

# Suez Canal set to resume normal traffic after collision

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Normal traffic is expected to resume through the Suez Canal within hours, the head of the canal authority said on Wednesday, following the collision of two vessels.



A tugboat works to refloat the Oil Products Tanker BURRI after it collided with LNG Tanker BW Lesmes in the waterway of the Suez Canal, Egypt, August 23, 2023. Suez Canal Authority/Handout via REUTERS

"Slight contact" was made after liquefied natural gas (LNG) carrier BW Lesmes made a sudden stop due to a technical failure that coincided with a strong current that drove oil tanker Burri towards it, authority chairman Osama Rabie said.

The canal authority responded by sending tugboats to move both ships, he said.

Singapore-flagged BW Lesmes was successfully towed outside of the waterway, Rabie said, while Cayman Islands-flagged Burri could be seen approaching the southern end of the canal as of 12pm local time, according to ship tracker MarineTraffic.

The canal's north convoy will resume once Burri is towed, Rabie said.



A view of the BW Lesmes tanker at Freeport, Texas, U.S., August 3, 2023, in this picture obtained by Reuters. Glenn Travis/via REUTERS

BW LNG AS, operators of BW Lesmes, reported the vessel ran aground transiting southbound through the Suez Canal at approximately 9.35pm (1835 GMT) on Tuesday, BW Group said in a statement.

The low-speed collision did not affect the vessel's operational capabilities and the vessel "remains structurally sound," it added.

BW Lesmes was successfully re-floated at 3.30a.m. local time on Wednesday and would undergo further inspections at Suez anchorage.

The Suez Canal chairman said there did not appear to be any significant damage or pollution but that Burri had a steering failure that would require repair.

TMS Tankers, which manages Burri, did not respond to requests for comment.

The Suez Canal is one of the world's busiest waterways and the shortest shipping route between Europe and Asia.

About 12% of the world's trade moves through the canal. During strong winds in 2021, a huge container ship, the Ever Given, became jammed across it, halting traffic in both directions for six days and disrupting global trade.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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