



MERCHANT SHIPPING NOTICE

MSN 0507

Amendment 2/2022

**EFFECT OF DECLINING WATER LEVELS
IN LAKE VICTORIA TO THE SAFETY OF
NAVIGATION**

This notice is hereby issued to Ship owners, Masters and Officers and other concerned parties

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Water levels in lakes Victoria, Tanganyika, Nyasa and Rukwa are reported to have drastically declined to alarming levels in recent years.
- 1.2 Vessels have been reported grounding in Lake Victoria on uncharted submerged rocks while sailing on normal routes and others grounding alongside wharfs before loading to the required marks.

2.0 Safety of navigation on normal sailing routes and berthing or un-berthing in lake ports

The decline in water levels has caused a drastic reduction in water depths and soundings. Routes which appear safe on the available charts or were normally and safely used for navigation by lake vessels can no longer be taken as being automatically safe for the passage of ships under the current conditions. Similarly berths in ports are now shallower than before and therefore not as safe as they were before the current change in water depths caused by the declining water levels phenomenon.



3.0 Guidance

3.1 Masters and Officers must navigate ships with great caution in the lakes taking every precaution to ensure the safety of navigation, including:

- Maintaining sharp look out at all times; and
- Using the available navigation aids to determine the depth of water (soundings) at appropriate intervals.

3.2 Masters must take every precaution when berthing their vessels in consideration of the changes in water depths in ports. Care should be taken to guard against ships grounding in ports due to reduced water depths caused by declining water levels.

4.0 For Inquiries contact:

Registrar

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