questions and comments on traffic arrangements and services can also be sent by e-mail to [winternavigation@fma.fi](mailto:winternavigation@fma.fi).

## INFORMATION ON WINTER NAVIGATION

Further information:

Mr Ilmari Aro, Director +358 (0)204 48 4216

Mr Åke Tötterström, Maritime Inspector, phone +358 (0)204 48 4416, GSM +358 (0)40 579 2619