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Wasser- und
Schifffahrtsverwaltung
des Bundes

Waterways and Shipping Administration of the Federal Government

Abstract

The Federal Government is the owner of the federal waterways, including 23,000 km² of maritime and 7,350 km of inland waterways. The federal waterways are administered by the Waterways and Shipping Administration of the Federal Government. The Waterways and Shipping Administration is subdivided into 7 Waterways and Shipping Directorates, 39 Waterways and Shipping Offices and 7 Offices for New Construction. The Waterways and Shipping Administration employs about 13,000 persons.

Translation

Situation: June 2009

Tasks of the Waterways and Shipping Administration of the Federal Government

- As the river police and building control authority, the Waterways and Shipping Administration ensures that the condition of the waterways is in line with the requirements of shipping and that the government-owned shipping facilities and the waterways comply with all requirements as to safety and order.
- As the shipping police authority, the Waterways and Shipping Administration ensures that no risks for man and the environment emanate from navigation or other uses of the waterways.
- The Waterways and Shipping Administration is responsible for the maintenance, modernization and new construction of federal waterways including the official approval procedures (plan establishment / plan approval).
- The Waterways and Shipping Administration maintains and operates about 450 lock chambers, 290 weirs, 4 shiplifts, 15 canal bridges and 2 barrages.
- The Waterways and Shipping Administration maintains and operates, for the purpose of channel marking, at and in the maritime waterways approximately 1,600 fixed shipping signs (such as lighthouses and beacons) as well as approximately 4,000 floating shipping signs (so-called buoys). In addition there are approximately 10,000 other shipping signs (e. g. bushes) as well as the relevant shipping signs (buoys and sign boards) in inland navigation.
- The Waterways and Shipping Administration maintains and operates the vessel traffic service centres at the maritime waterways and the traffic control centres at the inland waterways which, on a 24 h basis and manned with skilled personnel, survey, monitor and, if necessary, control traffic, support shipping by providing information and advice, check and activate the shipping signs, and in their function as shipping police assume the task of intervention and coordination in the case of accidents or environmental pollution.
- The Waterways and Shipping Administration maintains and operates the globally most technically advanced and efficient fleet of oil spill recovery ships (combating oil spills and chemical accidents, emergency towing, fire-fighting on board ships) which are mainly deployed in the German jurisdiction in the case of major accidents but may also be used at international level on the basis of bilateral agreements.

For further information see www.wsv.de



Bundesministerium
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