

MARINE AGGREGATE EXTRACTION AND THE FISHING INDUSTRY

Operational Code of Practice

This code has been developed by the British Marine Aggregate Producers Association (BMAPA), the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and The Crown Estate for the marine aggregate industry, in order to minimise operational conflicts between aggregate dredging vessels and fishing vessels/activity – particularly the loss or damage of fishing gear. This code defines best practice for communication between marine aggregate operators and fisheries interests both in advance of dredging operations commencing and while dredging operations are taking place.

The following procedures should be adopted by the marine aggregate industry.

In advance of dredging operations:

1. Regional Active Dredge Area (RADA) charts will be produced by BMAPA and The Crown Estate on a bi-annual basis (charts are dated 31 January and 31 July) to show where dredging is currently permitted within existing production licences. Areas where dredging is permitted is monitored by the MMO through the approved Electronic Monitoring Systems (EMS) located on each vessel. The need for working areas within production licences may be defined through existing licence conditions or through operators' voluntary management arrangements. Any changes to active dredge areas between issues of each RADA chart will be clearly highlighted.
2. Dredging operators will ensure that the limits of their active dredge areas are up to date and coincide with the EMS boundaries so they can be accurately presented through the RADA charts that are routinely issued.
3. The RADA charts will include up to date contact details for all marine aggregate operators with licensed interests in the region.
4. Laminated versions of the RADA charts will be produced by BMAPA on a bi-annual basis, and circulated to local fisheries interests (charts may be made available via the relevant MMO coastal office or direct from BMAPA). The latest RADA chart issued will also be flagged via the Marine Aggregate Kingfisher Fortnightly Bulletin service, and will be available to be downloaded at http://www.bmapa.org/issues_other01.php.
5. Where changes to active dredge areas are required (including the commencement of operations on a newly licensed production licence area), dredging operators will normally be required to provide a minimum of four weeks notice prior to commencing operations in any new working areas that are defined. Details of the proposed changes will be flagged via the Marine Aggregate Kingfisher Fortnightly Bulletin service, and operators may also be required to directly notify local fishing associations, using where necessary the assistance of the MMO and regional Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCA) offices.
6. Under exceptional operational circumstances, changes to working areas may be required inside of the standard four week notice period. Should this situation occur, operators are required to liaise directly with the MMO, regional IFCA offices and local fishing associations in order to determine

any particular conflicts that could exist and any additional mitigation measures that may be required.

During dredging operations:

7. Dredging and fishing vessels to maintain listening watch on VHF Channel 16.
8. Masters of dredgers to call up on VHF Channel 16 when approaching a dredging area at a range of 10 nm (approximately 1 hour before operations are to commence). They should provide an estimated time of arrival on the area and position of operation.
9. On hearing a dredging vessel's notification any fishing vessels in the area should respond giving their position and the gear being worked. A VHF working channel should be established between the dredger and the fishing vessel (s).
10. Once communications have been established liaison can take place to allow time for the removal of fishing gear as may be necessary. Dredging should commence clear of fishing gear until it is removed.
11. Masters of fishing vessels approaching an area where an aggregate dredging vessel is operating should call up the dredger on VHF Channel 16 to establish lines of communication.
12. The MMO, regional IFCA offices and local fishing associations can be used to establish communications depending upon the area being worked, such as in cases where direct communication between dredging vessels/operators and fishing vessels/activities is proving difficult.

British Marine Aggregate Producers Association
Gillingham House
38-44 Gillingham Street
London
SW1V 1HU

Marine Management Organisation
Lancaster House
Hampshire Court
Newcastle Business Park
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE47YH

The Crown Estate
16 New Burlington Place
London
W1S 2HX

31 July 2012