



भारत सरकार / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS
नौवहन महानिदेशालय, मुंबई
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING, MUMBAI

File No.: 25-97/1/2025-NT - DGS

Date: 19/05/2025

DGS Circular No. 23 of 2025

Subject: Foul Weather Relaxation for Mechanised Sailing Vessels (MSV) for Tuticorin-Colombo and Tuticorin- Malé route

The Directorate General of Shipping has received a representation from the Coastal Mechanised Sail Vessel Owners' Association (CMSVOA), Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu, seeking a relaxation from the prevailing foul weather restrictions for MSVs operating on the Tuticorin-Colombo and Tuticorin-Malé routes. The association highlighted that there have been no fatal weather-related incidents in recent years, and that MSVs are now equipped with modern navigational aids. It was also submitted that such a relaxation would safeguard livelihoods, promote bilateral trade, and enhance regional connectivity.

2. The Directorate, having regard to the socio-economic importance of this traditional trade and following stakeholder consultations held on 23.04.2025 under the chairmanship of the Nautical Adviser (I/c), refers to the existing DGS Order 04 of 2018, which permitted operations on the Tuticorin-Malé route until 30th April annually under foul weather conditions, subject to specified safety parameters.

3. In continuation and enhancement of the above, and in light of the evolving maritime security environment and operational readiness as outlined in the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Safety and Security of Indian Mechanised Sailing Vessels (2025), issued vide DGS Order 02 of 2025 dated 15.04.2025, the Directorate is pleased to grant following relaxations, subject to meeting the conditions mentioned below in Para 4.

- a. **For Tuticorin – Malé route:** an extension of foul weather relaxation until 15th May each year.
- b. **For Tuticorin-Colombo route:** trade operations will be permitted throughout the entire foul weather season

4. The above relaxation is strictly conditional upon compliance with the following criteria and the mandatory provisions contained within DGS Order 02 of 2025 - Standard operating Procedure for safety and Security for Indian Mechanised Sailing Vessels: -

- a) **Seaworthiness Certification:** Vessel owners shall submit the self-declaration about the seaworthiness of the vessel and safety of the passage including weather

forecasts, cargo manifest, crew list, passage plan, and copy of insurance and valid certificate of inspection of MSVs to Mercantile Marine Departments (MMDs) to declare the seaworthiness of each vessel prior to every departure. The local MMD may carry out the inspection of the vessel randomly, if required.

- b) **Weather Clearance:** Vessels must obtain and carry an official weather forecast for the entire voyage including return passage from two independent agencies. Sailing shall not be undertaken if the forecast indicates a Significant Wave Height exceeding two (2) meters and/or wind speed exceeding 20 Knots.
- c) **Position Monitoring:** Position of MSVs shall be reported to the DGComm Centre manually every four (4) hours in addition to Automatic Identification System (AIS) reporting, in accordance with SOP communication requirements.
- d) **Route Compliance:** Traffic discipline shall be observed by maintaining the pre-approved passage plan, ensuring vessels remain within 12 nautical miles from the coastline in the Gulf of Mannar during the coastal passage.
- e) **Equipment Readiness:** All vessels must be equipped with functioning navigational and radio communication equipment as mandated under DGS Order 02 of 2025.
- f) **Crew Sensitisation:** Vessel Owners and Tindals shall ensure that the crew is briefed on the SOP provisions, especially those concerning communication protocols, emergency preparedness, and reporting obligations to IFC-IOR, MMDAC DGComm Centre, and MRCC & MRSC as applicable.

5. Based on this relaxation, the concerned Registrars of Sailing Vessels, Port Authorities, and Customs Commissioners may permit the operation of MSVs on the specified routes during the extended foul weather window, strictly subject to fulfillment of the aforementioned conditions and full compliance with the Standard Operating Procedures for Safety and Security of Indian Mechanised Sailing Vessels (2025), issued vide DGS Order 02 of 2025 dated 15.04.2025.

6. The jurisdictional MMD is required to provide a monthly report of the details of MSVs sailing from Tuticorin during the foul weather season in both the sectors i.e Tuticorin - Columbo and Tuticorin- Male route.

7. The Directorate reserves the right to review, amend, or withdraw this relaxation based on operational feedback, weather developments, or any instances of non-compliance.

This order has been issued with the approval of the Competent Authority.



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