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.

Establishment of a new VTS Area covering the fairway between Florø and Måløy NCA propose to establish a new VTS area covering the fairway between Florø and Måløy. (See figure 2) Analyzes indicate that the vessel traffic in Norwegian waters will increase towards 2040 and that the general vessel size will increase as well. In some narrow waters, the growth in vessel traffic will represent a significant increase in the risk of accidents. The Norwegian Government have thus decided to expand the coverage of VTS areas on the western coast between Fedje and Kristiansund.

Analyzes have identified that the fairway between Florø and Måløy have several narrow stretches where VTS traffic monitoring and organization will be an effective measure to reduce the risk of vessel collisions and groundings. Due to this NCA propose to establish "Kinn" VTS area covering the waters between Florø and Måløy.



Figure 2, Kinn VTS area.

Regulations covering the fairway between Florø and Måløy

NCA propose to introduce the following regulations in the fairway between Florø and Måløy:

- Prohibition for vessels longer than 120 meters to pass other vessels in the fairway east of Nordre Nærøya. (See figure 3)
- Prohibition for vessels longer than 120 meters to pass other vessels in the approach to Nordgulen. (See figure 4)
- Prohibition for vessels longer than 225 meters to use the fairway at Skatestraumen. (See figure 5)
- Prohibition for vessels to pass other vessels in the fairway at Skatestraumen. (See figure 6)
- Prohibition for vessels to pass other vessels in the fairway at Djupsundet/ Risøystraumen. (See figure 7)
- Prohibition for vessels longer than 120 meters to pass other vessels in the fairway at Måløysundet. (See figure 8)

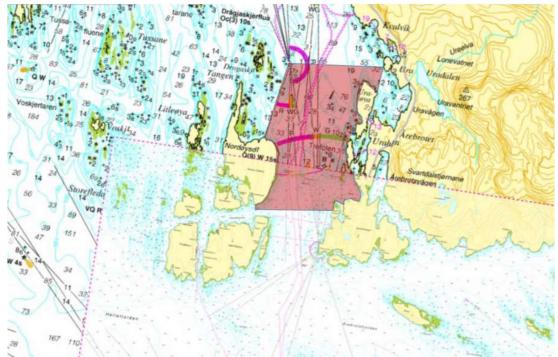


Figure 3, area of restriction regarding the passing of vessels east of Nordre Nærøya.

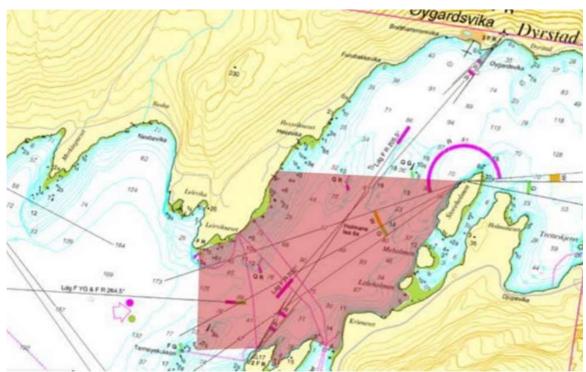


Figure 4, area of restriction regarding the passing of vessels in the approach to Nordgulen.

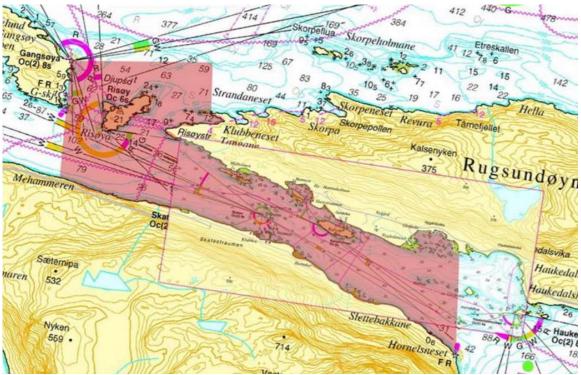


Figure 5, area of restriction regarding the use of the fairway at Skatestraumen.

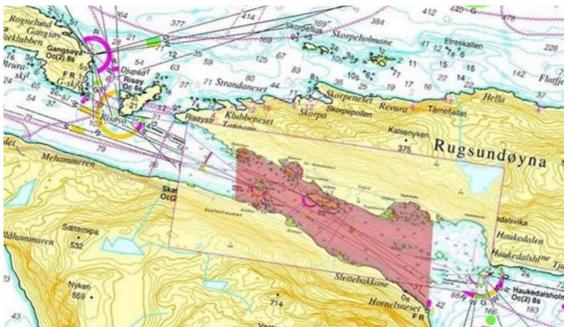


Figure 6, area of restriction regarding the passing of vessels in the fairway at Skatestraumen.

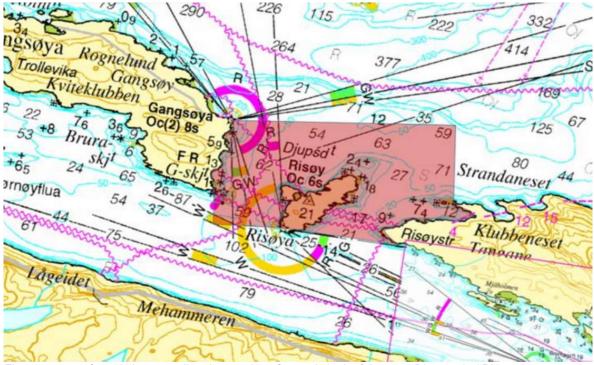


Figure 7, area of restriction regarding the passing of vessels in the fairway at Djupsundet/ Risøystraumen.



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)

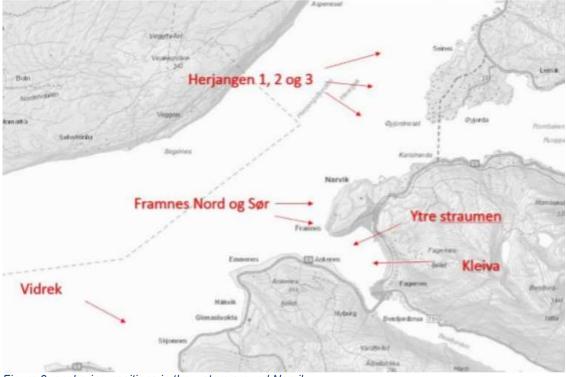


Figure 9, anchoring positions in the waters around Narvik.

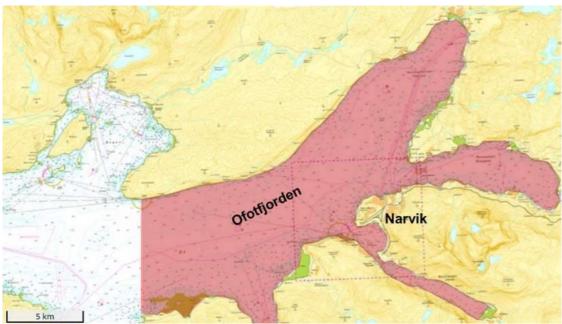


Figure 10, area for regulations regarding anchoring in the waters around Narvik.