

Advisory To Shipping No. A-54-2023

December 15, 2023

TO: All Shipping Agents, Owners, and Operators

SUBJECT: Increase in the Number of Booking Slots in the Panamax and Neopanamax Locks and Other Modifications to the Transit Reservation System

Based on the current and projected level of Gatun Lake, the Panama Canal Authority (ACP) hereby announces an adjustment to the number and distribution of booking slots for both the Panamax and Neopanamax locks.

In the Neopanamax Locks, one slot is being added in Period 1.a. (30 days prior to transit date). Applications under this new slot distribution will be received at the opening of the tiebreaker competition beginning December 17, 2023, for transit date January 16, 2024. The daily auction slot currently offered in Period 3 will continue until further notice. The special auction for full container vessels announced in Advisory to Shipping A-52-2023 may be offered as deemed necessary, as determined by the ACP.

In the Panamax Locks, two slots from the supers category are being carried over from Period 1 to Period 2. For the regular vessel category, one slot is being added in Period 2. Applications under this new slot distribution for Period 2 will be received at the opening of the tiebreaker competition beginning January 2, 2024, for transit date January 16, 2024.

In addition, the two (2) auction slots offered in Period 3 will be available to both *supers* and *regular* vessels, effective January 9, 2024, for auctions beginning January 16, 2024. These auctions will be offered to specific market segments based on the groups announced in Advisory to Shipping A-51-2023. The ACP will notify the day of the week when the slots to be auctioned will become available to each group.

The following table summarizes the new distribution of slots for the three vessel categories:

VESSEL CATEGORY	SPECIAL PERIOD	PERIOD 1	PERIOD 1.A (30-15 DAYS)	PERIOD 2 (14-8 DAYS)	PERIOD 3 AUCTIONS (7-2 DAYS)	TOTAL
Neopanamax	1	2	2	1	1	7
Supers	3	4	N/A	4	2	17
Regulars	2	-	N/A	2		
Total	6	6	2	7	3	24

Notes:

1. All unused slots from one period are carried over to the following period.
2. The two (2) daily auctions offered in Period 3 in the Panamax locks will be open to supers and regulars

Furthermore, due to the ongoing water crisis in the Panama Canal and the current reduction in transit slots, the ACP finds it necessary to adjust the number of slots that may be awarded to each customer (per customer code), with the objective of providing a more equitable and fair distribution of slots. Therefore, in the Neopanamax Locks, for transit dates beginning **January 16, 2024**, only one (1) booking slot will be allowed per customer per date (regardless of the booking period in which the slot was awarded), with the following exceptions:

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1. Slots that are awarded through the auction process.
2. Slots that cannot be allocated to other participating vessels during the tiebreaker competition, due to exceeding the established limits per direction and/or restriction.
3. If there are no other interested vessels during the tiebreaker competitions.
4. If there are booking slots still available after the closing of the tiebreaker competition. In such cases, the available booking slots will be awarded to any customer submitting their booking request, on a *first-come, first-served* basis.

This new allocation procedure will begin with the Period 1.a tiebreaker competition on December 17, 2023, for January 16, 2024.

In the Panamax Locks, during the tiebreaker competition for Booking Period 2 beginning January 2, 2024, for transit date January 16, 2024, only one (1) booking slot will be allowed per customer per date (for supers and regulars). Under this new allocation procedure, the following rules will apply:

1. Customers that have previously been awarded booking slots in Period 1 may be allowed to obtain a slot during the tiebreaker competition in Period 2.
2. Customers that are awarded a slot during Period 2 tiebreaker competition may not be assigned a slot for another vessel during the tiebreaker competition for the following day.
3. Customers that are awarded a slot during Period 2 tiebreaker competition may not be assigned a slot for another vessel during subsequent extraordinary competitions held during Period 2.
4. The limit per customer does not apply to slots awarded through the auction process.
5. Slots that cannot be allocated during the Period 2 tiebreaker competition may be assigned to customers that have already obtained slots for other vessels in Period 2.
6. If there are no other interested vessels during the tiebreaker competitions, these slots may be assigned to any vessel regardless of customer code.

Finally, beginning with the booking competition for **Booking Period 1.a** and **Booking Period 2** for transit date **January 16, 2024**, the booking slot assignment priority for the Neopanamax locks will be as follows:

Booking Period 1.a. Full container vessels shall have priority when assigning all booking slots offered during the tiebreaker competitions for this Booking Period. If there are still slots available, they may be assigned to Liquefied Natural Gas Carriers (LNG), Liquefied Petroleum Gas Carriers (LPG), or Vehicle Carriers / RoRo market segments, based on customer ranking. If there are still slots available, then they may be allocated to customers that have already been awarded slots, even if the assignment exceeds the maximum allowed per customer.

Booking Period 2. Full container vessels shall have priority when assigning the booking slots in this period during the tiebreaker competition. If there are still slots available, they may be allocated to vessels from any market segment that participated in the competition, based on customer ranking.

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The following table summarizes the slot allocation and priorities per booking period for the Neopanamax Locks:

	SPECIAL PERIOD (730 TO 366 DAYS)	PERIOD 1 (90 TO 31 DAYS)	PERIOD 1.A (30 TO 15 DAYS)	PERIOD 2 (14 TO 8 DAYS)	PERIOD 3 (7 TO 2 DAYS)
Number of slots	1	2	2	1	1
Slot allocation priority	Passenger vessels only based on customer ranking	Full container vessels only based on customer ranking	Priority to full containers; then LNG, LPG, and Vehicle Carrier/RoRo market segments based on customer ranking. Any additional slots: priority to full containers, then vessels from LNG, LPG, and Vehicle Carrier market segments based on customer ranking.	Priority to full containers, then by customer ranking. Conditioned slot (if available): priority to full containers; then by customer ranking. Any additional slots: full containers, followed by vessels from any market segment based on customer ranking.	All slots allocated to the highest bidder through auctions.

Note: Unused slots from one booking period are carried over to the following period.

These modifications related to the prioritization in Booking Periods **1.a** and **2** for the Neopanamax Locks will become effective at the opening of the tiebreaker competitions to be held on **December 17, 2023**, (opening of Period 1.a for January 16, 2024), and **January 2, 2024** (opening of Booking Period 2 for January 16, 2024).

This slot prioritization and limit per customer will remain in effect until further notice.

ORIGINAL SIGNED

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