

Marine Operations – Tug Orders

Tug Orders Vocabulary in All South Australian Ports

Standard tug orders are to be used in all South Australian ports. If non-standard terms are used pilots and tug masters must be aware of the potential for confusion. The standard terms and vocabulary used during manoeuvring are indicated below:

	Term	Meaning
	STANDBY TO (Ready to)	Position tug in readiness for indicated action and power (on small ships and light drafts this is sometimes used as an actual assistance)
	<i>Use order STANDBY TO in conjunction with the appropriate ACTION to position tug in readiness for intended manoeuvre.</i>	
A C T I O N	PUSH	Push at 90° to ship's fore and aft line unless a specific angle is requested by the Pilot. (e.g. Lift off at 45° towards the bow)
	LIFT OFF	Pull at 90° to ships fore and aft line unless a specific angle is requested by the Pilot. (e.g. Lift off at 45° towards the stern)
	LAY BACK ALONGSIDE	Stay parallel to ship side and act as a brake towing against the movement of the ship. Generally, only used for tugs made fast on the shoulder.
	LAY BACK ON YOUR LINE	Lay out the line directly astern of the vessel and act as a brake towing against the movement of the ship. Only used for tugs made fast aft.
	<i>Use the ACTION in conjunction with the appropriate POWER to effect required manoeuvre.</i>	
P O W E R	MINIMUM	Apply minimum power to maintain position. Where possible this should be 5% or less of the tugs available power.
	QUARTER	Apply one quarter of full power in conjunction with indicated action.
	HALF	Apply one half of full power in conjunction with indicated action.
	THREE QUARTERS	Apply three quarters of full power in conjunction with indicated action.
	FULL	Apply full power in conjunction with indicated action.
	MAXIMUM	Apply maximum power (emergency only)
	<i>Apply the MODE as an order by which the Tug Master will apply a power setting and line tension that allows the tug to maintain a position but does not effect change on the manoeuvring of the vessel.</i>	
M O D E	STOP	Maintain position and action with no applied power.
	NO WEIGHT	Maintain position with a slack line, or no applied weight on the hull.
	OFF THE HULL (Stand clear)	Move from a push up position and maintain position just off the hull with no weight on the line. Common on smaller or light vessels.
VHF COMMUNICATION FAILURE		SOUND ONE LONG BLAST
<i>Tugs and Pilots immediately function check VHF's on both primary channel and back up channel 12.</i>		
EMERGENCY TUG STOP		SOUND "D" (_ . .) ONE LONG FOLLOWED BY TWO SHORT BLASTS
Tugs STOP what they are doing and immediately attempt to stop the vessel dead in the water. As an example, if the tugs were pushing the vessel towards the berth, upon hearing this signal they would stop immediately and start lifting off to stop the vessel's movement towards the wharf.		

Each order shall be preceded by the position of the tug. For two tugs this should be "Tug Forward" or "Tug Aft". If three or more tugs are used this should be numbered from forward to aft. The use of tug's names can be confusing and is not recommended but may be used if the message also includes the tug's position. The use of tug master's names or nicknames for tugs is not acceptable.

Other commonly used terms include:

Swing bow to port/starboard – direction of bow during swing in any swinging area

Square up - tug to rotate 90 degrees to the ships fore and aft line whilst applying no or minimum weight to perform the action.

Tight Line – an alternative to Stand by to lift but means the line is tight with a very light amount of weight, 1% or less of the tugs available power.

Safety & Health Above All Else