

When there is little rainfall in recently it is possible that there is a low water level in many areas. This could possibly hold for a longer period of time. Taking precautionary measures is essential for the safety of the crew and barge.



POSSIBLE DANGERS

- Grounding of the barge.
- Collision and allisions with other ships or objects.

MEASURES

- Make sure to have a good and thorough travel preparation.
- The captain has to be familiar with the waterway.
- Consult for example; teletext, Elwis, etc. multiple times per day to determine the prospects of the water level for multiple days ahead.
- The weather can be of influence on the water level, therefore also monitor the weather forecasts.
- Ask for additional local information, for instance at harbors, loading-/dischargingdocks, locks and traffic posts.
- When determining the draft of the barge, keep in mind the under-keel clearance. Also during loading.
- Keep in mind the fact that barges with limited draft, maneuver differently than in normal circumstances. The stopping distance is longer than usual, since the power in reverse is lower.
- Anticipate on situations as much as possible.
- Adjust your speed timely, reduce speed. Take into account a longer travel time.
- Report your position timely and convey your intentions via the VHF radio. Do not rely on your navigational systems solely on some parts of the river!
- Give way (reduce speed) timely in case other vessels want to pass.
- Only pass when this can be done safely. Ask your colleagues for cooperation. Take into account your own speed, suction and waves.
- Take into account the suction and waves especially at anchored and moored vessels, keep your distance. Make sure to have enough (extra) ropes when moored.
- Don't underestimate the possibilities and impossibilities of your barge.
- Take into account that buoys might have drifted from their original place. In addition, these devices can be askew (lay dry) because of the low water.
- In all cases, stay with your barge between the buoys.
- Make sure to have enough space around your barge when dropping anchor.
- Try to prevent sailing with half loaded cargo tanks, due to the stability of the barge. Make sure to have a proper stability calculation.
- Show some understanding towards each other, everybody is looking for the deepest parts of the river!
- Keep in mind the fact that side rivers and canals can have deviating depths.
- Also keep in mind the clearance at for example locks, it could be necessary to take ballast to be able to pass under the lock doors (like in Wezel).

References/Sources:

www.elwis.de

Teletekst

www.vaarweginformatie.nl

www.waterinfo.be