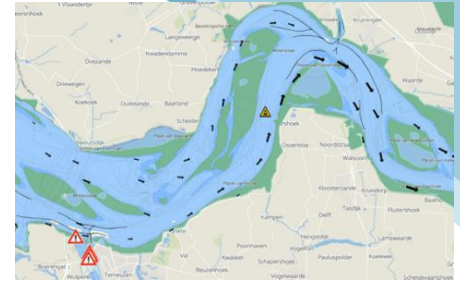


Over the years, a number of serious accidents have occurred on the Westerschelde between seagoing and inland shipping. Recently, another serious incident occurred on the Westerschelde between a seagoing vessel and an inland tanker. We are therefore sending this Safety Alert again to inform you about the dangers and possible measures with regard to sailing on the Westerschelde and sailing in secondary waterways.



## POSSIBLE DANGERS

- Collisions with (seagoing) ships.
- Grounding of the ship.
- Off course due to suction from a passing seagoing vessel.

## MEASURES

- Check whether you are sailing on the main or secondary waterway. Rules on the main waterway may differ from those on the secondary waterway.
- Take into account the width of the waterway. The estimate of the width of the waterway may differ from the actual distance.
- Cross the waterway at right angles if possible.
- Adjust your speed and stop in time to allow ongoing traffic to go through. Never cross the main waterway just before it is clear.
- Stay out of the blind spot of seagoing vessels. This is very big.
- Be aware that seagoing vessels travel considerably faster than inland ships. This speed can sometimes reach 30/35 km/h.
- Be aware of the waves a seagoing vessel causes even at lower speeds and how sensitive your vessel is to waves.
- Please take into account that due to their size, draft and manoeuvrability, seagoing vessels cannot or can only partially avoid obstacles.
- Ensure that you communicate promptly and clearly with crossing vessels and traffic posts. Indicate clearly what you intend to do. The traffic post can make a reliable assessment of whether and when crossing can take place safely.
- Make audible signals if necessary.
- On the Westerschelde it is mandatory to listen to the prescribed marine radio channel and to be reachable on it. Do not forget to switch over when the next block area is reached. See: '[VHF Sectors Scheldt](#)'
- The use of the Dutch or English language is mandatory on the Westerschelde.
- Some seagoing vessels have a huge bridge (wheelhouse) where it can happen that the marine radio (VHF) is (just) not within reach or hearing distance of a pilot. Do not blindly assume that the seagoing vessel receives all the information.
- Additional buoys have been placed on both sides of the main shipping channel for commercial and recreational shipping. "The so called bike lanes."
- These yellow buoys make it difficult to sail outside the main shipping channel.
- Ensure you have up-to-date maps of the area to be navigated.
- Take into account the cross current (lowering) when crossing the waterway
- Apply "Good Seamanship" in all situations.

## References/Sources:

<https://www.vts-scheldt.net/nautisch/marifoon?KL=en>