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Ship terminology: directions and the parts of a ship

Ship terms explained: port and starboard, bow and stern, hull and holds, draught and the Plimsoll mark, DWT and GT, mooring lines and helm orders.

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SHORT ANSWER

On board, directions are named after the ship, not the person: facing the bow, the left-hand side is port, the right-hand side starboard, the front the bow, the back the stern and the middle amidships. At night port shows a red light and starboard a green one. The hull's outer face above the waterline is the ship's side; cargo travels in the holds below deck and on top of the hatch covers. The load line (Plimsoll) mark amidships shows how deep the ship may be loaded, and her draught is read from draft marks at the bow, amidships and stern. DWT is the weight she can carry; GT measures her enclosed volume.

Why ships have a language of their own

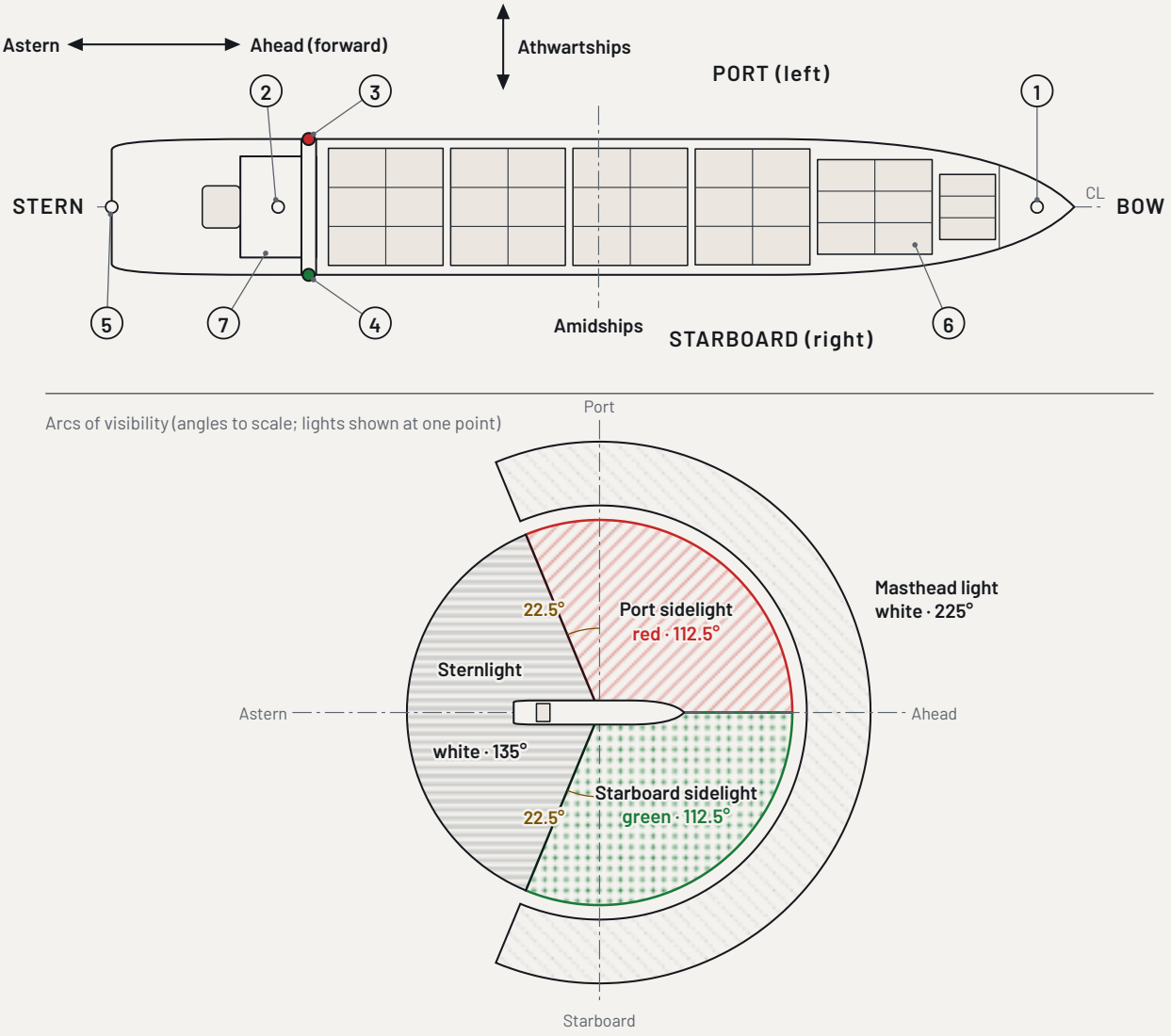
Ashore, "left" and "right" depend on the person speaking. On board that does not work. The officer on the bridge faces the bow, the line handler on the quay faces the ship, and the surveyor climbing down into the hold may be facing the stern; each one's "left" is somewhere else. Seafarers therefore name directions after the ship, not the person. Facing the bow, the left-hand side is **port** and the right-hand side is **starboard**, whichever way anyone happens to be looking. NOAA gives exactly this reason for using port and starboard instead of left and right.

If you work in logistics, you use this vocabulary even if you never set foot on a ship:

- **Stowage and bay plans:** A container's address on board is written in it. Bays are numbered from bow to stern, rows from the centreline out to port and starboard, tiers from the hold up to the deck. How to read the numbers: How to read a container's position on board: bay, row and tier.
- **Port correspondence:** Which side the ship will put alongside, whether she will wait at anchor, whether a pilot and tugs are needed, and the maximum draught she can bring in all come up in messages with agents and terminals.
- **Damage and survey reports:** Reports describe where cargo sat in terms of hold, side and deck. You need the words to read the report correctly. What to do after a loss is covered in Cargo damage and the claims process.
- **Bulk cargo quantities:** The weight of cargo loaded or discharged can be worked out from draught readings in a draught survey. There is a short explanation under Dimensions and loading below.

This page groups the terms by where they belong on the ship: directions first, then the hull, decks, machinery, dimensions, berthing and orders. Every term also has a short entry in the Logistics glossary. Turkish equivalents are given alongside, because they are what you will hear in Turkish ports and offices.

Directions and positions



1. Forward masthead light (white, 225°): within the forward quarter of the length
2. After masthead light (white, 225°): abaft of and higher than the forward one
3. Port sidelight (red, 112.5°)
4. Starboard sidelight (green, 112.5°)
5. Sternlight (white, 135°)
6. Hatch covers (deck cargo not shown)
7. Deckhouse, bridge wings and funnel

Figure 2 — Plan view and lights. Light arcs and placement follow COLREG 1972 Rules 21 and 23 and Annex I. Red sector: diagonal hatching; green sector: dots; white sectors: horizontal and dashed hatching. Ship dimensions are representative.

Position on board is always given along two axes: **fore and aft** (bow to stern) and **athwartships** (side to side). The Turkish Coast Guard's helmsman study guide defines starboard as the side on your right once you are on board

and facing the bow; port is the side on your left.

English	Turkish	Meaning
Bow	Baş	The foremost part of the ship.
Stern	Kıç	The aftermost part of the ship.
Ahead, forward	Pruva	The direction ahead of the bow, and the forward part of the ship. In everyday Turkish, pruva is often used for the bow itself.
Astern, aft	Pupa	The direction behind the stern, and the after part of the ship. The sternlight is pupa feneri in Turkish.
Port	İskele	The left-hand side when facing the bow.
Starboard	Sancak	The right-hand side when facing the bow.
Amidships, midships	Vasat	The middle part of the ship, between bow and stern. The load line mark and deck line are painted here on both sides.
Forward (fore) / aft	İleri / geri	Towards the bow and towards the stern, for relative position on board: "forward of the hold", "aft of the bridge".
Fore and aft, longitudinal	Boyuna (baştan kıça)	Along the length of the ship. Bays are numbered along this axis.
Athwartships, transverse	Enine	Across the ship, from one side to the other. Rows are numbered along this axis.
Ship's side	Borda	The outer face of the hull above the waterline. Every ship has a port side and a starboard side.
Windward / leeward	Rüzgâr üstü / rüzgâr altı	The side the wind is coming from, and the side it is blowing towards.

On a bay plan, left may not be port. Bay plans are usually drawn looking from astern, so port appears on the left and starboard on the right. When you read a plan or a photo, find the bow first and then decide which side is which. In row numbers, port uses even numbers and starboard odd ones: Row: port or starboard?

Why not just "left" and "right"?

As NOAA explains, left and right change with the direction a person faces, while port and starboard name fixed sides of the vessel. Starboard comes from the Old English for the "steering side": early boats were steered not by a rudder on the centreline but by an oar fixed on the right side of the stern. The other side, being the easier one to bring alongside for loading, was called larboard ("the loading side"). Larboard sounded too much like starboard and was gradually replaced by port. We could not find a source we were able to open and check on how the Turkish word iskele came to mean the left-hand side, so we do not offer an explanation for it.

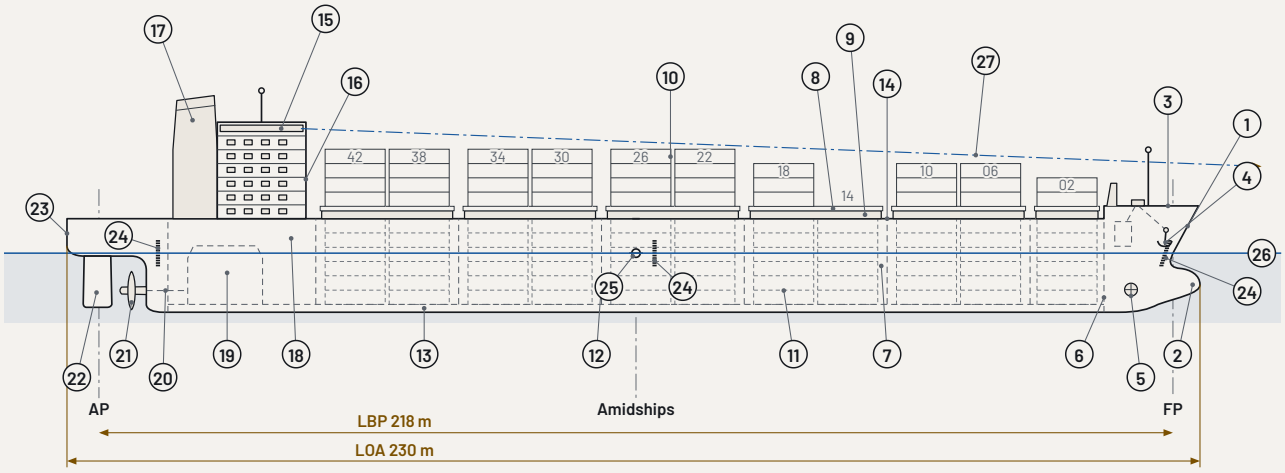
Navigation lights: red to port, green to starboard

At night, port and starboard are also told apart by colour. Rule 21 of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREG) defines the lights as follows:

Light	Colour	Arc	Where it shows
Masthead light (silyon feneri)	White	225°	On the centreline; from right ahead to 22.5° abaft the beam on either side
Starboard sidelight (sancak borda feneri)	Green	112.5°	From right ahead to 22.5° abaft the beam on the starboard side
Port sidelight (iskele borda feneri)	Red	112.5°	From right ahead to 22.5° abaft the beam on the port side
Sternlight (pupa feneri)	White	135°	At the stern; 67.5° either side of right astern

The two sidelights and the sternlight add up to the whole horizon (112.5 + 112.5 + 135 = 360°). Whatever angle you see a ship from, you will see at least one red, green or white light. If you see red and green together, you are looking at her from right ahead or very close to it. According to the Turkish Ministry of Education's seamanship textbook, on vessels of 50 metres or more the masthead light must be visible at 6 miles and the sidelights and sternlight at 3 miles.

Hull and structure



1. Stem
2. Bulbous bow
3. Forecastle
4. Anchor and hawse pipe
5. Bow thruster tunnel
6. Collision bulkhead (hidden)
7. Cargo hold (hidden)
8. Hatch cover
9. Hatch coaming
10. Deck containers; figures in the top tier are 40 ft bay numbers (rising from bow to stern). Bay 14 is drawn without deck cargo so that the hatch cover can be seen.
11. Containers in the hold (hidden)
12. Transverse bulkhead (hidden)
13. Double bottom (hidden)
14. Main deck
15. Navigation bridge (wheelhouse)
16. Deckhouse (accommodation)
17. Funnel
18. Engine room (hidden)
19. Main engine (hidden)
20. Propeller shaft
21. Propeller
22. Rudder
23. Transom stern
24. Draught marks: forward, midships, aft (detail: load line drawing)
25. Load line mark (symbol, not to scale)
26. Summer waterline (T = 12.0 m)
27. Line of sight from the bridge: 2 L or 500 m ahead of the bow, whichever is less (SOLAS V/22)

Figure 1 — Side view. Seen from starboard, bow to the right. Dashed lines show hidden edges. Example ship: a Panamax container ship of about 3,500 TEU; dimensions are representative. AP and FP follow standard ship-geometry definitions; the line of sight follows SOLAS V/22.

The waterline divides the hull in two: the part above the water and the part below it have different names. The Turkish Ministry of Education's seamanship textbook names the four faces of the hull like this:

	Outer face	Inner face
Above the waterline	**Ship's side** (borda)	**Inner face of the side** (alabanda)
Below the waterline	**Underwater hull, bottom** (karina)	**Bilge** (sintine)

The **bilge** is the inside of the hull below the waterline, where leaking water, fuel, oil and condensation collect. The low points in the engine room and holds where these liquids gather are bilge wells. That is why the state of the bilges comes up when wet damage in a hold is investigated. The Turkish word alabanda also has a helm-order meaning, covered under Orders.

The hull's framework

- **Keel (omurga):** The main structural member running along the centreline of the bottom from bow to stern. The rest of the hull is built on it.
- **Frames (posta):** The ribs that support the shell plating from inside, rising from the bilge to the deck.
- **Beams (kemere):** Transverse members that support the deck plating from below.
- **Floors (döşek):** Transverse members that give the bottom its athwartships strength; they can be solid, open or watertight.
- **Girders (tulani, görder):** Members that give the hull its longitudinal strength.
- **Shell plating (saç kaplama):** The outer skin of the hull, called bottom, side or deck plating depending on where it is.
- **Bilge keel (yalpa omurgası):** A fin-like plate welded along the turn of the bilge to reduce rolling.

Double bottom and tanks

The **double bottom (çift dip)** is the set of compartments between the outer bottom plating and the inner bottom, running along the ship and built for safety. These spaces, and on double-hulled ships the spaces along the sides, are used as **ballast tanks**. The Turkish seamanship textbook lists ballast tanks among the most corrosion-prone parts of a ship, because they hold seawater. Fuel, fresh water and, on tankers, the cargo itself are also carried in tanks.

Bulkheads

A **bulkhead (perde)** is an upright wall dividing the hull into compartments. Most of the bulkheads that subdivide the hull are watertight, so water entering one compartment does not pass into the next. Openings between compartments are closed with watertight doors. The foremost watertight bulkhead is the **collision bulkhead (çatışma perdesi)**. Rules require it to sit within a set distance of the forward perpendicular and to be watertight up to the bulkhead deck.

Bow and stern

- **Stem (baş bodoslama):** The upward continuation of the keel at the bow. On many ships a bulb-shaped projection, the bulbous bow, sits at its lower end.
- **Stern post (kıç bodoslama):** The upward continuation of the keel at the stern. The propeller and rudder are fitted in this area.
- **Transom (ayna, aynakıç):** The flat surface that forms the stern.
- **Forecastle and poop (kasara):** Decks raised above the main deck at the bow and at the stern. In Turkish both are kasara: baş kasarası is the forecastle, kıç kasarası the poop deck. Anchoring and mooring work is done on the forecastle and at the stern.

Portholes and windows

A **porthole** or side scuttle (lomboz, also spelled lumbuz in Turkish training material) is a watertight, usually round window in the hull. It lets light and air into a compartment; it may open or be fixed, and some have a deadlight, an inner cover that closes watertight. Round side scuttles and rectangular ship's windows are covered by separate international standards (ISO 1751 and ISO 3903). Side scuttles close to the waterline face stricter rules: Canada's load line regulations, for example, require watertight deadlights on side scuttles below the freeboard deck and do not allow a scuttle's sill to come closer to the load line than a set height.

Deck, holds and superstructure

A **deck (güverte)** is a floor running the length of the ship. The deck that runs unbroken from stern to bow is the **main deck (ana güverte)**. Along the deck edge, the **bulwark (küpeşte)** keeps seas off the deck and protects people, and **freeing ports** in it let water drain overboard.

Hold, hatchway and hatch cover

- **Hold (ambar):** A cargo space below deck.
- **Hatchway (ambar ağzı):** The opening into the hold left when the hatch covers are open.
- **Hatch coaming (ambar mezarnası):** The raised rim around the hatchway. The covers rest on it.
- **Hatch cover (ambar kapağı):** The watertight cover that closes the hatchway and keeps sea and weather out of the cargo. On container ships, deck containers are usually stowed on top of the hatch covers.

On a container ship the split shows up in the tier number: tiers in the hold usually start at 02, tiers on deck at 80 or 82. More: Tier: hold or deck?

Superstructure

- **Accommodation (yaşam mahalli):** The block with the cabins, mess rooms and galley.
- **Bridge (köprüüstü):** The top level of the accommodation, from which the ship is navigated. The wheel, radar and charts are here.

- **Funnel (baca):** The structure carrying the engines' exhaust pipes.
- **Masts (direk):** The main mast, the tallest on board, rises above the bridge and carries navigation lights, signals and flags. The shorter mast at the bow carries the forward masthead light, the forward anchor light and day signals.

On a container ship: cell guides and lashing bridges

The holds of a container ship are fitted with vertical guide rails welded to the hull structure: **cell guides**. Containers are lowered between the rails and guided into position. In the hold, containers are secured to each other and to the tank top with twistlocks or stacking cones.

On deck it works differently. Containers are stacked on the hatch covers, the bottom tier is locked to the cover with twistlocks, and the lower tiers are also held with lashing rods and turnbuckles. Larger ships have fixed raised platforms between the hatch covers: **lashing bridges**. Because containers are lashed to these platforms, they can be stacked higher. One classification society's container securing guidelines recommend lashing bridges for ships of 4,000 TEU and above, and an IMO circular notes that such platforms let lashing crews reach the twistlocks without climbing onto container tops.

Note: the glossary term lashing and securing refers to tying cargo down inside a container or vehicle. Securing the container to the ship is a separate job, done on the ship's side.

On a general cargo ship: cranes, derricks and winches

A ship with its own cargo gear can load and discharge without shore cranes. The Turkish seamanship textbook uses three separate words for this gear:

- **Ship's crane (kreyn):** A lifting appliance that slews through 360° and is run by one operator. It is now the most common type of cargo gear.
- **Derrick (bumba):** A boom fixed to a mast or the superstructure; the system that cranes replaced, still seen on some older ships. Two derricks worked together are a union purchase (alavere).
- **Winch (vinç):** The motor, drum, gearing and brake that haul in a wire or rope. It is the working part inside a windlass, a derrick and a crane.

In everyday Turkish, and on this site, vinç is also used for a crane, as in rıhtım vinci (STS crane). In technical messages, check the English to avoid confusion: crane or winch? On Ro-Ro ships, vehicles drive on and off over a **ramp**. For heavy and out-of-gauge cargo handled with ship's gear, see Project cargo and out-of-gauge loads.

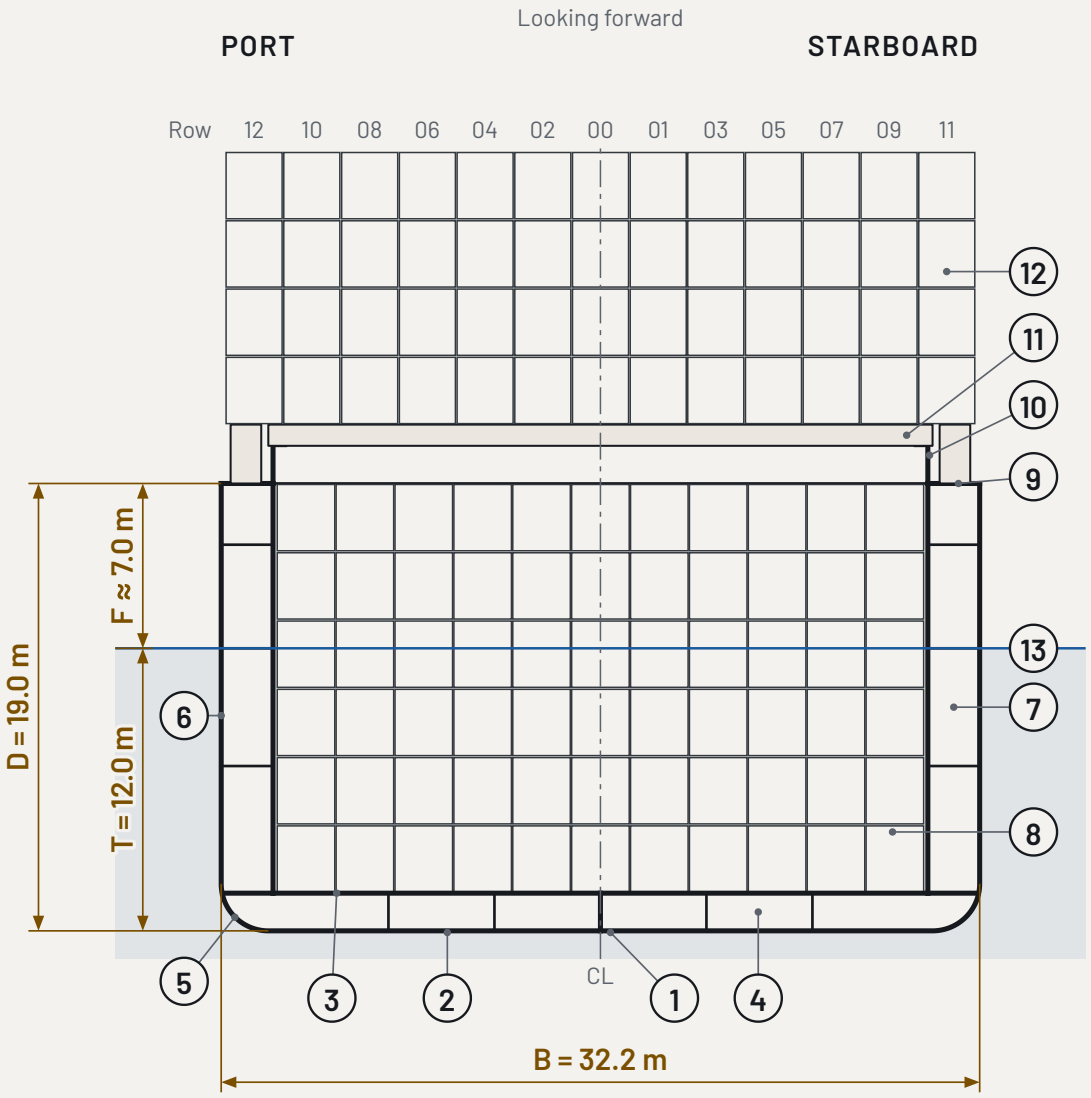
Machinery and propulsion

- **Engine room (makine dairesi):** The space housing the main and auxiliary engines, with the engine control room close by.
- **Main engine (ana makine):** Produces the power that drives the ship. Most ships today use diesel engines.

- **Propeller shaft (şaft):** Carries the main engine's power to the propeller. The watertight passage from the engine room aft is the shaft tunnel; the bearing tube where the shaft leaves the hull is the stern tube.
- **Propeller (pervane):** On a fixed-pitch propeller (FPP) the blade angle does not change, so speed and direction are controlled by engine revolutions and the direction of rotation. On a controllable-pitch propeller (CPP) the revolutions stay constant and the blade angle changes. A turning propeller also pushes the stern sideways, especially at low speed, and this is taken into account when berthing and unberthing.
- **Rudder (dümen):** Turns the ship and keeps her on course; it is controlled from the wheel on the bridge. The machinery that moves it is in the **steering gear room** (yeke dairesi) at the stern, from where the ship can also be steered in an emergency.
- **Bow thruster:** A unit in the underwater hull at the bow that pushes the ship sideways to port or starboard. It works best at low speed; the Turkish textbook notes that one common type is used at 5 knots or less. Some ships also have a stern thruster.

A bow thruster and good manoeuvrability can reduce the need for tugs when berthing, but whether tugs are compulsory is set by the port's rules.

Dimensions and loading



1. Keel (flat plate keel and centre girder)
2. Bottom shell plating
3. Inner bottom (tank top); the space below is the double bottom
4. Double-bottom tanks (ballast)
5. Bilge (turn of the bilge)
6. Side shell
7. Wing (side) tanks (ballast); box girder at the top
8. Cargo hold: 11 rows × 6 tiers in cell guides
9. Main (upper) deck
10. Hatch coaming
11. Hatch cover
12. Deck containers: 13 rows × 4 tiers; outer rows on pedestals
13. Summer waterline

Figure 3 — Midship section. Looking forward. Thick lines are cut plating; thin lines are containers in the section plane. Freeboard is shown here as D – T; on the load line mark it is measured from the upper edge of the deck line. Double-bottom height follows the B/20 figure in SOLAS II-1/9; other dimensions are representative. Deck camber is not drawn.

A ship's dimensions matter both for port and canal restrictions and for loading calculations. The basic ones are:

Dimension	Turkish	Definition
Length overall (LOA)	Tam boy	The horizontal distance between the extreme points of the bow and stern.
Length between perpendiculars (LBP)	Dikeyler arası boy	The horizontal distance between the forward and aft perpendiculars. The forward perpendicular passes through the point where the stem meets the design waterline; the aft perpendicular through the axis of the rudder stock.
Beam, breadth (B)	Genişlik	The horizontal distance between the port and starboard sides at the ship's widest section.
Depth (D)	Derinlik	The vertical distance amidships from the baseline (keel line) to the main deck.
Draught, draft (T)	Su çekimi	The vertical distance from the waterline down to the bottom of the hull; how deep the ship sits in the water.
Freeboard	Fribord	The vertical distance from the waterline up to the freeboard deck (on most ships, the main deck). Roughly, depth minus draught.

Two details are worth keeping in mind. First, the "moulded" dimensions used in naval architecture are taken from the baseline, whereas the draught read off the draft marks on board is measured from the bottom of the keel. Second, the length (L) used in load line and tonnage rules has its own definition and should not be confused with LOA.

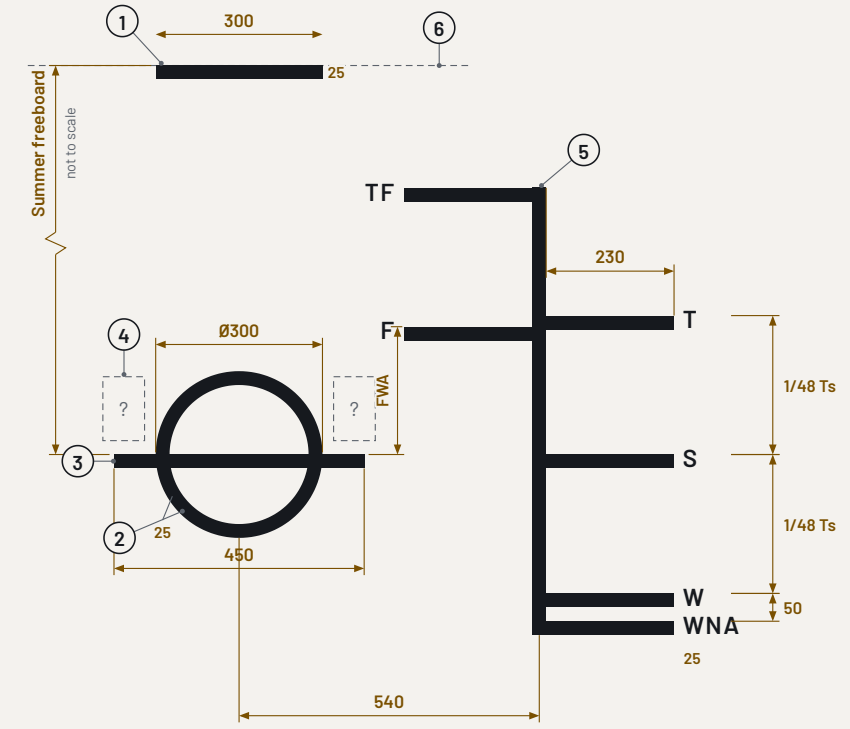
Draft marks and reading the draught

Draught is read from **draft marks** painted on the hull at the bow, amidships and the stern, on both sides. The figures are of equal height and evenly spaced, and the reading is taken at the **bottom edge** of the figure the water touches. That gives six readings: forward, midships and aft, on port and starboard. The difference between the forward and aft draughts is the **trim**. Trim depends on where the cargo is placed and affects hull resistance, and therefore fuel consumption.

Draught is very much a logistics matter: it decides which ports, berths and canals a ship can use. Canal authorities may lower the maximum permitted draught when water levels drop, which in turn cuts the amount of cargo a ship can carry.

Freeboard and the load line mark (Plimsoll)

A — Load line mark (dimensions in mm)



B — Draught marks

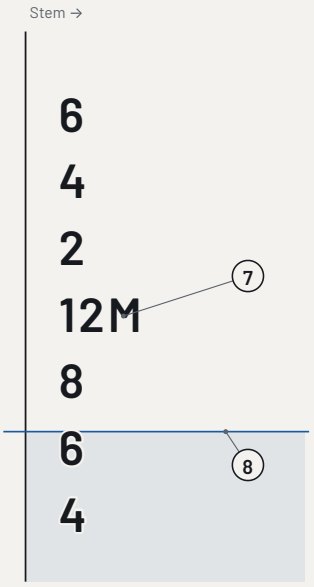


Figure size and spacing representative

1. Deck line (300 × 25 mm); upper edge marks the freeboard deck
2. Load line ring: 300 mm outside diameter, 25 mm wide; centre amidships
3. Horizontal line through the ring: 450 × 25 mm; its upper edge passes through the centre (summer load line)
4. Space for the assigning authority's initials (max. 4, each ≈ 115 × 75 mm)
5. Vertical line (25 mm), 540 mm forward of the ring centre

TF tropical fresh water load line (abaft the vertical line)

F fresh water load line (abaft); its distance above S is the fresh water allowance (FWA)

T tropical load line (1/48 Ts above S)

S summer load line (level with the ring centre)

W winter load line (1/48 Ts below S)

WNA winter North Atlantic (50 mm below W; only ships ≤ 100 m long)

6. Upper surface of the freeboard deck (behind the shell, hidden)
7. Draught figure: figures of equal height, evenly spaced; its lower edge gives the draught shown; "M" at whole metres
8. Water surface: the draught is read from where the water lies against the figures

Figure 4 — Load line mark and draught marks. Mark and line dimensions, order and position follow the International Convention on Load Lines, 1966 (ICLL), Annex I, Regulations 4–8; spacings follow Regulation 40. Example values: summer draught 12 m (1/48 = 250 mm), fresh water allowance 230 mm. The convention gives no size for the load line letters; they are representative here. An empty placeholder stands in for the authority's initials.

The International Convention on Load Lines, 1966 limits how deep a ship may be loaded. The limit is shown by a three-part marking painted amidships on both sides. The same dimensions appear in the UK's load line regulations, which implement the convention:

- **Deck line:** A horizontal line 300 mm long and 25 mm wide, marking the position of the freeboard deck.
- **Load line mark:** A ring 300 mm in outside diameter and 25 mm wide, crossed by a horizontal line 450 mm long and 25 mm wide whose upper edge passes through the centre of the ring. The centre of the ring is marked below the deck line at a distance equal to the ship's summer freeboard.
- **Load lines:** Each 230 mm by 25 mm, marked at right angles to a vertical line placed 540 mm forward of the centre of the ring. The deepest level to which the ship may be loaded is the **upper edge** of the relevant line.

On a draft mark you read the bottom edge of the figure; on a load line you read the upper edge of the line. Keep the two apart.

Letter	Line	Position	When it applies
S	Summer	Forward of the vertical line; level with the line through the ring	In summer zones and seasons, in seawater. The other lines are set relative to it.
W	Winter	Forward; below S	In winter seasonal zones during the winter period. More freeboard, less cargo.
WNA	Winter North Atlantic	Forward; below S	For ships of 100 metres or less, in the designated North Atlantic zones during the winter period.
T	Tropical	Forward; above S	In the tropical zone. The ship may load a little deeper than the summer line.
F	Fresh Water	Aft of the vertical line	In fresh water. Fresh water is less dense than seawater, so the same ship sits deeper in it; she may load deeper by the fresh water allowance shown on her certificate.
TF	Tropical Fresh Water	Aft	In fresh water within the tropical zone.

The letters either side of the ring identify the authority that assigned the load line. The zones and seasonal periods are defined in Annex II of the convention. The mark's popular name comes from Samuel Plimsoll, the 19th-century British reformer who campaigned for it. As a ship is loaded, the waterline rises and the freeboard shrinks; the load line rules set the minimum freeboard each ship must keep.

Tonnage: DWT, GT and NT

Measure	What it measures	What it is used for
DWT (deadweight; dedveyt ton)	Weight: the total of cargo, fuel, water, stores, crew and passengers the ship can carry down to her load line	Describing how much weight the ship can carry
GT (gross tonnage; gros tonilato)	Volume: a figure calculated by formula from the moulded volume of all the ship's enclosed spaces	Manning rules, safety rules and registration fees; port dues
NT (net tonnage; net tonilato)	Volume: calculated from the moulded volume of the cargo spaces; it may not be less than 30% of GT	Port dues, together with GT

GT and NT are calculated under the International Convention on Tonnage Measurement of Ships, 1969. Despite the word "tonnage", GT is not a weight. A ship's DWT and GT measure different things, so one cannot stand in for the other.

Rolling, trim and ballast

- **Roll (yalpa):** The ship's side-to-side rotation about her fore-and-aft axis. The up-and-down movement of bow and stern is pitch. Bilge keels are fitted to reduce rolling.
- **Trim:** The difference between the forward and aft draughts. It is taken into account in the loading plan for both stability and fuel consumption.
- **Ballast (balast):** Seawater taken into ballast tanks for trim and stability when the ship is empty or her cargo is not enough to keep her stable. If the tanks are left completely empty, the propeller can come out of the water. The discharge of ballast water is regulated by IMO rules.

What a draught survey is for

A **draught survey** works out the weight of cargo loaded or discharged from the ship's draught before and after the operation. It rests on Archimedes' principle: the heavier the ship, the more water she displaces. The surveyor reads the draught at six points, corrects for trim and water density, and accounts separately for changes in non-cargo weights such as ballast, fuel and fresh water. The difference gives the weight of the cargo. For coal cargoes, the method was standardised in a 1992 code issued by the UN Economic Commission for Europe. For how time in port and the charter relationship work in the bulk trades, see Chartering, laytime and vessel demurrage.

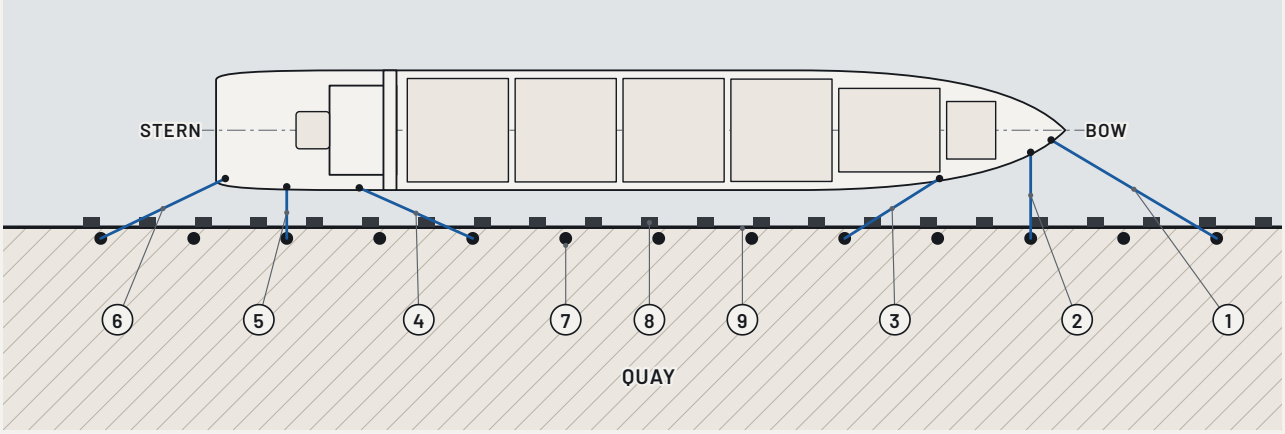
Distance and speed: nautical miles and knots

Distance at sea is measured in **nautical miles**; the international nautical mile is exactly 1,852 metres. Speed is measured in **knots**: one nautical mile per hour, or 1.852 km/h. A ship making 14 knots covers about 336 nautical miles a day (14 × 24), or roughly 622 km.

Berthing, mooring and anchoring

The port structure where ships come alongside to load and discharge is the **quay** or berth (rıhtım). Turkish regulations group quays, piers and berths together as coastal facilities (kıyı tesisi). Coming alongside a quay or another ship is aborda in Turkish, and leaving the berth is avara. A ship with her port side against the quay is berthed port side to; with her starboard side against it, starboard side to. Time at the berth and the cost of port services are covered in How cargo moves through a port.

Mooring lines



1. Head line: leads ahead from the bow; stops the ship moving astern
2. Forward breast line: at right angles to the quay; holds the ship alongside
3. Forward spring: leads aft from forward; stops the ship moving ahead
4. After spring: leads forward from aft; stops the ship moving astern
5. After breast line: at right angles to the quay; holds the ship alongside
6. Stern line: leads astern from the stern; stops the ship moving ahead
7. Bollard (evenly spaced along the quay)
8. Fender
9. Quay edge

Figure 5 — Mooring pattern. Line names and functions follow standard seamanship texts; line leads follow the mooring guidance in IMO MSC 84/INF.6. The gap between ship and quay is widened for legibility; in reality the ship lies against the fenders. Several lines are usually run in each group; one of each is drawn here.

The heavy ropes that hold a ship to the quay are **mooring lines** or hawsers (palamar). Each has a name and a job:

English	Turkish	Leads from / to	What it does
Head line	Baş halatı	From the bow, forward to the quay	With the aft spring, stops the ship moving astern; also holds her alongside

English	Turkish	Leads from / to	What it does
Stern line	Kıç halatı	From the stern, aft to the quay	With the forward spring, stops the ship moving ahead; also holds her alongside
Forward spring	Baş koltuk halatı	From the forward part of the ship, leading aft to the quay	Stops the ship moving ahead
Aft spring	Kıç koltuk halatı	From the after part of the ship, leading forward to the quay	Stops the ship moving astern
Breast lines	Baş açmazı / kıç açmazı	From the bow or stern to the quay, nearly at right angles to the ship	Hold the ship close to the quay and stop her moving off it

Springs hold the ship's fore-and-aft position; breast lines hold her athwartships. The order in which lines go ashore when berthing is agreed with the pilot. The service of taking the lines and making them fast on bollards is line handling (palamar hizmeti), one of the vessel services billed to the shipowner (Who pays whom?).

Mooring equipment

- **Bollard, bitts (baba):** A short round post on deck or on the quay around which a line is turned and made fast (volta etmek in Turkish).
- **Fairlead and chock (kurtağzı, halat loçası):** Fittings that lead a line out through the bulwark.
- **Fender (usturmaça):** A cushion placed between a ship and the quay, or between two ships, to absorb impact and protect the hull.
- **Windlass (ırgat):** The machine that heaves in and pays out the anchor cable and lines. Its toothed wheel that grips the chain is the cable lifter (gomina kapanı), its drums for rope are warping ends (halat feneri), and the brake that holds the chain is kastanyola in Turkish. Separate mooring winches are also used for the lines.

Anchor and anchoring

- **Anchor (demir):** The heavy fitting lowered on a chain to the seabed to hold a ship in place. Large ships usually carry stockless anchors.
- **Hawse pipe (göz loçası):** The opening through which the chain runs from the deck to the outside, and where the anchor is housed at sea.
- **Chain and shackles:** Large ships use stud-link chain, with a stud across each link. Chain length is counted in lengths called kilit in Turkish: one length is 15 fathoms, about 27.5 metres. The chain is stowed in the **chain locker** (zincirlik) below the windlass.
- **Anchorage (demir yeri):** A sea area, designated by the port administration, where ships anchor and wait. Seabed, depth, current, wind and traffic are considered when choosing it. The amount of chain paid out is the scope (kaloma), adjusted to depth, weather and seabed.

A ship may wait at anchor until a berth is free. The CPPI port performance index starts a ship's time in port at her arrival at the anchorage or pilot station: How is port performance measured?

Pilot and tugs

When entering, berthing and leaving, a ship is guided by a pilot with local knowledge: pilotage. Tugs assist with berthing, unberthing and manoeuvring: towage. Tugs carry fenders so as not to damage the ship, and pushing points are marked on the ship's side. The pilot boards by the accommodation ladder or the pilot ladder.

Orders and common phrases

Orders on board are short and set in fixed forms, and whoever receives an order repeats it aloud so there is no misunderstanding. These are the ones you are most likely to hear in Turkish ports:

Turkish	English	Meaning
Vira	Heave (in)	Haul in a chain or rope with a windlass or winch, or lift a load. Demiri vira etmek means heaving up the anchor.
Mayna	Lower, slack away	Lower a load, or pay out a rope under control; the opposite of vira. The accommodation ladder is lowered the same way.
Funda	Let go (the anchor)	Drop the anchor.
Volta etmek	Make fast	Turn a line around a bollard and secure it.
İskele alabanda / sancak alabanda	Hard-a-port / hard-a-starboard	Put the wheel hard over to port or starboard. The Turkish textbook gives this as 35–45° depending on the ship.
İskele on / sancak on	Port ten / starboard ten	Put the wheel 10° to that side. Five and fifteen follow the same pattern.
Ortala	Midships	Bring the wheel back to 0°.
Viya / viya böyle	Steady / steady as she goes	Hold the ship's head on her present course.
Tornistan	Astern	Run the engine astern and give the ship sternway.

The English helm orders are those of IMO's Standard Marine Communication Phrases (SMCP), where hard-a-port means the rudder held fully over to port. In the language of the hull, alabanda also means the inner face of the ship's side (Hull and structure).

Words that are easy to mix up

- **İskele:** Has three meanings in Turkish: the port side of a ship; a pier or jetty where ships berth; and the accommodation ladder lowered over the side (borda iskelesi). Make the context clear in correspondence.
- **Vinç:** Can mean a winch (a machine that hauls in rope) in technical Turkish, or a crane in everyday speech.
- **Vasat and ortala:** Vasat is the name of the middle part of the ship. The order to centre the rudder is ortala (midships).
- **Pruva and baş, pupa and kıç:** Often used interchangeably. Strictly, baş is the forward part of the ship and pruva the direction ahead of it; kıç and pupa work the same way.

Where to go next in the guide

- A container's address on board: How to read a container's position on board: bay, row and tier
- Port services, line handling and anchorages: How cargo moves through a port
- Weight distribution and securing inside the container: Container packing and weight distribution
- Bulk cargo, laytime and vessel demurrage: Chartering, laytime and vessel demurrage
- Heavy lifts with ship's gear: Project cargo and out-of-gauge loads
- Surveys and damage: Cargo damage and the claims process
- Short definitions of every term: Logistics glossary

Test yourself

1. You are standing on deck facing the stern. Which side is on your right? *(Answer: Port. Port and starboard are defined facing the bow, so for someone facing aft, port is on the right.)*
2. At night you can see only a ship's red light. Which side of her are you looking at? *(Answer: Her port side. The red sidelight is on the port side.)*
3. A ship is loading in seawater during the summer season. Down to which line may she load, and which edge counts? *(Answer: The S line; its upper edge.)*
4. A broker describes a ship as "50,000 DWT". Is that her volume or the weight she can carry? *(Answer: Weight. The volume-based measure is GT.)*
5. Which lines stop a moored ship from ranging ahead and astern along the quay? *(Answer: The springs, together with the head and stern lines; the breast lines hold her close to the quay.)*

Frequently asked questions

What do port and starboard mean?

Facing the bow, port is the left-hand side of a ship and starboard the right-hand side. The names do not change with the direction a person is facing, which is why they are used at sea instead of left and right. At night, port is shown by a red sidelight and starboard by a green one. In Turkish they are iskele and sancak.

What is the difference between bow, stern, ahead and astern?

The bow is the foremost part of a ship and the stern the aftermost. Ahead and astern are directions: in front of the bow and behind the stern. In Turkish, baş and kıç are the parts, while pruva and pupa are the directions, though in everyday use pruva often stands for the bow and pupa for the stern.

What do the letters on the Plimsoll mark mean?

S is the summer load line, W winter, WNA winter North Atlantic, T tropical, F fresh water and TF tropical fresh water. The upper edge of each line shows the deepest the ship may be loaded in that zone, season and type of water. The marking is based on the International Convention on Load Lines, 1966 and is painted amidships on both sides.

What is the difference between DWT and GT?

DWT (deadweight) is a weight: the total of cargo, fuel, water, stores and crew a ship can carry down to her load line. GT (gross tonnage) is a measure of size calculated from the volume of the ship's enclosed spaces. Port dues, manning and safety rules are based on GT.

What is a draught survey?

A method of working out the weight of cargo loaded or discharged from the draughts read before and after the operation. Draughts are read forward, amidships and aft on both sides, then corrected for trim, water density and non-cargo weights such as ballast and fuel. It is used mainly for bulk cargoes such as coal.

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