

Harbour Master Instruction

HMI 006-2025

Title: Port Botany – Vessel Exchange Protocol at BLB
(for vessels less than 130 meters LOA)

Purpose: This Harbour Master Instruction provides guidance for the planning and execution of vessel exchange maneuvers at BLB, where the inbound vessel enters the channel before the vessel that is currently alongside the berth departs.

Scope: This instruction applies to PANSW Marine Operations personnel, including **Sydney VTS, and Sydney Pilots, BLB terminal operators and vessel agents**, involved in the planning, coordination, and execution of exchange maneuvers of vessels less than 130 meters at BLB, Port Botany.

Procedure:

1. Initial Booking

- Agents must book the vessel movements in the usual manner - outbound movement followed by the inbound movement.
- However, the terminal must submit a formal request for a vessel exchange to be considered.

2. Assessment and Approval

- The Duty Pilot will assess the request based on the criteria outlined in this procedure to determine whether the maneuver can be safely facilitated.
- Once the Duty Pilot accepts the request, Sydney VTS may amend the booking to reflect that the vessel exchange maneuver will take place.
- Final discretion for approval remains with the Harbour Master.

3. Pre-Movement Requirements

- The departing vessel must contact Sydney VTS and declare Notice of Readiness at least 1 hour prior to the scheduled departure time.
- A minimum of 30-minute separation must be maintained between the POB times of the outbound and inbound vessels.
- The pilots onboard the outbound and inbound vessels are to coordinate directly to determine when the outbound vessel can single up and depart the berth.

4. Communication and Coordination

- Open communication between both pilots is essential for the safe execution of the maneuver.
- Sydney VTS will monitor the entire operation and provide assistance as required.
- Once approved, Sydney VTS will confirm the inbound movement to all relevant parties.

5. Operational Conditions

The vessel exchange maneuver may only proceed if the following conditions are met:

- Pilotage, tug(s), and mooring/unmooring services must be available at the designated times.
- The maximum forecast wind gusts must not exceed 20 knots (Molineux Point).
- There must be no thunderstorm forecast during the planned time of maneuver.
- There must be no conflicting vessel movements in the immediate vicinity of the BLB berth.
- The proposed exchange must offer a clear efficiency gain for the BLB terminal, without unduly impacting operations at other Port Botany terminals (Duty VTSM, Duty HM and Duty Pilot can confer and make final decision).

Review and Monitoring:

The Harbour Master reserves the right to suspend or cancel a planned vessel exchange if conditions change or new risks emerge.

For a list of Harbour Master Instructions currently in force, please see:

[Harbour Master's Instructions | Port Authority New South Wales \(portauthoritynsw.com.au\)](https://portauthoritynsw.com.au)