

Suomen talvimerenkulku

Finlands vintersjöfart

Finland's Winter Navigation

Ohjeita talvimerenkulun toimijoille

Insruktioner för aktörerna inom vintersjöfarten

Instructions for winter navigation operators



Arctia Icebreaking Ltd

Icebreaker	Call Sign	Direct	Mobile – GSM phone	E-mail
Urho	OHMS	+358 (0) 30 620 7500	+358 (0) 400 219681	urho.bridge@arctia.fi
Sisu	OHMW	+358 (0) 30 620 7400	+358 (0) 400 219682	sisu.bridge@arctia.fi
Otso	OIRT	+358 (0) 30 620 7300	+358 (0) 400 219680	otso.bridge@arctia.fi
Kontio	OIRV	+358 (0) 30 620 7200	+358 (0) 400 592747	kontio.bridge@arctia.fi
Voima	OHLW	+358 (0) 30 620 7650	+358 (0) 400 318156	voima.bridge@arctia.fi
Fennica	OJAD	+358 (0) 30 620 7700	+358 (0) 400 107157	fennica.bridge@arctia.fi
Nordica	OJAE	+358 (0) 30 620 7800	+358 (0) 400 246551	nordica.bridge@arctia.fi
Polaris	OJQT	+358 94 245 0459	+358 4687 67900	polaris.bridge@arctia.fi

All icebreakers listen to VHF Channel 16 and MF 2332 kHz



Urho 1975 . Sisu 1976



Otso 1986 . Kontio 1986



Fennica 1993 . Nordica 1994



Voima 1954/1979/2016



Polaris 2016

Alfons Håkans AS Finnish Branch

Icebreaker	Call Sign	Mobile – GSM phone	E-mail
Zeus Of Finland	5BSP4	+358 400 184 031	tug.zeus@alfonshakans.fi



Zeus

TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION UNDERGOING REFORM

On 1 January 2019, the current Finnish Transport Agency will become the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency.

The Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency will be responsible for the state-owned road and railway network, for the waterways and their development, and for land use coordination. From the beginning of next year, the Winter Navigation Unit will be part of the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency. The contact information will remain unchanged. At the turn of the year, the Finnish Transport Safety Agency Trafi and the Finnish Communications Regulatory Authority will be integrated into the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency. The communications duties of the current Finnish Communications Regulatory Authority will be incorporated into the duties of the new Finnish Transport and Communications Agency. The transport-related duties will comprise the duties of the Finnish Transport Safety Agency Trafi, and certain duties to be transferred from the current Finnish Transport Agency, such as those related to transport system planning, public transport development, the Hydrographic Office and subsidies to merchant vessels. After the reform, the agencies under the administrative branch of the Ministry of Transport and Communications will include the **Finnish Transport and Communications Agency, the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency and the Finnish Meteorological Institute.**

Traffic management functions, such as Vessel Traffic Services, will be incorporated. The state-owned special assignment company **Traffic Management Finland Ltd** will begin its operations at the beginning of next year. The incorporation will not affect the provision of Vessel Traffic Services.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Winter Navigation Management

Finnish Transport Agency
Winter Navigation Unit
PL 33
00521 HELSINKI, FINLAND

service number (24 h): +358 50 471 48 50
phone: +358 295 34 3000, exchange (8.00–16.15 LT)
+358 295 34 3322, Head of Winter Navigation Unit
+358 295 34 3328, Senior Maritime Officer
(assistance restrictions)
email: winternavigation@fta.fi
internet: www.liikennevirasto.fi/web/en/merchant-shipping/winter-navigation

Icebreaking in the Lake Saimaa area:

Finnish Transport Agency
Winter Navigation Unit
Raatimiehenkatu 23
53100 LAPPEENRANTA, FINLAND

phone: +358 29 534 3326
+358 400 650 824 (Senior Officer)
email: jukka.vaisanen@fta.fi

Saimaa VTS

Sulkuvartijankatu 15
53300 LAPPEENRANTA, FINLAND

phone: +358 206 37 3745
email: saimaa.vts@fta.fi

Western Finland Vessel Traffic Centre

Juhana Herttuan puistokatu 21
PO Box 351, 20101 Turku, FINLAND

Turku Radio

phone: +358 (0)20 448 6400
email: turku.radio@fta.fi
VHF: See separate map

Bothnia VTS

phone: +358 (0)20 448 7356
email: botnia.vts@fta.fi
VHF: 67

GOFREP Traffic Centres, contact information:**Helsinki traffic:**

phone: +358 (0)204 485387 or +358 (0)204 485388
 email: gofrep@fta.fi
 fax: +358(0)204 485394
 VHF: 60 (80)

Tallinn traffic:

phone: +372 6 205 764 or +372 6 205 777
 email: gofrep@vta.ee
 fax: +372 620 5766
 VHF: 61 (81)

St.Petersburg traffic:

phone: +7 812 380 70 21 or +7 812 380 70 81
 email: gofrep@rsbm.ru
 fax: +7 812 380 70 20
 VHF: 74 (10)

Swedish Maritime Administration

Ice-breaking Division
 SE-601 78 Norrköping
 SWEDEN

service number (24h): +46 771 63 25 25
 phone: +46 771 63 00 00, exchange (08.00-16.40 LT)
 +46 10 478 47 57, Head
 +46 10 478 62 58, Operational Manager
 email: opc@sjofartsverket.se
 internet: www.sjofartsverket.se

Ice Info

Phone: +46 10 492 76 00
 email: iceinfo@sjofartsverket.se
 VHF: 78

Providers of icebreaking services

Arctia Icebreaking Ltd

Laivastokatu 9
00160 HELSINKI
FINLAND

service number (24 h): +358 46 876 7050
email: icebreakers@arctia.fi
internet: www.arctia.fi

Alfons Håkans AS Finnish Branch

Linnankatu 36 C 18
20100 TURKU
FINLAND

service number (24 h): +358 50 63304
phone: +358 2 515 500
email: office.turku@alfonshakans.fi
internet: www.alfonshakans.fi

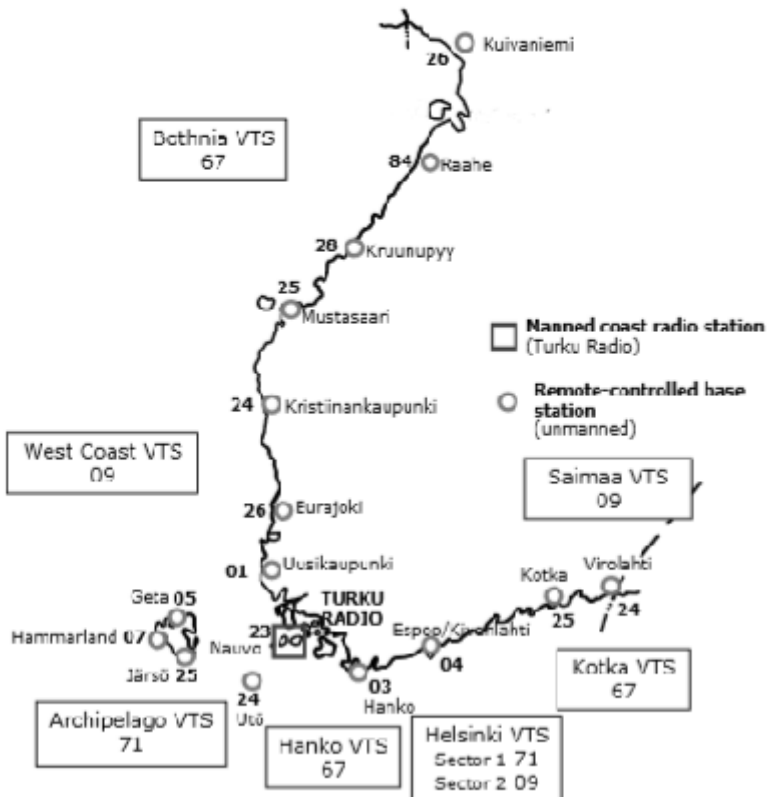
Finnish Meteorological Institute:

The Ice Service of the Meteorological Institute

PO Box 503 (Erik Palménin aukio 1)
00101 HELSINKI
FINLAND

phone: +358 29 539 3464 (Eriksson, Tollman, Vainio,)
fax: +358 29 539 3413
email: ice@fmi.fi
internet: <http://en.ilmatieteenlaitos.fi/ice-conditions>

TURKU RADIO WORKING CHANNELS IN RADIOTELEPHONY



NB!

All remote-controlled base stations have channels 70(DSC), 16 and the duplex channels specified

This is an unofficial translation, FTA takes no responsibility to its correctness. The official texts are in Finnish and Swedish only.

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1. General information

The Winter Navigation Unit at the Finnish Transport Agency has compiled these general instructions for winter navigation.

The instructions and their objective

The Finnish Transport Agency has laid down the following instructions for winter navigation in collaboration with the industry, shipping companies and charterers. All parties are aware of their responsibility for the Finnish winter navigation and strive to engage modern vessels with sufficient propulsion power and good ice-going characteristics and which are manned by competent crews for their import and export shipments. The Finnish Transport Agency is responsible for the availability of icebreaking services according to item 1.2.

The objective of these instructions is, according to Finland's maritime strategy 2014–2022 that Finnish foreign trade and domestic waterborne transport are smoothly functioning and socio-economically viable and international competitiveness is ensured also in winter, with short waiting times.

1.2 Assistance of winter navigation

According to the Act on the ice classes of ships and icebreaker assistance (1121/2005) the Finnish Transport Agency is responsible for the availability of icebreaker assistance in Finnish waters when the ice conditions so require. Assistance is provided in all class 1 approach channels with a minimum depth of 8 metres leading to a port. Assistance to other ports along and beyond these approach channels is only given in class 1, at least 8 metres deep channel sections or to destinations specified by the Finnish Transport Agency. Assistance in port areas is the responsibility of the ports in question. The Finnish Transport Agency is also responsible for the availability of icebreaker assistance outside Finnish waters, if assistance is necessary to safeguard Finnish foreign trade or is based on a cooperative agreement concluded with another state.

Winter navigation assistance is free of charge.

The Finnish Transport Agency has entered agreements with Arctia Icebreaking Ltd, Alfons Håkans AS Finnish Branch and other private towing companies. The Finnish Transport Agency's Winter Navigation Unit leads and monitors the implementation of the icebreaking services and follows up client satisfaction in cooperation with the vessel traffic services, Baltic Sea icebreaking organisations and the masters of the coordinating icebreakers.

Icebreaking services include the assistance of vessels in ice and the related towing.

Charges for towage in connection with salvage operations and other related assistance are based on separate agreements.

1.3 Vessels entitled to icebreaker assistance

Provisions on icebreaker assistance are included in the Act on ice classes of ships and icebreaker assistance (1121/2005). Icebreaker assistance is given to vessels, which meet the assistance restrictions that the Finnish Transport Agency has imposed on vessels calling at the relevant port. In addition, vessels shall comply with the requirements on construction and engine output for winter navigation (ice class regulations, see item 10, LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS) and commit to compliance with these instructions.

The vessel must also meet the following requirements when navigating in an area where icebreaker assistance is provided:

- **when navigating in ice, the vessel is always to be loaded to the draught required for its ice class (between the upper and lower ice waterlines);**
- **the propeller is to be completely submerged and if possible entirely below the ice;**
- **the cooling-water system is to be designed and used so that the supply of cooling-water is ensured when navigating in ice, even *when using maximum engine power* according to the Ice Class Certificate;**
- ***the vessel has to use the maximum engine power specified for its ice class, if the ice conditions or the icebreaker so require.***

The master of an icebreaker may for justified reasons refuse to assist a merchant vessel. A justified reason is for example a vessel whose equipment is not operational before the assistance starts, or whose hull, engine output, equipment or manning is such that there is cause to believe that navigation in ice will endanger the safety of the vessel, or that the vessel does not meet the ice class requirements for example in terms of its draught.

In individual cases the Head of the Winter Navigation Unit can postpone the assistance of a vessel, even though the vessel meets all requirements regarding assistance restrictions. **The reason for a postponement can for example be that the vessel has not committed to comply with these instructions, the vessel causes unacceptable delays for other traffic, the prevailing ice conditions are exceptionally severe or repeated written reports from icebreaker masters about a vessel being unsuitable for winter navigation.**

Tugs towing barges are considered to belong to ice class III, and are thus not included in the icebreaking service.

1.3.1 The publication Finland's Winter Navigation, compliance with instructions

The Finnish Transport Agency posts these instructions on its website every year and informs about the publication in a press release.

During the icebreaking season 2018–2019 all vessels arriving for the first time of the winter season to a Finnish or Swedish assistance area will be asked the following question:

Do you accept and commit to follow the Finnish Winter Navigation rules, stated in this publication?

The answer to the question is “**yes**” or “**no**”.

The answer “yes” does not incur any expenses for the vessel.

The answer “no” will affect the provision of future icebreaker assistance to Finnish ports.

The answers can be sent in advance from the vessel or by the shipping company by e-mail to Turku Radio: turku.radio@fta.fi, which forwards the information to the authorities. Shipping companies can send a combined answer in advance for all their vessels operating in the area.

The vessels which have not submitted their answer in advance will be asked the question by e-mail, AIS text message or by VHF phone. Vessels bound for the Gulf of Bothnia or the Archipelago Sea will be asked the question by Turku Radio and vessels bound for Finnish ports in the Gulf of Finland and the Lake Saimaa area will be asked the question by Helsinki Traffic.

A negative answer will be noted and the Vessel Traffic Services will alert the Head of the Winter Navigation Unit. The master of the vessel shall contact the agent at the port of arrival regarding the negative answer. The agent shall then contact the Head of the Winter Navigation Unit for possible further measures.

A negative answer will affect the provision of assistance in the future.

This question is asked to ensure that vessels’ crews have read the publication “Finland’s Winter Navigation 2018–2019” in advance, and that they accept and comply with the instructions in the publication.

1.4 Order of assistance

The general rule is that vessels are not prioritised, with the exception of vessels in danger, which are always assisted first. The master of the icebreaker may also change the assistance order due to traffic or for technical reasons by for example forming effective assistance convoys or by approving a proposal by the port to change the order of assistance.

1.4.1 Securing transports critical for the emergency supply

If delays become critical for Finland’s emergency energy or food supply or the essential industry, the instances in question have to request permission from the National Emergency Supply Agency to prioritise these transports.

1.5 Reporting obligations by ports and shipping companies

1.5.1 Ports

Ports or ship agents submit preliminary notifications on their vessel traffic to the icebreakers once a week and always when there are changes in the traffic situation. The reporting obligations start when the first winter assistance restrictions are imposed for the port in question, and continue until the last assistance restrictions have been lifted.

1.5.2 Shipping companies and agents

The shipping companies or their agents are requested to enter data about vessel timetables into PortNet and to update changes in the data as often as possible. This is in order to ensure timely icebreaking services and smooth traffic.

The shipping companies or agents must also ensure that the publication Finland's Winter Navigation is forwarded to all of their vessels in good time before the vessels enter the area. Inquiries from foreign countries concerning ice conditions, assistance restrictions and traffic should be directed to the vessel's Finnish agent. The information about conditions and assistance restrictions can be found on the Baltice.org website.

2. Assistance restrictions and exemptions

2.1 Assistance restrictions

When the ice situation becomes more difficult, the Winter Navigation Unit at the Finnish Transport Agency imposes assistance restrictions for the winter ports. For safety reasons and for reasons arising from concentrating the traffic in certain areas, the Finnish Transport Agency may restrict the provision of icebreaker assistance in specific areas and to specific ports. The Finnish Transport Agency decides on the restrictions concerning assistance on the basis of weather and ice conditions, and the ship's ice class and deadweight. The assistance restrictions are based on the Helcom recommendations. The Finnish Transport Agency may also take into account the ship's engine output and the amount of cargo on board if extremely difficult ice conditions so require. In that case, the assistance restrictions have usually been supplemented by an additional restriction on cargo for the port in question: For example, vessels must have a load of at least 2,000 tonnes of cargo to be loaded or unloaded or both.

2.2 Imposing of assistance restrictions

The restrictions on assistance enter into force five (5) days after their date of issue, except for the relaxations, which enter into force immediately. The assistance restrictions in force can be found on the website: www.baltice.org

During the icebreaking season 2018-2019, the manner of indicating Finnish and Swedish assistance restrictions will be harmonised. Finland will start indicating the minimum restriction. The restriction indication will change, but the assistance restrictions remain unchanged.

Old indication	New indication	Assisted ice classes
I, II 2000	II 2000	IAS, IA, IB, IC and II; 2000 dwt
IA, IB 2000 / IC, II 3000	IB 2000 / II 3000	IAS, IA, IB 2000 dwt / IC, II ;3000dwt
I 2000	I 2000	IAS, IA, IB, IC 2000dwt
IA, IB 2000	IB 2000	IAS, IA, IB 2000 dwt
IA 2000	IA 2000	IAS, IA 2000 dwt

Bay of Bothnia: The first restrictions of the winter season – ice classes I and II, with the deadweight 2,000 dwt – for the ports in the northern part of the Bay of Bothnia are normally imposed in December. The maximum restriction IA 4,000 dwt has been applied in combination with the cargo restriction of 2,000 tonnes.

Sea of Bothnia: The first restrictions - ice classes I and II with the deadweight 2,000 dwt - are normally imposed in January-February. During an average winter, the maximum restriction is IB 2,000 dwt.

In the Archipelago Sea: The first restrictions II 2,000 dwt have been imposed somewhat later than in the Sea of Bothnia although the restrictions are the same. The maximum restriction during a normal winter is IB 2,000 dwt.

Gulf of Finland: The first restrictions - II 2,000 dwt - have normally been imposed at the end of January. The maximum restriction during an average winter is IA 2,000 dwt.

Lake Saimaa area: The minimum restriction applied has been II 1,300 dwt and the maximum restriction IA 2,000 dwt.

Tables showing the first and last dates that restrictions are in force can be found on the website: <https://www.liikennevirasto.fi/web/en/merchant-shipping/winter-navigation#.W9A1M-RIKUK>

2.3 Equivalence between ice classes

Information on the equivalence of Finnish ice classes to the ice classes of recognized classification societies, and on the data and documents needed to confirm the ice class of a vessel can be found on the website: https://www.trafi.fi/en/maritime/ice_classes_of_ships

2.4 Exemptions

In accordance with section 10, subsection 3, of the Act on the Ice Classes of Ships and Icebreaker Assistance (1121/2005), the Finnish Transport Agency may in **individual cases**, on application, grant a ship that is sailing to a port or an area to which assistance has been restricted, the right to icebreaker assistance if:

- ice conditions have temporarily eased;
- it is a question of a special transport, urgent energy supplies or the threat of a production shutdown in a factory; or
- the ship would otherwise be entitled to assistance but its deadweight is not more than five (5) per cent below the required deadweight;
- the vessel has started its voyage, which under normal conditions would last no more than a week, already on the day when the assistance restrictions were raised and the arrival of the vessel is not considerably delayed from the point of time when the former assistance restrictions were valid.

Applications for exemptions shall be sent by email to the address: winternavigation@fta.fi. The application shall include; reason for application for exemption,

- ETA,
- ship's name,
- IMO number,
- ice class,
- deadweight,
- engine output, and
- year of build.

For a decision made upon an application for exemption a charge is collected as provided in the Act on Criteria for Charges Payable to the State (150/1992).

Applications for exemption shall be submitted to the Finnish Transport Agency by 12:00 o'clock at least three working days before the vessel arrives to the assistance area.

3. MASTER'S CHECKLIST

Before entering ice-covered waters

- Make sure that the vessel's ISM manual includes instructions for safe navigation in ice.
- Ensure that the vessel's ice classification certificate is available.
- Make sure that there is sufficient supply of fresh water and bunker in case of possible delays caused by ice.
- Start listening to the daily ice reports well in advance.
- Check that your VHF radio is operative, and find out in advance which channel is used by the icebreaker operating in the area.
- Check that the pipes on deck are drained of water.
- Check that the sounding and air pipes of the ballast tanks are emptied of water.
- Check that anchor, mooring and other equipment which may be used in ice conditions are covered by adequate tarpaulins to prevent icing.
- Keep the pilot ladder in a sheltered place and, before use, make sure that it is ice-free.
- Test the searchlights in advance.
- Move the anchors astern or lift them onto deck, if there is even a slight possibility that they may come into contact with the icebreaker's towing notch. Any neglect in this respect will cause assistance to be delayed.
- Ensure that ballast has been loaded to minimum ice class draught and that the propeller is completely submerged.
- Check that cooling water is available when navigating in ice.
- Follow the icebreaker's or pilot's instructions on using maximum engine power.
- Avoid colliding with loose ice floes at high speed and check your open-water speed.
- Check the waypoints* provided by the icebreaker/VTS/GOFREP when navigating in ice.

*Waypoints

In ice-covered areas the coordinating icebreaker provides waypoints, which indicate the assistance route. The waypoints are set in order to help vessels navigate more easily and safely in ice conditions and in order to enable vessels to navigate unassisted for as long as possible. Vessels obtain the waypoints for ice navigation via Turku Radio, ICE INFO, VTS/GOFREP or from the icebreakers. Failure to follow the waypoints may lead to delayed icebreaker assistance. Vessels are, however, at all times responsible for their own safe navigation.

4. NAVIGATION IN ICE

4.1 Risks when navigating in ice

During winter navigation ships are exposed to greater risks than when sailing in ice-free waters. When navigating in broken ice fields, sailing in convoy or preparing for towage, ships cannot always keep an adequate distance to each other. This entails an increased risk of collision between the ships involved.

The Finnish Transport Agency will not assume any liability for delay, damage or other loss or cost caused to a ship, its crew, its passengers, its cargo, its charterer or carrier within the scope of, in connection with or resulting from icebreaker assistance. Nor can the responsibility be laid on the subcontractors or contracting parties used by the Finnish Transport Agency to produce the icebreaking services in connection with or based on the icebreaking services provided by these.

Assistance and advice are offered to a ship at its own risk and the ship being assisted is solely responsible for its navigation. Under the Finnish Maritime Act, Chapter 7 Section 1(2), a valid insurance cover is mandatory for ships navigating in Finnish territorial waters or inland waterways, when arriving to or leaving Finnish ports or anchorage and waiting areas, or if the ship is used for some other purpose than transport in Finnish territorial waters.

4.2 Reporting

4.2.1 Vessels bound for the Bay of Bothnia or Sea of Bothnia

Vessels bound for Finnish or Swedish ports in the Bay of Bothnia or Sea of Bothnia in which assistance restrictions apply, shall report as follows:

Reporting position:	when passing latitude 60° 00' N*
Call sign:	ICE INFO
Call channel:	VHF channel 78 (or phone +46 10 492 76 00)
Report:	- name of vessel - nationality - destination and ETA - speed
Language:	Swedish or English
E-mail:	iceinfo@sjofartsverket.se

* If required due to the ice conditions, the position for reporting can be transferred farther to the south.

ICE INFO provides vessels with the advance instructions of the coordinating icebreaker, or establishes contact via VHF between vessels and the coordinating icebreaker.

Vessels bound for a Finnish or Swedish port in the Quark or the Bay of Bothnia shall give an advance report to Bothnia VTS 20 nautical miles before Nordvalen Lighthouse (63° 32,15' N 20° 46,60' E) on VHF channel 67. Bothnia VTS forwards the information it has received from the coordinating icebreaker to the vessels, i.e. navigational instructions, waypoints, as well as the position, name and VHF working channel of the icebreaker.

4.2.2 Vessels bound for the Gulf of Finland

Vessels of 300 GT or more sailing in the Gulf of Finland are required to report to the GOFREP Traffic Centre in question. Instructions for reporting are also found on the website: www.fta.fi/gofrep.

The GOFREP Traffic Centre forwards the information it has received from the coordinating icebreaker to the vessels, i.e. navigational instructions, waypoints as well as the position, name and VHF working channel of the icebreaker (see item 6: VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICE VTS, GOFREP AND TURKU RADIO).

4.2.3 Vessels bound for the Lake Saimaa area

The ship agents must send the advance information of the vessels and the vessels' reply concerning compliance with these instructions by e-mail to Saimaa VTS: saimaa.vts@fta.fi

4.3 Proceeding in ice

- A ship navigating in ice without assistance must follow the instructions given via Turku Radio, ICE INFO, VTS, GOFREP and by the icebreakers and should strive to proceed in the ice without assistance for as long as possible. The vessel is also expected to be able to navigate in thin ice in a broken ice channel without icebreaker assistance. For this reason the vessel must always have sufficient engine output.
- The vessel traffic services (VTS/GOFREP) are responsible for the vessel traffic management and information in their respective area. The icebreaker is responsible for the icebreaker assistance provided to vessels and for coordinating the traffic in an ice field. Because of this, vessels are required to simultaneously monitor both the local VTS traffic channel and the icebreaker channel.
- A vessel stuck in ice must notify the icebreaker of its position without delay.
- VTS/GOFREP informs and manages the traffic in accordance with the instructions given by the coordinating icebreaker (see item 6: VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICES VTS, GOFREP AND TURKU RADIO).

4.4. Instructions to assisted vessels

- During hours of darkness, icebreakers display a fixed blue all-around light at the top of the mast.
- A careful watch shall be kept for signals from the icebreaker or any other assisted vessel in the convoy and a continuous listening watch shall be maintained on the agreed VHF working channel, as well as on channels 16 and MF 2332 kHz.
- The vessel's propulsion machinery shall be ready for rapid manoeuvres at all times. Any problems arising in the assisted vessel relating to engine power or manoeuvring capabilities must be reported to the icebreaker without delay.
- In order to avoid collisions, a vessel in convoy shall inform the icebreaker without delay on the dedicated assistance channel if it stops or significantly reduces its speed.
- Finnish icebreakers are equipped with two rotating red warning lights, installed one upon the other, which are lit when the icebreaker stops unexpectedly or when it significantly reduces its speed. In such cases, the master of the assisted vessel shall take all possible measures to stop his vessel as quickly as possible.
- If the vessel stops due to the ice conditions, the searchlight must be switched off for as long as the vessel remains stationary.
- If the vessel sustains or is suspected to have sustained damage, the icebreaker must be informed about this immediately. The incident shall be recorded in the icebreaker's log book along with the prevailing ice and weather conditions and other matters of relevance. Any damage sustained must be reported to the Operational Management of the current icebreaking company.
- Having reported to the icebreaker does not exempt the vessel from reporting to the authorities or the shipping company.

A vessel that does not follow the instructions given by the icebreaker cannot expect to be assisted.

4.5. Instructions for towage

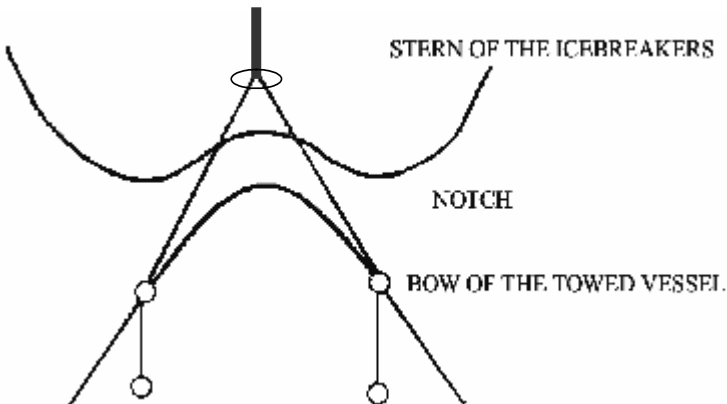
1. In difficult ice conditions, towing may be the only means of ensuring safe and effective assistance.
2. The vessel shall be prepared to make fast or cast off the towing wire at any time. The icebreaker decides when a vessel is taken into tow.
3. A vessel towed by an icebreaker may use its propulsion machinery only according to instructions from the icebreaker. The vessel's propulsion machinery shall be ready for rapid manoeuvres at all times.
4. During towage, the vessel in tow must use manual steering. By steering manually the vessel should try to stay in line with the icebreaker.

Towage

The method normally used is notch towing. This means that the merchant vessel's bow is brought into the towing notch of the icebreaker. The icebreaker will also hand over two wires which are to be fastened to the merchant vessel's bits which have been designed to withstand the stresses of towing.

Notch towing

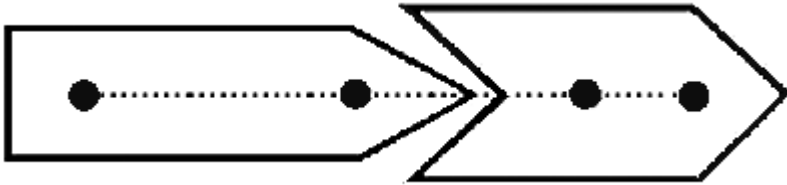
Notch towing is applied when the icebreaker and the towed vessel are connected as below:



The hull of the towed vessel is always acting as an active rudder of the icebreaker

If the towed vessel has sufficient engine power and follows the instructions of the icebreaker, it acts as an active rudder steering in the right direction. Proper use of the rudder ensures safe towage, helps avoid accidents and increases towage speed.

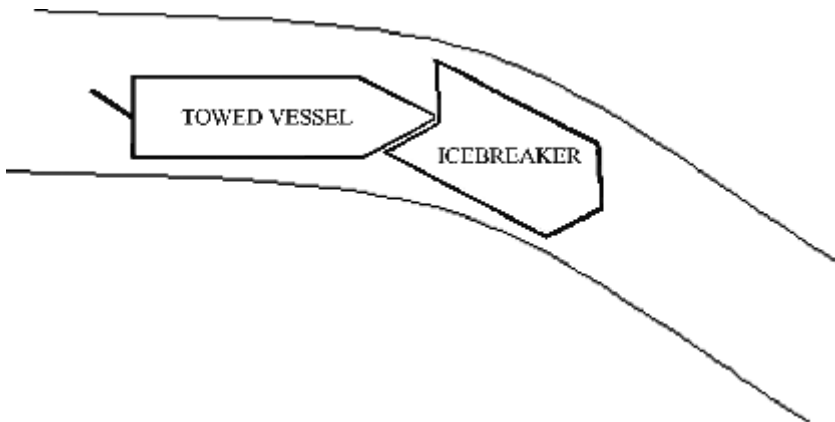
When proceeding straight ahead the vessel should keep its masts in line with the masts of the icebreaker.



If the vessel cannot keep the engine output as high as required or it is affected by rudder problems, the icebreaker should be notified immediately, so that it can reduce its speed.

Altering course

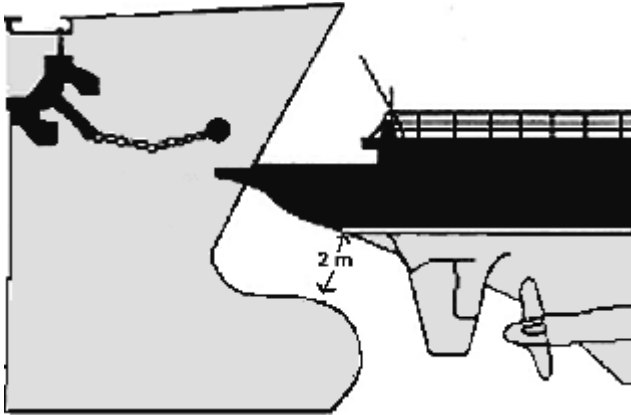
If the icebreaker asks the vessel to help with altering the course, the helm has to be turned enough in the opposite direction of the one normally used, as the vessel's hull is acting as the rudder of the whole combination.



Special measures for safe towing:

Vessels with a bulbous bow should be trimmed so that the distance between the top of the bulb and the hull of the icebreaker is at least two (2) meters.

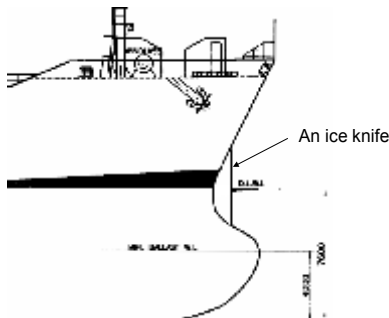
If the ship's anchors are located on the outside of the hull and could thus come into contact with the towing notch, they must be pulled back or lifted onto the deck well in advance before the assistance.



Factors complicating towage:

The shape of the vessel's bow greatly influences the towage. The principle is that in cases where an unsuitable bow complicates the towage or makes it virtually impossible, the vessel is only assisted when this can be carried out without towage. **The master of the icebreaker makes the final decision on towage.**

Some merchant ships have an ice knife fitted above the bulb. This ice knife is a vertical plate which presents a sharp edge against the notch at certain draughts. Circumstances permitting, the assistance of vessels equipped with ice knives will be carried out without towage, in order to avoid damage to the fendering at the icebreaker notch.



5. Pilot boarding in ice conditions

- Pilots are ordered through Finnpiilot's Pilot Order Service (<https://www.pilotorder.fi>)
- The pilot boarding position may deviate from its actual position during the open water season. If required, the local VTS centre provides information about the pilot boarding position and on which side of the vessel the pilot is boarding.
- Keep pilot ladders in a sheltered place and on deck as long as possible to avoid icing. Place pilot ladder (normally) 1.5 m above sea level.
- The pilot may arrive by pilot boat or hydrocopter in icy conditions.
- Vessel must obey orders of the icebreaker when approaching pilot boarding position.
- A complete stop may be required.
- Vessel must follow the pilot's instructions when he is embarking or disembarking the vessel.
- Searchlights are required at night-time to ensure safe navigation.

6. Vessel traffic services VTS, GOFREP and TURKU RADIO

6.1 VTS

According to the Vessel Traffic Service Act (623/2005) it is the objective of the VTS centres to increase the safety and efficiency of vessel traffic and to prevent damage caused to the environment by vessel traffic. VTS supervises and manages the vessel traffic with a capability to interact with traffic and to respond to changing traffic situations. When necessary, the VTS authority may temporarily, on account of for example exceptional ice conditions, impose speed limits in a water area or fairway when the coastal fairway in the Gulf of Finland is used during winter (see item 6.5: Coastal fairway taken into use in the Gulf of Finland). The operational hours of the VTS centres are 24 h/day all year round. The VTS centres forward information about for example other traffic, ice conditions, waypoints as well as the positions, names and VHF working channels of the icebreakers.

6.2 GOFREP

GOFREP is a mandatory ship reporting system in the Gulf of Finland. Its objectives are to increase navigational safety, improve the protection of the marine environment and monitor the compliance with the rules of the road at sea. The traffic centres TALLINN TRAFFIC, HELSINKI TRAFFIC and ST. PETERSBURG TRAFFIC monitor the vessel traffic and provide advice and information about navigational hazards and weather conditions in the Gulf of Finland. The operational hours of GOFREP are 24h/day all year round.

6.3 Maritime safety radio communications, Turku Radio

During the icebreaking season Turku Radio reports the positions of the icebreakers once a day at 0803 UTC. Turku Radio also informs about the valid waypoints as part of the report Position of icebreakers. Turku Radio reads the ice report of the Meteorological Institute twice a day at 1033 and 1833 UTC and informs vessels of any exceptional situations in winter navigation at least once a day at 1033 UTC, as part of the report Navigational warning.

Turku Radio also provides information on its VHF working channel.

6.4 Temporary withdrawal of the traffic separation scheme

The traffic separation schemes in the Gulf of Finland, Sea of Åland and the Quark can temporarily be withdrawn if traffic, due to the ice conditions, cannot be managed properly using these. Vessels are informed about this through the GOFREP System and Turku Radio. Furthermore, information about this is given in connection with the daily ice reports of the Meteorological Institute (see item 7: THE ICE SERVICE OF THE FINNISH METEOROLOGICAL INSTITUTE).

6.5 Coastal fairway taken into use in the Gulf of Finland

The icebreaker assistance in the Gulf of Finland is transferred either partly or wholly to the coastal fairway, if the ice condition at open sea so requires. VTS reports the speed limits and the meeting and overtaking prohibitions applied in the coastal fairway to the vessels. Vessels must comply with the speed limit, so that the channel through the ice stays intact and safety hazards are avoided. Practically all vessels using the coastal fairway shall have a pilot on board.

7. The Ice Service Of The Finnish Meteorological Institute

The Ice Service of the Finnish Meteorological Institute monitors ice conditions and developments on a daily basis and issues ice charts, ice reports and ice forecasts based on the collected and analysed data.

The daily ice chart and ice report include a description of current ice conditions and information about the operational areas of the icebreakers. Announcements are also given about assistance restrictions, ship routes and advance notification obligations.

The ice report is read daily at 12:45 in Finnish on Radio Finland and in Swedish on Radio Vega.

Ice charts, ice reports and ice forecasts can be ordered from the Finnish Meteorological Institute. The orders are subject to a charge and are delivered by e-mail. Ice charts and ice reports are available free of charge via BIM Web on the website: www.baltice.org.

In addition, the Ice Service of the Meteorological Institute answers questions about the ice situation, ice winter forecasts and any other expert questions related to ice.

Useful information about ice in the Baltic Sea can also be found on the Finnish Meteorological Institute's website: <http://en.ilmatieteenlaitos.fi/scientific-themes>

Winter classification in the Baltic Sea:



Mild



Average



Severe

8. Icebreaking in the Lake Saimaa area

The Finnish Transport Agency's office in Lappeenranta manages icebreaker assistance in the Saimaa Canal and Lake Saimaa area. The same assistance restrictions apply in the area as in the approach channels to Kotka and Hamina and the assistance restrictions are also based on the Helcom recommendations. Restrictions differing from these may be given at the beginning and end of the traffic season. The Saimaa Canal is normally closed to traffic from the end of January to the beginning of April depending on the ice conditions in the area.

Joint information about ice conditions and assistance restrictions are given daily in the ice reports of the Finnish Meteorological Institute. Information about the dates when the Saimaa canal will be opened and closed can be found in the Finnish version of Notices to Mariners, on FTA's website and in the newspapers. The assistance restrictions in force can also be found on the website: www.baltice.org. The Lappeenranta office also informs operators in the Lake Saimaa area by email. If you want to receive notices by e-mail, please send your contact information to the address: winternavigation@fta.fi

Icebreaker assistance in the Bay of Vyborg and the approach channel to the Saimaa Canal (up to Juustila) is the responsibility of Russian icebreakers.

9. Further information

9.1 Finnish Transport Agency's Winter Navigation Unit

Inquiries directly concerning assistance restrictions, exemptions, ice conditions and other related matters can be directed to the Finnish Transport Agency's Winter Navigation Unit.

The Winter Navigation Unit informs about exceptional situations and current matters. All press releases can be found on the website: www.fta.fi/news. The Winter Navigation Unit also sends information by e-mail. If you want to receive notices by e-mail, please send your contact information to the e-mail address: winternavigation@fta.fi. Useful information on winter navigation is also available on the website: www.fta.fi/winternavigation.

9.2 Baltic Sea Icebreaking Web (BIM Web)

Information about winter navigation has been compiled on the website www.baltice.org. The website includes a daily ice chart covering the whole Baltic Sea area, an ice report, the positions and assistance plans of icebreakers and the assistance restrictions in force. Via this website, you can monitor the progress of selected assisted vessels or the changes in the assistance restrictions of the ports by requesting the information to be sent directly to your own email address.

10. Legislation and regulations

Act on the Ice Classes of Ships and Icebreaker Assistance (1121/2005)

Act on the Amendment of the Act on the Ice Classes of Ships and Icebreaker Assistance (1308/2009)

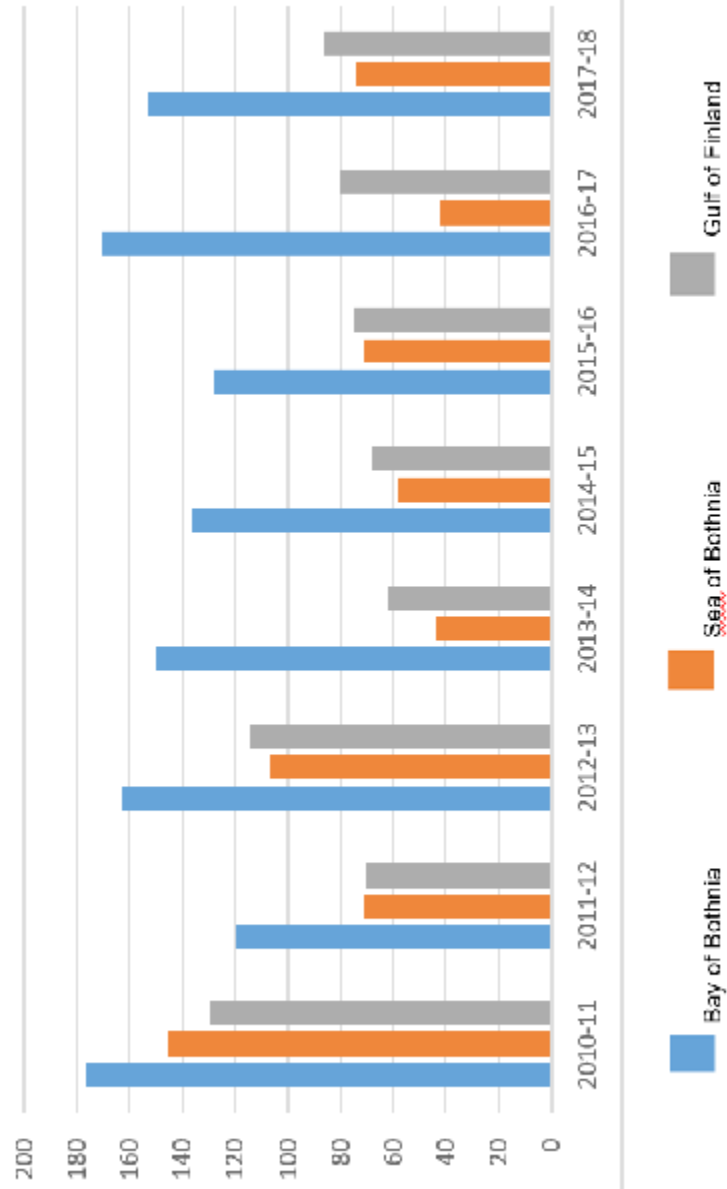
Act on Criteria for Charges Payable to the State (150/1992)

The Administrative Procedure Act (434/2003)

Regulations on the structural design and engine output required of ships for navigation in ice (ice class regulations and the application thereof) on Trafi's website: https://www.trafi.fi/filebank/a/1510737568/021da3a49321139231df027d50ff5b13/28389-TRAFI_494_131_03_04_01_00_2016_EN_Jaaluokkamaarays_2017.pdf

Finnish ice classes equivalent to the class notations of recognized classification societies and on documents and information required for the determination of the ice classes of ships: https://www.trafi.fi/filebank/a/1510737651/595ce3b-1375ba6f8a4a8dfbbc285076b/28390-TRAFI_383804_03_04_01_00_2016_Vas-taavuusluettelo_EN.pdf

Assistance restrictions (Day)





FINNISH METEOROLOGICAL INSTITUTE

CALL FOR OBSERVATIONS OF ICE ACCRETION

The Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI) is responsible not only for giving wind forecasts and warnings for seafarers but also for giving warnings about the accretion of ice on ship superstructures. The warnings given pertain to Finnish territorial waters.

Ice accretion occurs when the sea is still open but the air temperature is clearly below zero. The warnings given range from moderate to severe or extremely severe icing. They can be heard in English via Navtex and Safety-Radio-Turku Radio in connection with other warnings. They are also posted on the website www.fmi.fi.

Observations of the ice accretion are very important. The FMI collects these observations from ships sailing in Finnish territorial waters, which report their observations voluntarily. The observations reported by the ships are collected and delivered real time to forecasters'

workstations, thus helping them to verify forecasts and giving them information on the icing situation. The result is better service. Observations reported by vessels are the only way we can obtain information about accretion, and that is why we need your help.

We kindly request you to assist by becoming an observer. We have prepared an electronic form for observers to use.

You can fill in the form with your observations in the website of Baltice.org. From this site you will find the form and also the instructions for sending it. You can also inform the VTS centers or Turku-Radio about the icing situation and ask them to fill in the form for you.

We will gladly provide more information about the collection of ice accretion observations and about other weather services for vessels.

Finnish Meteorological Institute

Customer Services

liikenne@fmi.fi

Erik Palménin aukio 1

P.O. Box 503 FI-00101 Helsinki

Tel. +358 29 539 1000

www.fmi.fi

ilmatieteenlaitos.fi



Attention winter navigation operators!

Baltice.org is a free single access point website for reliable and up-to-date information about winter navigation in the Baltic Sea area. The website is held up by Baltic Icebreaking Management (BIM) member country authorities.

The website is chart based information system, with online AIS information of the vessels trading in the area - including Ice Breakers positions and assistance plans. You can choose vessels you want to follow or request information about changes in assistance restrictions of the ports of interest.

On the website you can find:

- icebreakers' assistance plans
- traffic restrictions
- ice maps
- and lots of other useful information relating to winter navigation

Please, visit the website www.baltice.org

Swedish Maritime Administration

Icebreaker

Ale	SBPQ	+46 (0) 31-33 44 952
Atle	SBPR	+46 (0) 31-33 44 948
Frej	SBPT	+46 (0) 31-33 44 940
Oden	SMLQ	+46 (0) 31-33 45 511
Ymer	SDIA	+46 (0) 31-33 44 944
Thetis	5BMW4	+358 40 090 3905
Baltica	SJOY	+46(0) 10 478 57 00
Scandica	SKFZ	+46(0) 10 478 57 71

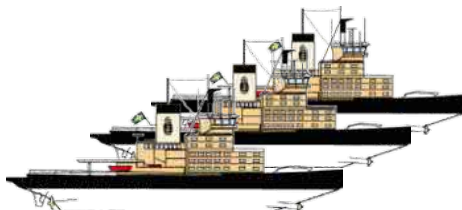
E-mail

bridge@ale.sjofartsverket.se
bridge@atle.sjofartsverket.se
bridge@frej.sjofartsverket.se
bridge@ib-oden.se
bridge@ymer.sjofartsverket.se
tug.thetis@alfonshakans.com
baltica@sjofartsverket.se
scandica@sjofartsverket.se

All icebreakers listen to VHF Channel 16 and MF 2332 kHz



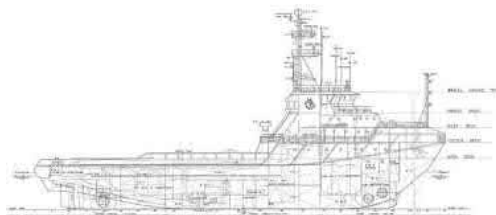
Oden 1988



Atle, Frej & Ymer 1974-1977



Ale 1973



Thetis 1983

Other partners in icebreaking cooperation: www.baltice.org



suomeksi



på svenska



in english

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