# OPS-03 (v2) – IMMOBILISATION OF ENGINES – VESSELS

Port of Sunderland – Updated Procedure

Version: 2.0

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Review Cycle: Every 3 years or after any incident/legislative change

Document Owner: Harbour Master

## 1. PURPOSE

This procedure ensures that the Port of Sunderland maintains effective control over any vessel wishing to immobilise its main engines within port limits.

Engine immobilisation affects a vessel's manoeuvrability, emergency response capability, mooring integrity, and interaction with port operations.

Therefore, immobilisation is only permitted when the Port is satisfied that the vessel has:

adequately planned the immobilisation,

assessed the associated risks,

put safe contingency and emergency measures in place, and

will maintain effective communications and watchkeeping throughout.

The vessel retains full responsibility for safe immobilisation.

**The Port's role is to manage port-wide safety, traffic, and operational interfaces.**

## 2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all vessels within the jurisdiction of the Port of Sunderland intending to immobilise main propulsion machinery for:

- maintenance,
- repairs,
- inspections,
- testing,
- or any condition leaving the vessel unable to manoeuvre.

### Exclusions

Vessels in dry-dock under the control of an approved ship repair facility are exempt, provided that the dry-dock's own immobilisation controls and RAMS are in force.

## 3. REFERENCES

- Port Marine and facilities Safety Code (PMSC)
- UK Merchant Shipping (Safety of Navigation) Regulations
- UK Merchant Shipping (Health and Safety at Work) Regulations
- ISM Code – Vessel's Safety Management System (SMS)
- IMO Guidelines for Safe Mooring & Safe Engine Immobilisation
- HSE – Safety in Docks ACOP & guidance

## 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

### 4.1 Vessel Master / Operator

**The Master is responsible for ensuring that:**

- A task-specific risk assessment covering engine immobilisation has been completed, including:
- mooring integrity,
- fire protection/pumping capability,
- power-dependent systems (bilge, alarms, steering hydraulics, generators),
- tidal conditions & weather,
- traffic & navigational risk,
- hot work interactions,
- environmental consequences of failure.
- A suitable contingency / emergency plan is in place, including:
- ability to restore propulsion or bow thruster power if needed,
- emergency releases,
- mooring failure procedure,
- fire response readiness,
- pollution prevention actions.
- Adequate mooring arrangements, fendering, and lines are in place before immobilisation.

A minimum watch is always maintained, including:

duty deck officer (or equivalent),

duty engineer where required by SMS or risk assessment.

**The vessel maintains appropriate power supply to essential systems, including:**

- bilge alarm systems,
- fire pumps/monitors (as required),
- steering gear testing if required,
- emergency lighting and communications.

**The Permit to Immobilise Engines is submitted, complete and accurate.**

Harbour Control (VHF Ch.11/ 14) is informed:

before immobilisation begins,

if the immobilisation period changes,

immediately when engines are re-activated.

## 4.2 Harbour Master / Port of Sunderland

The Harbour Master (or Deputy) will:

- Review vessel's request form and declarations.
- Consider port-wide risks:
- weather,
- tides,
- berth/traffic conflicts,
- emergency access,
- cargo/hazardous operations.
- Approve, approve with conditions, or refuse the request.
- Monitor conditions and direct the vessel to suspend or terminate immobilisation if safety requires.
- Maintain permit records for 5 years.

## 5. CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL / REFUSAL

Approval may be refused or delayed if:

- Navigational or tidal conditions require the vessel to remain immediately manoeuvrable.
- Nearby vessels or port operations could be adversely affected.
- The vessel's mooring configuration is inadequate for the expected conditions.
- Any cargo operations would be compromised.
- The vessel is engaged in hazardous cargo operations.
- Vessel firefighting capability would be significantly reduced.
- Weather, sea state, or expected movements pose an unacceptable risk.

The Harbour Master may impose conditions, such as:

- Additional moorings
- Tug availability
- Restricted operating windows
- Suspension during adverse weather

## 6. PROCEDURE

**Step 1 – Vessel submits completed request**

The Master submits the Permit to Immobilise Engines – Request Form at least 2 hours before the intended immobilisation.

Urgent cases must be made by VHF/telephone and followed up in writing.

**Step 2 – Port review and decision**

Harbour Master / Deputy considers the request and either:

- Approves,
- Approves with conditions, or
- Refuses (reasons provided to Master).

**Step 3 – Start notification**

Prior to engine shutdown, the vessel must notify Harbour Control on VHF Ch. 14.

**Step 4 – During immobilisation**

The vessel must:

- maintain continuous VHF watch on Ch.11/ 14,
- comply with any conditions laid down,
- monitor weather, tides, moorings, and port operations,
- maintain onboard watchkeeping & essential systems.

**Step 5 – Completion**

When engines are restored to full operational readiness, the vessel must notify Harbour Control on VHF Ch. 14.

## 7. SUSPENSION OF IMMOBILISATION

The Port may stop or suspend immobilisation immediately if:

- Conditions change (e.g., weather, tides, traffic).

- Mooring arrangements appear inadequate.
- Cargo or hazardous operations commence nearby.
- An emergency or other port requirement demands propulsion readiness.

**The Master must comply immediately.**

## 8. RECORD KEEPING

All completed permits and decisions will be retained for 5 years for audit, trend analysis, and investigation purposes.

## APPENDIX A – PERMIT TO IMMOBILISE ENGINES

## PERMIT TO IMMOBILISE ENGINES – VESSEL REQUEST FORM

**Port of Sunderland**

**A. Vessel Information**

Vessel Name: ____________________________________

IMO No.: _________________________________________

Berth / Location: __________________________________

Contact Officer Onboard: ____________________________

Contact Number / VHF: ______________________________

**B. Planned Immobilisation**

Reason for immobilisation: ___________________________

Start Date/Time: ___________________________________

Expected End Date/Time: ____________________________

**C. Master's Safety Declarations**

**I confirm that for this immobilisation:**

☐ A task-specific risk assessment has been completed.

☐ Moorings and fendering are adequate and secure for the full duration.

☐ A suitable contingency and emergency plan is in place.

☐ Essential systems (bilge alarms, fire pumps, generators) will remain operational.

☐ A minimum safe watch will always remain onboard.

☐ Engine control can be restored within the timeframe defined by our SMS.

☐ Cargo operations will not be compromised.

☐ Harbour Control will be informed of delays or reactivation.

**Master / Authorised Officer:**

Name: _____________________

Signature: __________________

Date/Time: _________________

**D. Harbour Master Review**

Risk acceptable: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Additional moorings required: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Weather/tide suitable: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Conflicting port operations: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Approval Decision

☐ Approved

☐ Approved with conditions (below)

☐ Refused (reasons below)

Conditions / Comments:

Harbour Master / Deputy:

Name: _____________________

Signature: __________________

Date/Time: _________________

**E. Notifications**

Vessel notified start to Harbour Control (VHF Ch.11/14): Time ______

Vessel notified completion: Time ______