

# **MALDON HARBOUR IMPROVEMENT COMMISSIONERS**

August 2016

## **DAMAGE TO THE PORT AIDS TO NAVIGATION (AtoN)**

Maldon Harbour Improvement Commissioners (MHIC) is the Statutory body responsible for safe navigation of the Rivers Blackwater and Chelmer between Fullbridge and the Harbour Limit buoys just south of Heybridge Lock. They are tasked to maintain the Aids to Navigation (AtoN) to help to ensure that mariners can navigate their way safely within the Port.

The following AtoN exist within within the Port of Maldon :

MHIC Limit port	No 10 Red Can	No 14 Red Can
MHIC Limit Stbd	No 11 Green Conical	No 15 Green Conical
No 8 Red Can	No 12 Red Can	No 17 Green Conical
No 9 Green Conical	No 13 Green Conical	No 19 Green Conical

MHIC are required to operate in accordance with international recommendations and guidelines. For marine aids to navigation, the standards are set by the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) and are monitored by and reported to Trinity House, the recognised availability standards are set for each category of aid by IALA.

The availability of the actual aid to navigation (e.g. whether the light is flashing correctly or a buoy is on station) is calculated over a 3 year continuous period.

### **Aids to Navigation – Limitations**

Mariners should be aware of the following limitations of marine aids to navigation.

Prudent mariners will not rely solely on any single aid to navigation, particularly a floating aid.

The buoy symbol on a navigational chart is used to indicate the approximate position of the buoy and the sinker which secures the buoy to the seabed. The approximate position is used because of practical limitations in positioning and maintaining buoys and their sinkers in precise geographical locations.

The position of the buoy can shift inside and outside the charting symbol due to environmental conditions.

Aids to navigation are subject to damage, failure and dislocation.

Aids to navigation may fail to exhibit their advertised characteristics.

Mariners are cautioned not to rely solely on buoys for navigation purposes.

Atmospheric conditions can have a considerable effect on light transmission and the visibility of lights.

### **Care when approaching AtoN**

The following are some important points to be noted when approaching aids to navigation.

The Commissioners request Mariners navigating within the port to exercise the greatest care to avoid damage to floating aids to navigation.

Mariners should give all navigational buoys a wide berth, always having regard for the strength of the wind and tide, and are requested to report immediately any defect in an Aid to Navigation either to the Clerk or one of the Commissioners

The Merchant Shipping Acts 1995 make provision for the imposition of a fine on any person who wilfully or negligently runs foul of, or makes fast to, any Buoy or Beacon, and for the recovery of the expenses for making good any resulting damage.

### **Unreported damage to No 15 Buoy**

On or before the weekend of 24th/25th of May 2016 No 15 Starboard hand buoy was run down and damaged to such an extent that it was taking on water and starting to sink, Further damage included damage to the top light and the anchor point was pulled out of the base of the buoy As well as the structural damage, large stripes of thick black paint, traces of red antifouling were left on the buoy The damaged Buoy has now been exchanged for a spare and is under repair.

This incident was not reported and MHIC would like to point out that damage to a port AtoN is an offence and could be liable to a fine and/or recovery of repair costs should information be forthcoming as to the vessel and operator involved.