

Code of conduct for safe passage through Borssele Wind Farm Pass

Introduction

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. Off the coast of Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, the Borssele Wind Farm Pass is situated in the Dutch Borssele wind farm zone. This corridor offers free passage to vessels with an LOA of up to 45 metres.

In order to limit safety risks to shipping in a corridor where possible, it is strongly recommended that you observe certain conditions. This code of conduct for safe passage through the Borssele Wind Farm Pass covers the rules¹ and safety tips for shipping passing through the Borssele wind farm zone.

Passage to shipping under specific conditions

Passage through wind farm zones 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 the platform. The presence of shipping 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 farm zones. In offshore wind farms and within a radius of 500 metres around the wind farm zone there are strict conditions and rules that must be observed; these are included in the Administrative Ruling of General Application establishing safety zones. Failure to comply with these rules is an offence and penalties will be enforced accordingly. The corridor is outside the safety zones. Tips have also been drawn up in addition to the rules that apply within the safety zone to limit safety risks to shipping. Together with the rules, these form the code of behaviour for safe passage through Borssele Wind Farm Pass.

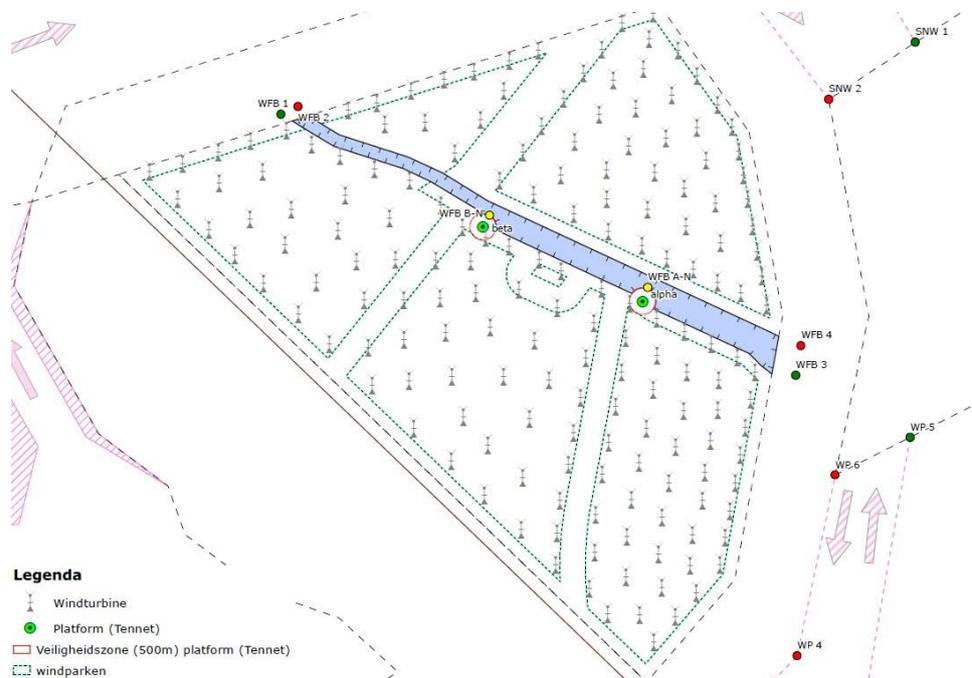


Figure 1 Overview of Borssele offshore wind farm, including the Pass.

[Legenda – Legend

Windturbine – Wind turbine
Veiligheidszone platform – Platform safety zone
Windparken – Wind farms]

¹ Government Gazette 2021, 13511 Bekendmaking houdende een verbod zich te bevinden binnen de veiligheidszones van windenergiegebied Borssele in de Noordzee [Announcement constituting a prohibition on entering the safety zones of Borssele wind farm zone in the North Sea]

A shipping corridor, called Borssele Wind Farm Pass runs from east to west and vice versa through the middle of the Borssele wind farm zone.

Rules for passage through Borssele Wind Farm Pass (corridor)

- Passage for vessels is permitted solely in the specially designated Borssele Wind Farm Pass (corridor).
- IMO-enforced routing measures apply in the corridor and an 'area to be avoided' (ATBA) has been created.
- Vessels with a length of up to 45 metres that are not carrying hazardous cargo are permitted to use the corridor.
- Access to the corridor for vessels up to 45 metres in length applies both during the day and at night.
- Passage through the wind farm zone is permitted in the corridor only. Outside the corridor, safety zones in a radius of 500 metres around the platforms and 500 metres around the outer limits of the wind farms have been set up. Passage through these safety zones is not permitted. This also applies to objects extending from the vessel, such as lines, floats and hooks.
- It is recommended that you have an AIS transponder (at least class B) 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.
- A number of cables and pipelines lie on the bed of the corridor. As a consequence, it is strongly recommended that you do not make contact with the sea bed: for example, by dropping anchor or trawling over the sea bed with nets.
- Use of a fishing rod is permitted, where this does not lead to disruptive or potentially hazardous situations for other users of the corridor.
- Activities that lead to potentially hazardous situations in the corridor or may cause disruption include diving, kite surfing and reckless handling of the vessel. Furthermore, you are advised not to throw fish (or any other) waste overboard, as this would attract birds.

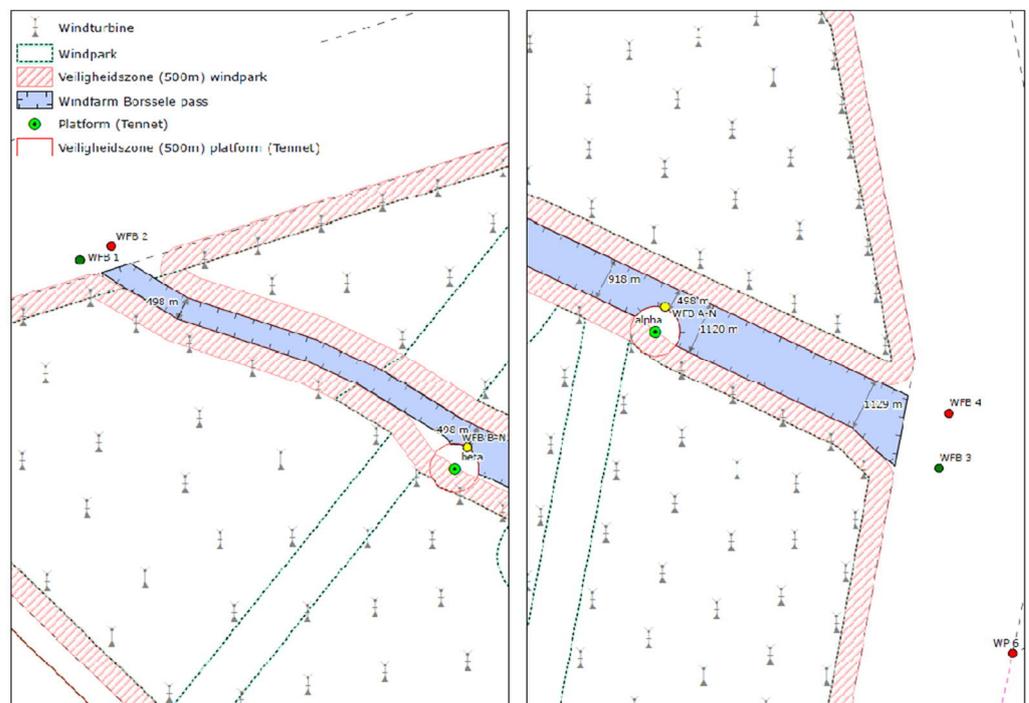


Figure 2 Overview of situation for passage through the Borssele Wind Farm Pass corridor

- [Windturbine – Wind turbine
- Windpark – Wind farm
- Veiligheidszone windpark – Wind farm safety zone
- Windfarm Borssele pass – Borssele Wind Farm Pass corridor
- Veiligheidszone platform – Platform safety zone]

Safety tips

Show good seamanship

1. Use nautical charts
Use up-to-date (digital) nautical charts with a sufficiently large scale, on which the safety zones, 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 the corridor. 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 corridor in heavy weather 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 the corridor 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 sailing. 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 or entering the corridor, take other shipping into account; shipping outside the wind farm zone may not be able to see you immediately. Shipping within the wind farm zone 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 disruptive 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.

If you are found to have acted in breach of the rules you will be fined, and any damage caused to cables and/or wind turbines will be recovered from the person responsible.

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 (where possible) by telephone on: 0900-0111.
- 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.
- 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.

Areas earmarked for new wind farms may be freely used by shipping until the start of construction. During construction, these areas will be closed; the areas in question will not be reopened for shipping and shared use once construction has been completed and the wind farm is operational.

Go to www.noordzeeloket.nl for more information on applicable legislation.

Published by Rijkswaterstaat Zee en Delta