



The new Suez Canal due to open in August 2015

The new Suez Canal which is due to open on 6 August 2015 will increase the capacity of the existing canal allowing ships to pass north and south concurrently. A new canal will be created, parallel to the existing one, to cope with the expected growth of world trade.

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Due to the lack of reliable navigational data prior to the opening of the new canal, Gard has recently received a number of enquiries from Members and clients about potential risks connected with the transit and navigation through the new Suez channel.

According to the Suez Canal Authority (SCA), the long term goal is to increase the daily average of transiting vessels to 97 ships by the year 2023, up from 49 ships at present, to achieve direct unstopped transit for 45 ships in both directions, and increasing the permissible draft to 66 feet all through the Suez Canal. The 72-kilometre project includes a new 37-kilometre long parallel waterway, as well as deepening the current canal to 24m and expansion of the existing Suez Canal along a 35-kilometre stretch. By facilitating traffic of larger ships in both directions and minimising waiting times for transiting ships, the number of ships that the Canal can handle on a daily basis will increase. The transit times will be shortened from 18-22 hours to 11 hours and the waiting times for vessels will become 3 hours at most instead of today's 8-11 hours. Two-way traffic will not be possible along the entire canal. There will be a long section with two-way traffic but passing places will be built on other sections with one-way traffic. The two canals will be connected by four smaller waterways. Ships will continue to use the canal in convoys but the convoys will be much longer.

Members and clients transiting the new canal should note the following;

- Gard is presently not aware of any problems or specific dangers when transiting the new Suez Canal. According to the SCA no vessel will be allowed to pass through the waterway unless it is secure. However, no instructions or navigational warnings have so far been published by the Suez Canal Authority (SCA);

<http://www.suezcanal.gov.eg/nc.aspx>

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- According to our correspondent, El Hamamsy Marine Services Ltd in Egypt, no records of any safety/security issues or threats of any kind to the transiting of the Suez Canal have been made. There are no fixed transit schedules due to the new Suez Canal project.

- Members and clients should monitor the SCA website prior to entrance (

<http://www.suezcanal.gov.eg/>

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According to a notice received from the SCA dated 13 July 2015, Masters of vessels transiting the Suez Canal are requested to submit a signed and stamped letter of undertaking, confirming that there are no weapons onboard. The letter must be among the documents submitted prior to Canal transit, as otherwise the vessel will not be allowed for transit.

Gard will monitor the situation and provide further information when available prior to or after the opening.

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We would like to thank El Hamamsy Marine Services Ltd in Egypt for this

information

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