



Rules and safety tips

Code of conduct for safe passage through offshore wind farms

The North Sea has some of the busiest shipping lanes in the world. The Dutch government aims for the space available in this body of water to be used efficiently, by allocating different uses to various sites. The Dutch wind farms in the North Sea: Offshore Wind Farm Egmond aan Zee, Offshore Wind Farm Prinses Amalia off the coast of IJmuiden and Offshore Wind Farm Luchterduinen off the coast of Noordwijk have been accessible for vessels with a length overall (LOA) of up to 24 metres since 1 May 2018. The Gemini wind farms in the Ten noorden van de Wadden wind farm zone remain a closed area. In order to limit safety risks to shipping in a wind farm where possible, it is important to comply with certain conditions. This code of conduct for safe passage through offshore wind farms covers rules and safety tips for shipping passing through wind farm zones.



Passage to shipping under specific conditions

Passage through the wind farms is necessarily associated with safety risks. The most significant of these risks is formed by the moving rotor blades and various high-voltage cables that form underwater connections between the individual wind turbines and between the turbines and platform. Passage of vessels increases the likelihood of damage to the valuable installations. Moreover, it is more difficult for the emergency services to operate when called out to wind farms. In an individual wind farm, and within a radius of 500 metres around it, strict conditions and rules must be observed. Failure to comply with these rules is an offence and penalties will be enforced accordingly. A number of tips have been drawn up to supplement the rules so as to further limit the risks associated with passage of shipping. These were devised in conjunction with various stakeholders and, together with the rules, form the code of conduct for safe passage through wind farms at sea.

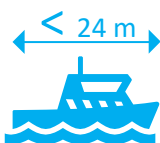
The rules for shipping in wind farms



An AIS transponder (at least class B) must be in operation and the marine VHF radio must be tuned to channel 16 to receive any instructions. You must take action if the instructions are addressed to you.



The wind farms are accessible during the day only (access after sunset is prohibited and penalties will be enforced). The precise times of sunrise and sunset as determined by the KNMI are decisive in this respect.



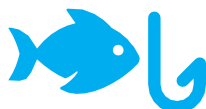
The wind farms are accessible to vessels with a length overall (LOA) of up to 24 metres only.



It is not permitted to alight on the structures in the wind farm. Keep at least 50 metres' distance from wind turbine towers and 500 metres from a transformer station. This also applies to objects extending from the vessel, such as lines, floats and hooks.



It is not permitted to make contact with the sea bed in wind farms: for example, by dropping anchor or trawling over the sea bed with nets.



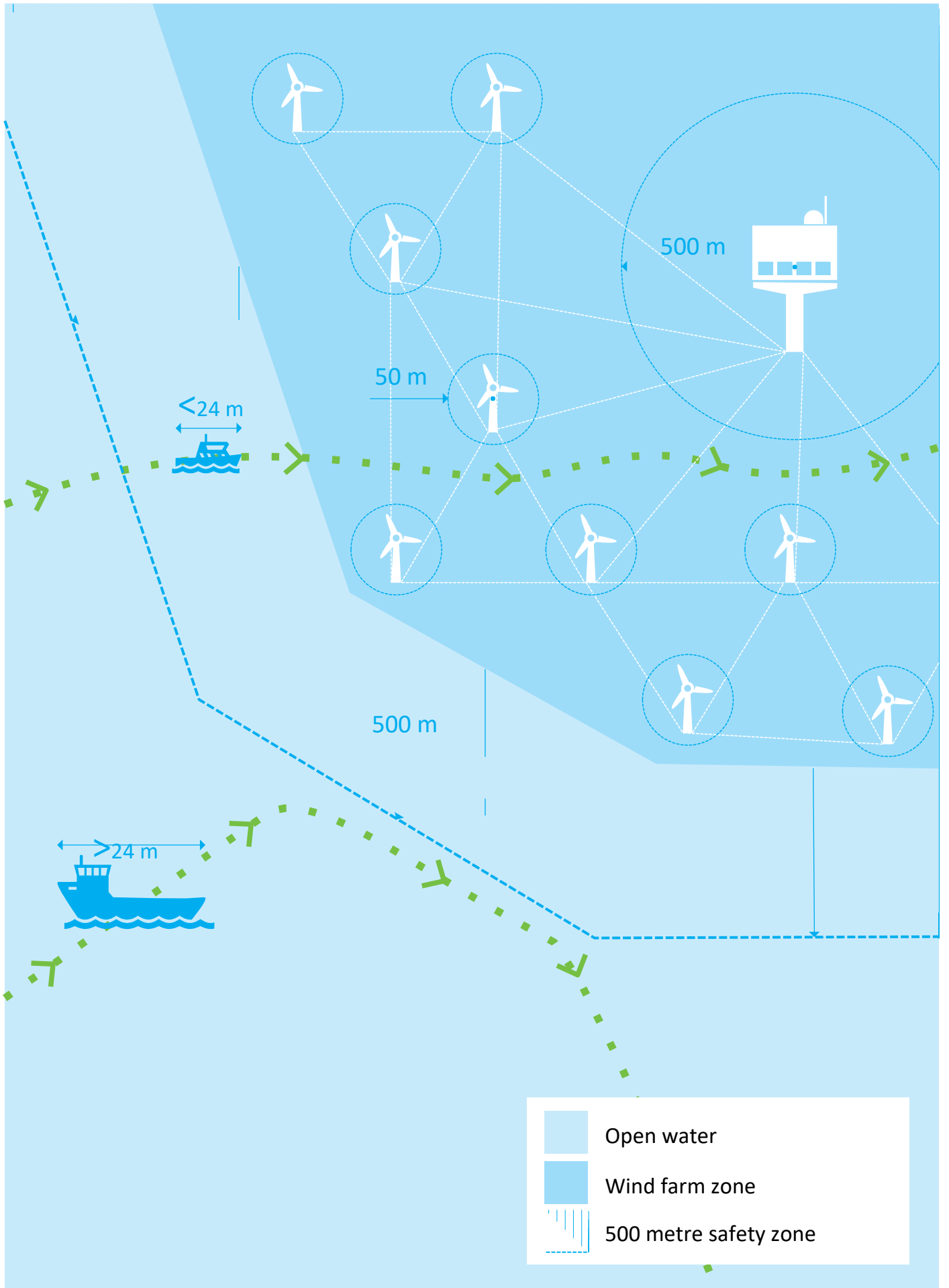
The sole form of fishing permitted is that with rods, taking into account the aforementioned distancing rules.



Other fishing gear must be fastened so that it cannot be used at short notice. The fishing gear in its entirety must be visible on deck; in that way it is clear that there is nothing trawling along the sea bed.



Activities that could result in hazardous situations and other disruption within a wind farm are prohibited. By this we mean activities including, but not limited to, diving, kite surfing and reckless handling of the vessel. It is also prohibited to throw fish (or any other) waste overboard.



Safety tips

Show good seamanship

1. Use nautical charts

Use up-to-date (digital) nautical charts with a sufficiently large scale, on which individual wind turbines and the high-voltage cables are shown clearly.

2. Prepare for the voyage properly

Consult the Coast Guard safety messages before you enter a wind farm. In that way, you will be aware of the current situation and any maintenance (or other) work and activities in the wind farms that could impede free passage.

3. Travel in good weather conditions

Do not enter the wind farms in heavy weather conditions, such as when visibility is poor, a storm is brewing, winds are strong and waves are high. Adapt your speed and handling style to the weather conditions.

4. Ensure that you have an operational motor

Ensure that on entry to a wind farm your vessel has a motor that can be used immediately if necessary. The reason for this is to prevent your vessel from becoming impossible to manoeuvre in the event of motor problems or poor conditions for passage. It is recommended that small motor boats driven by an outboard motor have a reserve motor on board.

5. Be visible

Use a radar reflector to increase your visibility (to radar and in general). Wear a life vest with a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) and use an AIS-SART so that the emergency services can locate you quickly in the event of emergency.

6. Take other shipping into account

When leaving the wind farm, take other shipping into account; shipping outside the wind farm may not be able to see you immediately. Shipping within the wind farm may be unable to make evasive manoeuvres due to the lack of space.

7. Do not throw waste overboard

Keep the sea clean: do not throw fish or other waste overboard. This could attract bird life and increase the risk of birds flying into the wind turbines.

8. Be alert

If you see any disturbing activities or potentially hazardous situations, such as drifting nets or damage to installations, please report this to the Coast Guard on the marine VHF radio, using channel 16, under all circumstances. Where possible, please also state the numbering of the wind turbines. This helps in the localisation of incidents and potentially dangerous situations. Send images or video footage of issues and/or hazardous situations to the Coast Guard at the following e-mail address: ccc@kustwacht.nl.

What to do in the event of emergency

- In the event of emergency, please contact the Coast Guard. The best way to do this is by using the marine VHF radio, channel 16, or otherwise (where possible) by telephone on: +31 900-0111.
 - Please be aware that it may take longer than expected for the emergency services to arrive on scene at a wind farm, as helicopters can be impeded by wind turbines.
 - It is forbidden to drop anchor as to do so may damage valuable cables on the sea bed. If, as a consequence of an emergency, you are forced to deploy the anchor, try to veer out the chain in a controlled way. If you have deployed the anchor in a wind farm, this must always be reported to the Coast Guard. When doing so, please report the position of the incident.
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Go to www.windopzee.nl for more information on applicable legislation.

This code of conduct was made possible with the help of: Rijkswaterstaat | Platform Waterrecreatie | Watersportverbond - Regioteam Noordzee | Sportvisserij Nederland | De Nederlandse Charterboot Vereniging | VisNed | Nederlandse Vissersbond | Vissen voor de Wind | Eneco | Nuon | NWEA | Kustwacht | Communicatiebureau Zandbeek

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