

Summary of proposed changes to the Norwegian Maritime Traffic Regulations

On behalf of the Ministry of Transport the Norwegian Coastal Administration (NCA) have prepared a proposal for revised Maritime Traffic Regulations. Changes proposed to enter into force at 1 January 2021 include:

- Adjustments to Fedje VTS area at Kleppestø in the east.
- Requirements for vessels at 500 GT or more regarding the use of English language when communicating on the VTS working channels.
- Establishment of a new VTS Area covering the fairway between Florø and Måløy.
- New regulations covering the fairway between Florø and Måløy including restrictions on passing in Skatestraumen, Måløysundet, the approach to Nordgulen and the fairway east of Nordre Nærøya.
- New regulations on anchoring in Ofotfjorden, Herjangfjorden and Narvikbukta.

When the regulations enter into force, the revised Maritime Traffic Regulations can be found at Kystverket.no under "Regulations".

Adjustments to Fedje VTS area at Kleppestø

NCA propose to move the border of Fedje VTS area in Byfjorden eastwards to a line between Øyarodden and Gravdalsneset. (See figure 1) The change is proposed to ensure that Fedje VTS better can organize the vessel traffic around Kvarven and the outbound traffic from Florvåg.



Figure 1, Adjustments to Fedje VTS area at Kleppestø.

Use of English language when communicating on VTS working channels

NCA propose to introduce requirements for vessels at 500 GT or more to use English language when communicating on the VTS working channels. Today communication can be made using both English and Scandinavian language. The change is proposed due to an increasing number of non-Scandinavian navigators sailing within the VTS areas. The requirement to use English will ensure that all navigators do understand all the communication conducted on the VTS working channels.

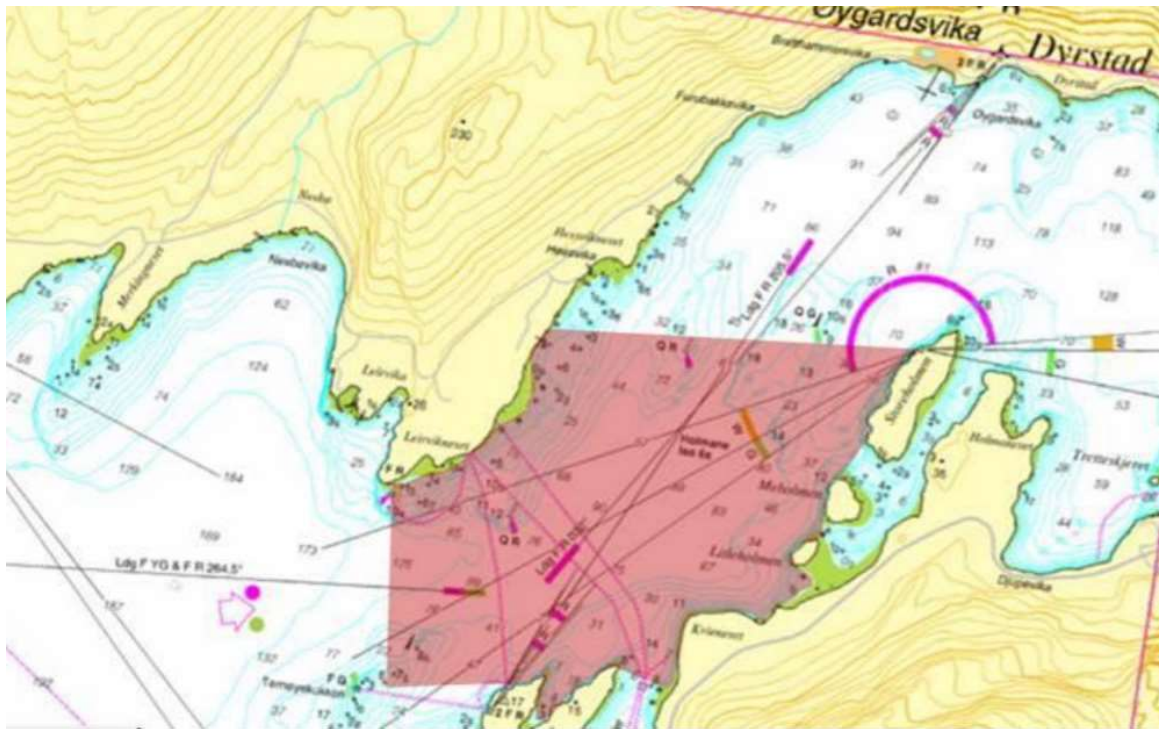


Figure 4, area of restriction regarding the passing of vessels in the approach to Nordgulen.

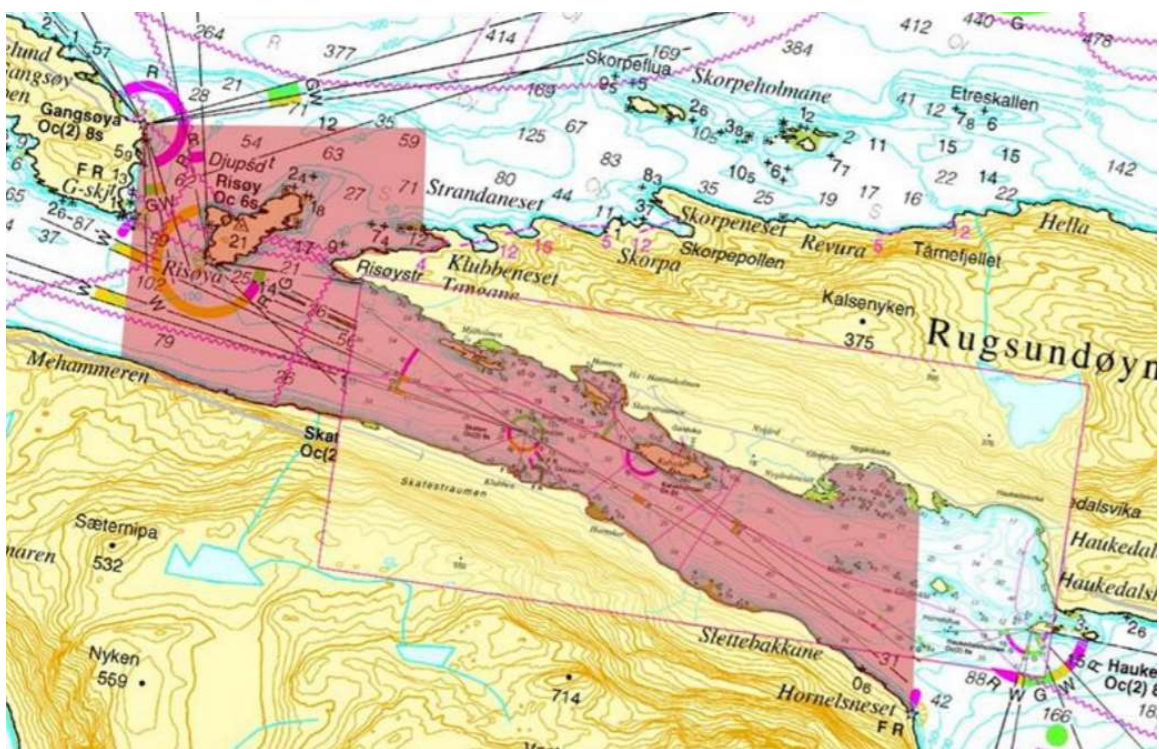


Figure 5, area of restriction regarding the use of the fairway at Skatestraumen.

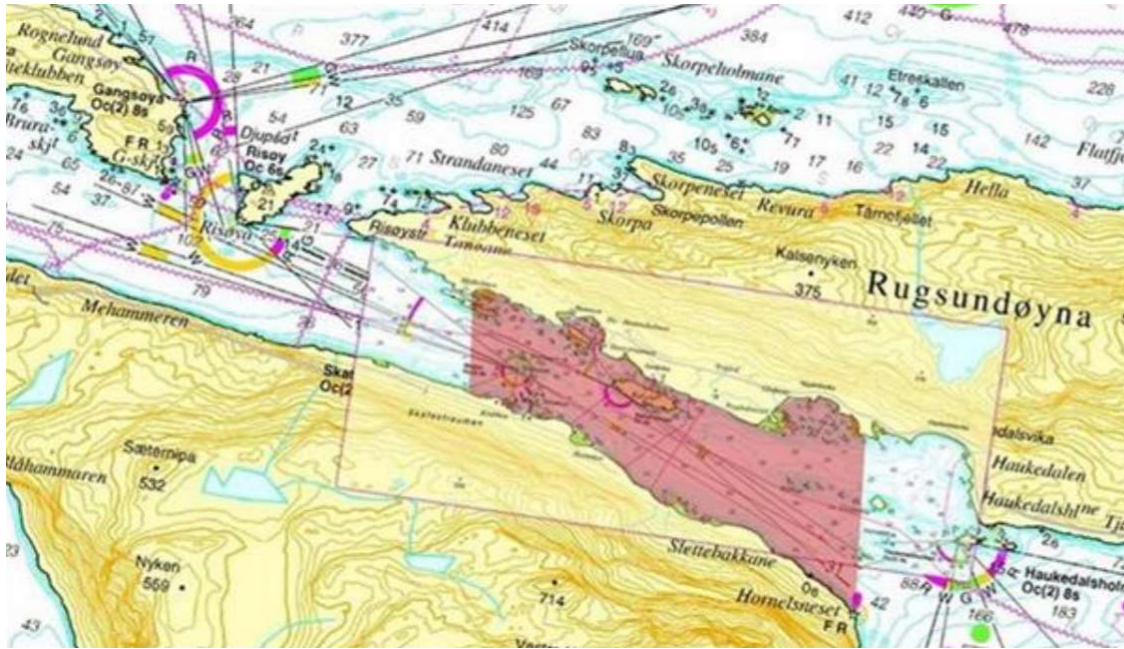


Figure 6, area of restriction regarding the passing of vessels in the fairway at Skatestraumen.

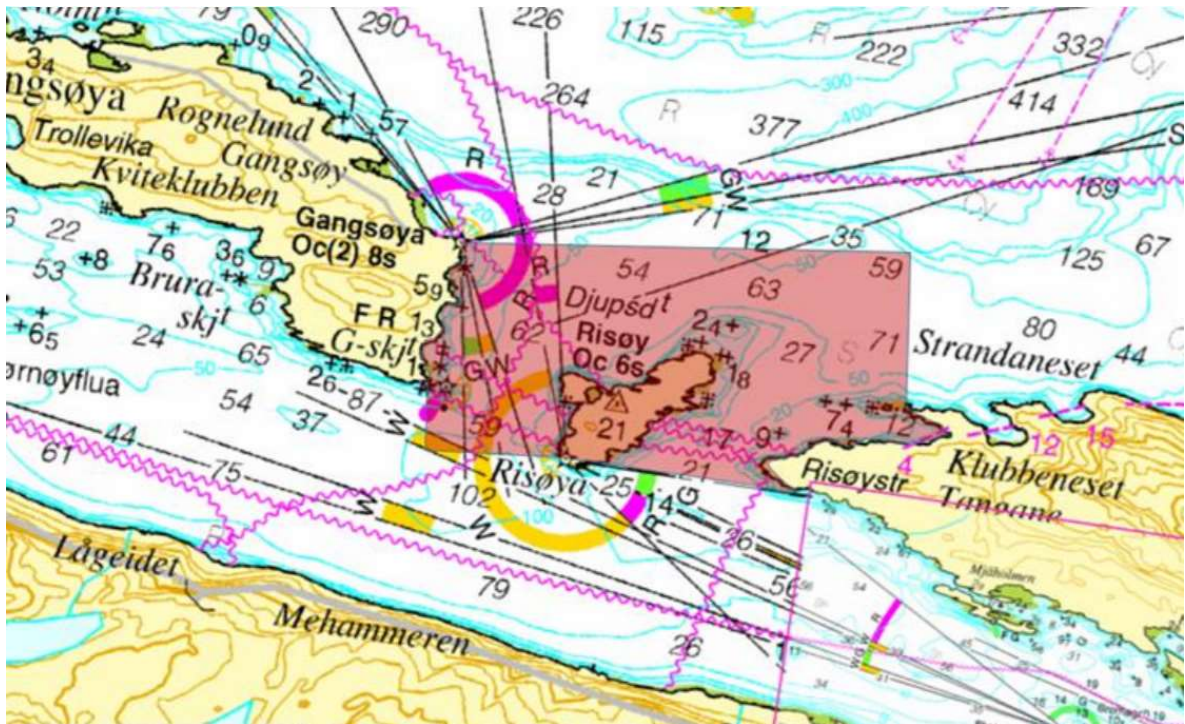


Figure 7, area of restriction regarding the passing of vessels in the fairway at Djupsundet/ Risøystraumen.

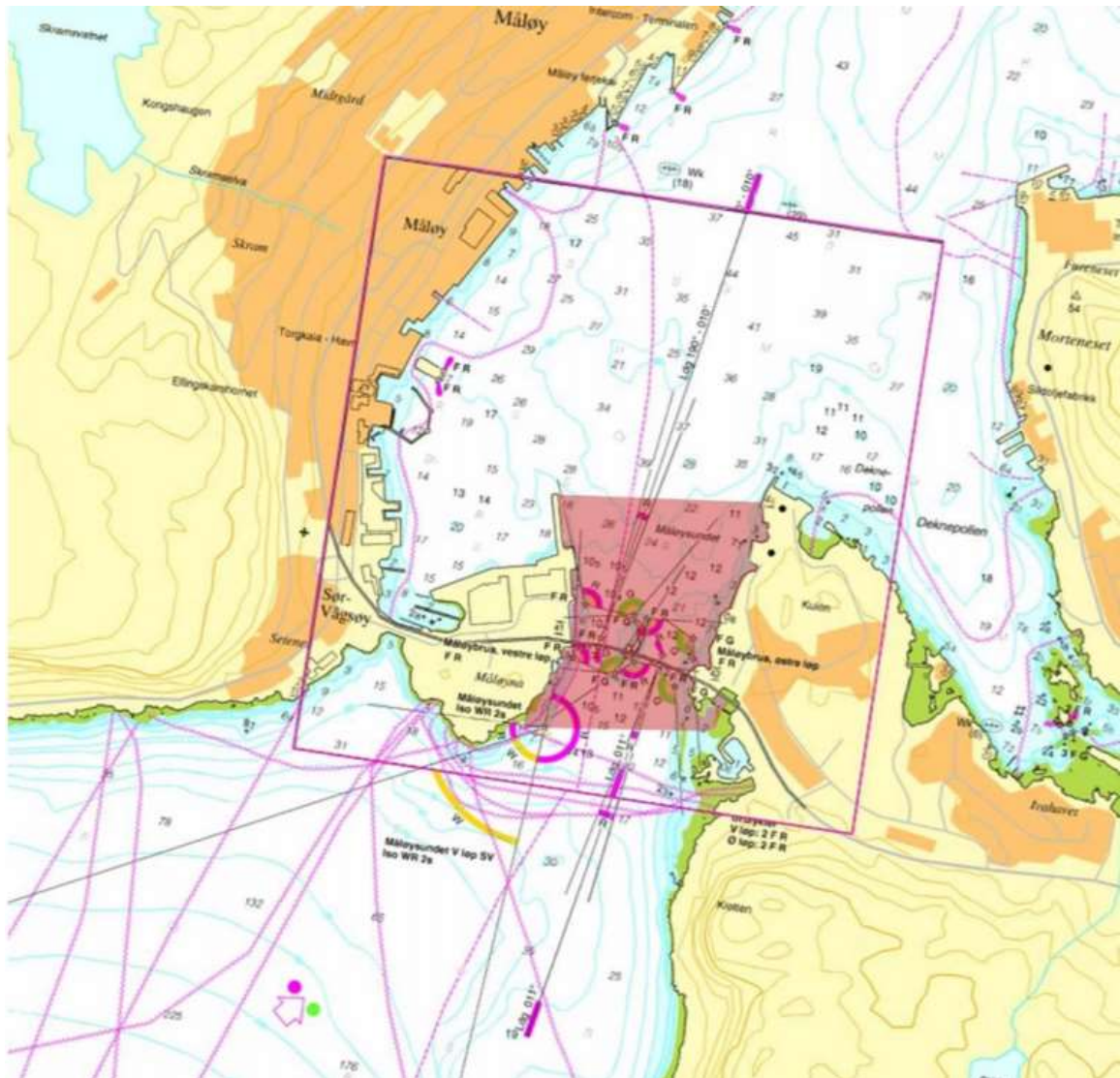


Figure 8, area of restriction regarding the passing of vessels in the fairway at Måløysundet.

Regulations on anchoring in Ofotfjorden, Herjangfjorden and Narvikbukta

Today, a total of 8 positions are used for anchoring in the waters surrounding the port of Narvik. (See figure 9) The wind conditions in the Narvik area are at times challenging, with strong gusts. This have led to several situations where ships have dragged their anchor. In those situations, assistance from towing vessels might be essential to prevent ships from drifting aground.

If all anchoring positions are used simultaneously in windy conditions, the need for towing assistance might exceed the capacity of the three towing vessels located in Narvik. Regulations to restrict the number of ships at anchor are therefore assessed as essential for the safety of ships anchoring in the Narvik area.

Based on this NCA propose to introduce two new regulations. The first regulation require ships longer than 150 meters to obtain an approval to anchor in Ofotfjorden, Herjangfjorden or Narvikbukta prior to crossing the Norwegian baseline at Vestfjorden. The second regulation require ships longer than 70 meters to be assigned to a specific anchoring position prior to anchoring in the Narvik area. (See figure 10)

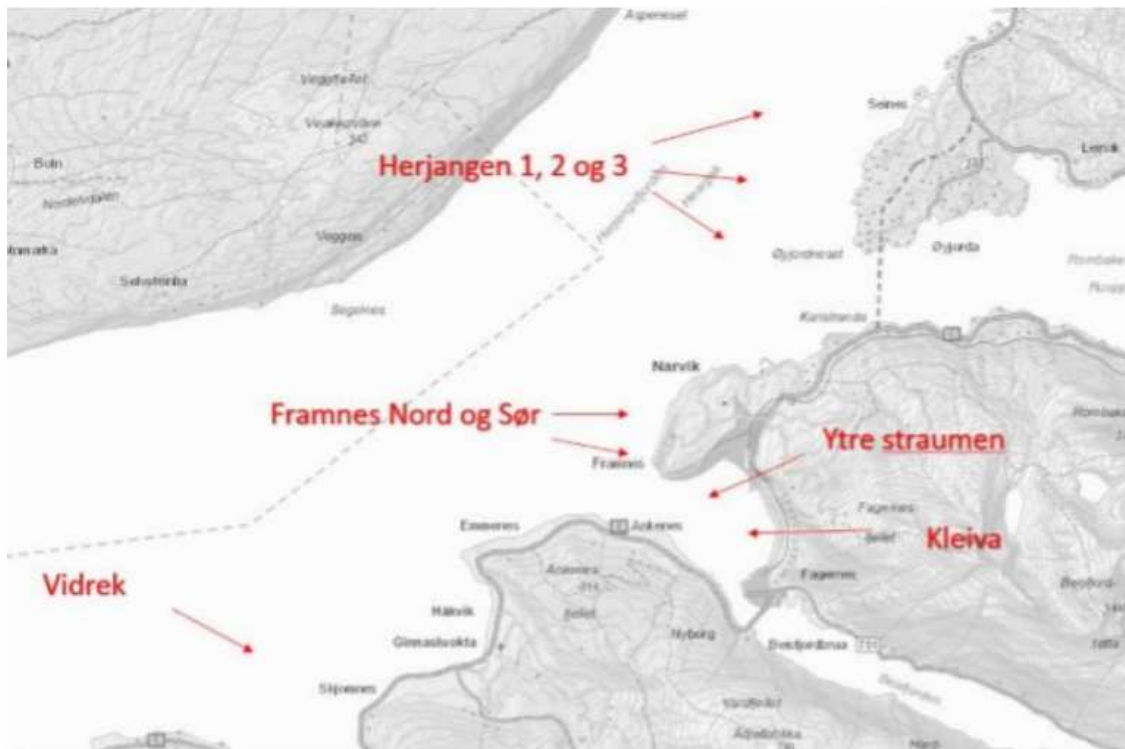


Figure 9, anchoring positions in the waters around Narvik.

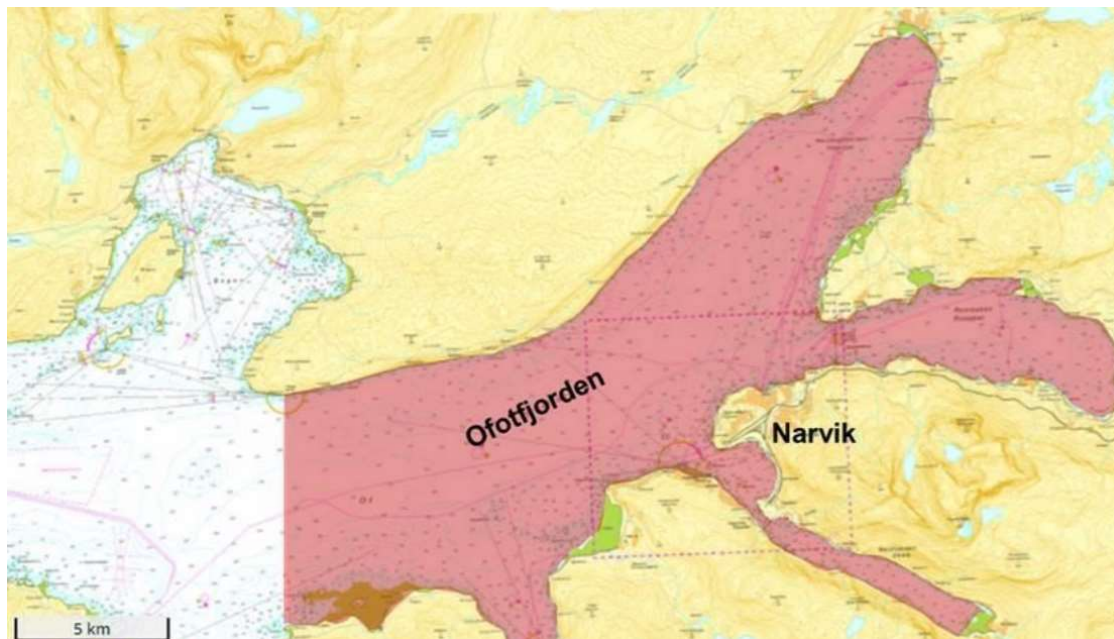


Figure 10, area for regulations regarding anchoring in the waters around Narvik.