Ship Simulator 2008 Mission Editor Manual

Contents

Introduction

This manual describes the use of the Mission Editor of the game Ship Simulator 2008 v1.1. The Mission editor was first released in conjunction with patch 1.1 of the game, issued early September 2007. Even though the game itself is released in various languages, the Mission editor is only released in English.

General

Navigate with the cursor keys and the mouse (right-hand mouse button pushed while dragging the mouse to rotate). Scroll wheel to zoom out. Click at the icon buttons at the top-right: Create, Mission, Weather, AI, Environment, Moorage and Transfer, Points. These open different panels below them. You always work roughly from left to right on these sections.

Image 1. Icon buttons at the top-right of the Mission Editor: Create, Mission, Weather, AI, Environment, Moorage and Transfer, Points.

Create

In this panel you add the mission objects to the environment, including invisible areas which can later be used for waypoint interactivity. The objects fall in 3 categories: Player, Static and AI. With simple missions you will only add just one player ship. Every mission usually has multiple waypoints. Before you can create waypoints, you first need to add the objects or areas that later on become waypoints. Adding AI objects is something you usually do at a later stage, when all the waypoints are added, and AI paths are added.

Mission

In the Mission section, you add a title and description to your mission. You set which of the player ships is the active one when the mission is started. Even when there is just one player ship in the mission, you still need to set it as start by selecting it, and clicking on the button "Set as start". Once that is done, you add waypoints one by one with the Add waypoint button and following the subsequent dialog boxes with settings.

Weather

In this section you set the weather conditions in the current environment. You can change some weather parameters with waypoint logic. You can add additional environments to the mission and set different weather parameters for each environment.

AI

In the AI section, you can create the basic paths, or routes, to be followed by the autonomous vessel traffic (usually called AI ships). You use the Insert key of the keyboard for setting path nodes.

Environment

If you want your mission to contain multiple environments, to allow the player for example to move from the harbour to open sea, or to the next harbour, you add these extra environments in this section. You can move to a selected environment with the "Switch to environment" button. In the new environment, you can add static objects, turn them into active waypoints, and add new AI paths and traffic.

Moorage and Transfer

If you want the player ship (or any other ship) to start in moored or anchored condition, or with a towing line to another vessel, you can bring the lines across in this section. If your mission contains waypoints that involve passenger pick-up, or containers to be loaded, you can add people and containers to active areas in this section.

Points

Ship Simulator 2008 contains a system of ranks. People can improve their ranks by completing missions successfully. You can set how much you want people to improve on their current ranking in the Points section. To prevent people from cheating by making simple missions with too much ranking improvement, there is a process of external evaluation and accreditation before any new mission really adds points to ranks. For this reason, the elements of the Ranking panel are disabled in the public version of the Mission Editor.

Example mission "Rescue drowning person"

In the following sequence of screenshots, we will show you how to create a simple rescue mission like the one included with SS08.
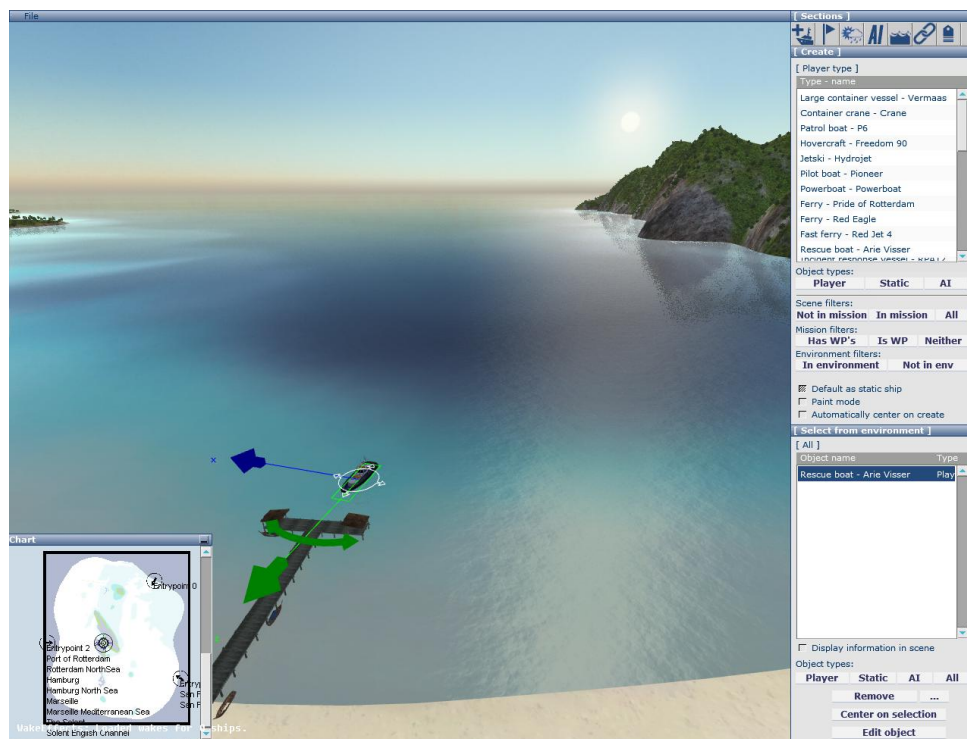

Figure 1 Create a new mission, starting in Phi Phi Islands. Drag and drop a rescue boat from the list of player ships into the scene. With the arrows around the ship you can move and rotate it.
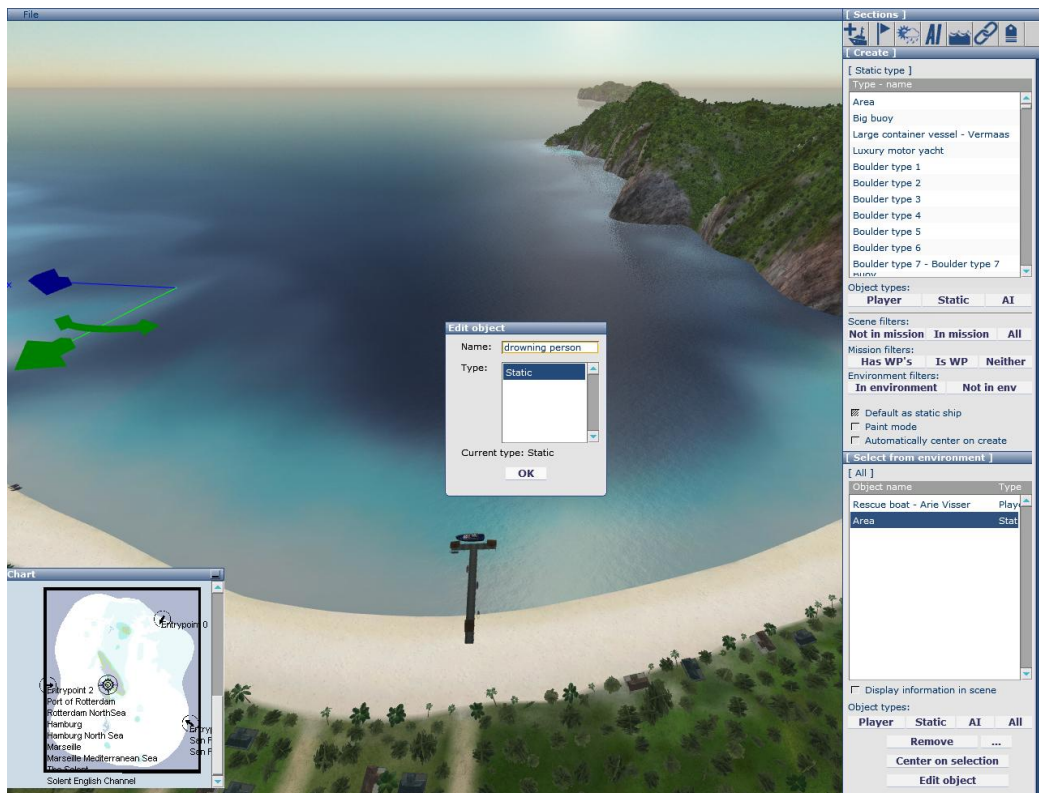
Figure 2 Click on Static (next to Player) in the right-hand toolbar to get the list of static objects. Drag Area into the scene. Click on "Edit object" at the bottom, to give the area a name. Type in "Drowning person". This area will later be used to make a waypoint of a drowning person, to be rescued by the player.
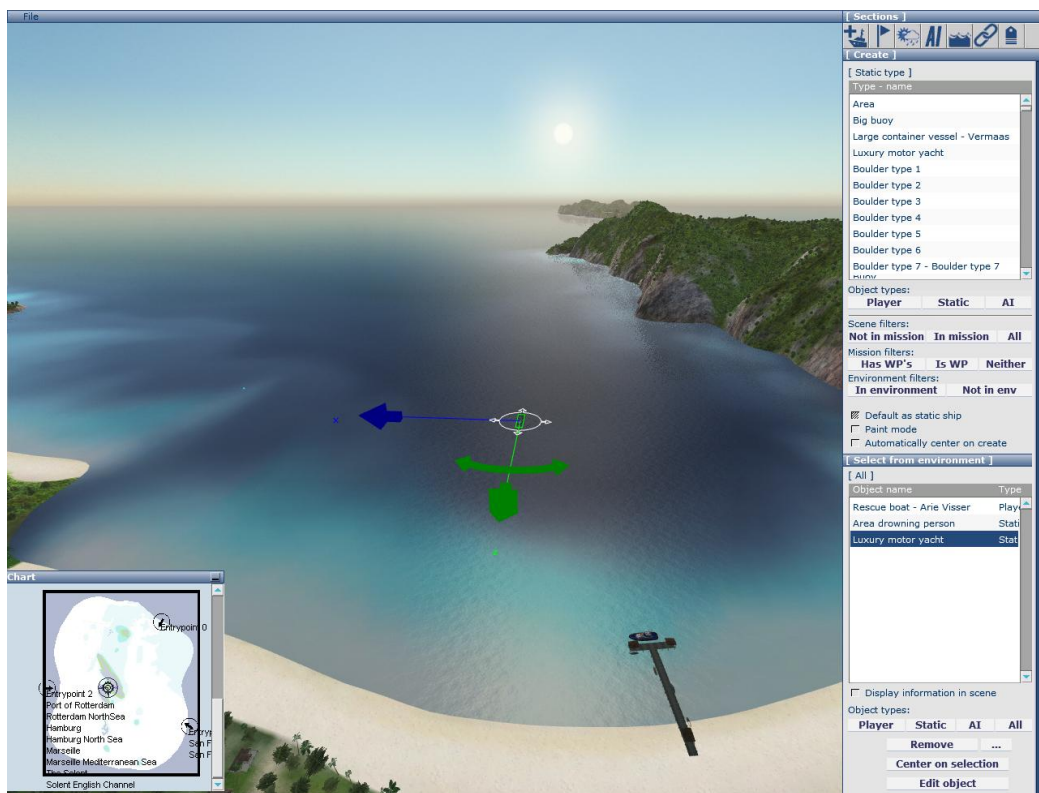

Figure 3 Also from the list of Static objects, drag in a "Luxury motor yacht" into the scene, some distance away from the drowning man and the player ship. You can see the active objects appear in the list at the right-hand bottom. If you ever get lost in the scene, you can quickly get back to any of these objects by selecting it and clicking on the "Center on selection" button at the bottom.
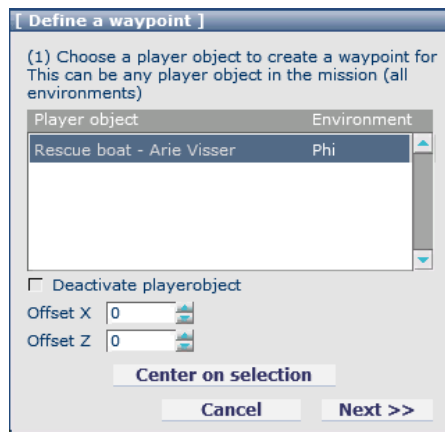
Figure 4 Go to the Mission section. Now click on "Define WP". A dialog box appears in the top-right area. In case of multiple player ships, you need to select the one for which this will be a waypoint as waypoints are always ship-specific. In this case, only the Rescue boat appears in the list. Click on it and then on Next.
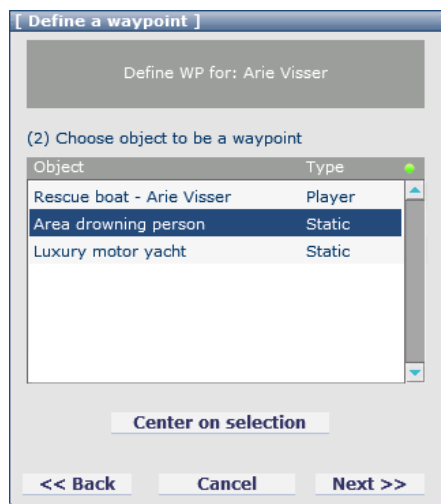

Figure 5 In the next dialog box, you need to select the object or area which will become the waypoint. In this case, we added only 3 objects, from which we can now choose. Select the "Area drowning person". Click on Next.

[Define a waypoint]

Define WP for: Arie Visser
WP: drowning person

(3) Choose waypoint type and settings

Object
Normal
Taxi
Container
Rescue
Mooring
Anchor
Towing
Disconnect

Conditions to reach waypoint

Speed (kts): 1.00
Radius (m): 20.00
Time: 10.00   Reset
OffsetX: 0
OffsetZ: 0   Center on WP

☐ Deactivate

Special conditions / settings (1)

NrOfPeople (-1.00)   ▼   0   ▲▼   OK

Waypoint texts

▨ Waypoint objective

☐ Waypoint reached text

[none]

<< Back   Cancel   Done

Figure 6 In the next dialog box, you need to specify the type of waypoint. If you played some missions in the game, you will recognise some of these. Select "Rescue". Then set the maximum speed that is allowed to complete the waypoint to 1 knots, the radius to 20 meter, and the time that the player needs to keep his boat within this radius to the waypoint at a speed below the maximum speed of 1 knots to 10 seconds.

You can set values by typing them, or by clicking the mouse cursor on the small blue up & down arrows next to a parameter end click-shifting upwards or downwards. .

OffsetX and OffsetY allow you to shift the centre of the circle of the waypoint away from the middle of the object. This is useful for example if you want the player to drop a person on a large vessel. The drop-off point is likely not the centre of the ship, but the side of ship, located close to the living quarters.

The "Deactivate" option allows you to hide the waypoint from the list of waypoints that the player sees when he starts the mission. With another waypoint you can activate the waypoint, so it suddenly pops up in the list. This feature allows you to create suspense in your mission. The player doesn't know what's next in the action list until he completed a task successfully.

Under "Special conditions" you can set some waypoint-specific parameters. In our case, the Rescue waypoint, we need to set how many people need to be rescued from the water. Click the OK button when you set the correct number.

Under "Waypoint texts", you need to add the text which will appear in the message pop-up and also next to the waypoint icon. "Waypoint objective" is always visible when the waypoint is active. "Waypoint reached text" pops up when the waypoint is completed successfully.

The small green dots indicate that the parameters are set in an acceptable way. The red dots indicate that a setting or some text is still needed.

Special conditions / settings (1)

NrOfPeople (1.00)   ▼   1.00   ▲▼   OK

Waypoint texts

▨ Waypoint objective

Go to the drowning man

▨ Waypoint reached text

Well done! You saved him!

<< Back   Cancel   Done

Figure 7 When you filled in all the text and made all parameter settings, the bottom part of the waypoint dialog box should look like this. Click on Done when you are finished. Now the waypoint is added to the mission.
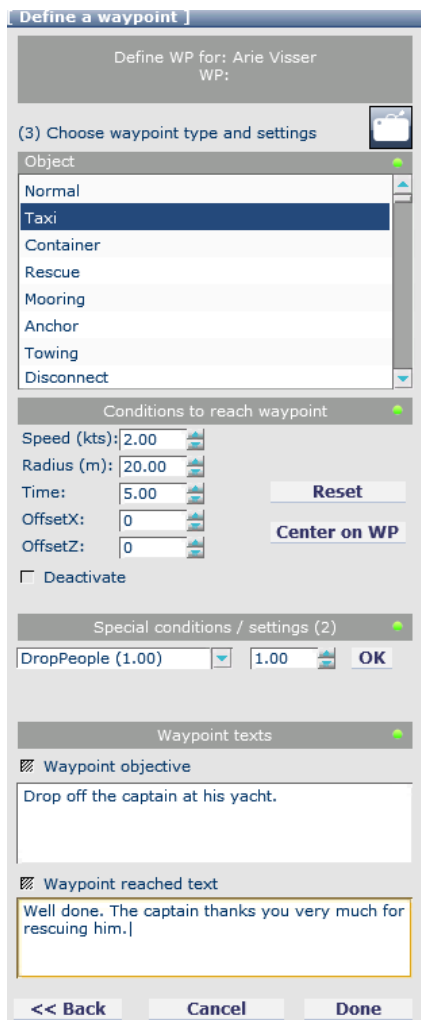
Figure 8 Now we need to add the second waypoint, whereby we drop the person we just rescued off at his motor yacht. Click on "Define WP", select the Rescue boat as the player ship, and select the "Luxury motor yacht" as the waypoint object. This will be a waypoint of type Taxi, which is used for picking up and dripping off people. Fill the waypoint dialog box in as shown in the image on the right.

In principle, the mission is now playable. It is roughly the same as how it was added to the game as one of the first missions. To enhance the learning value of this tutorial, we will add some more waypoints, showing additional features of the editor.
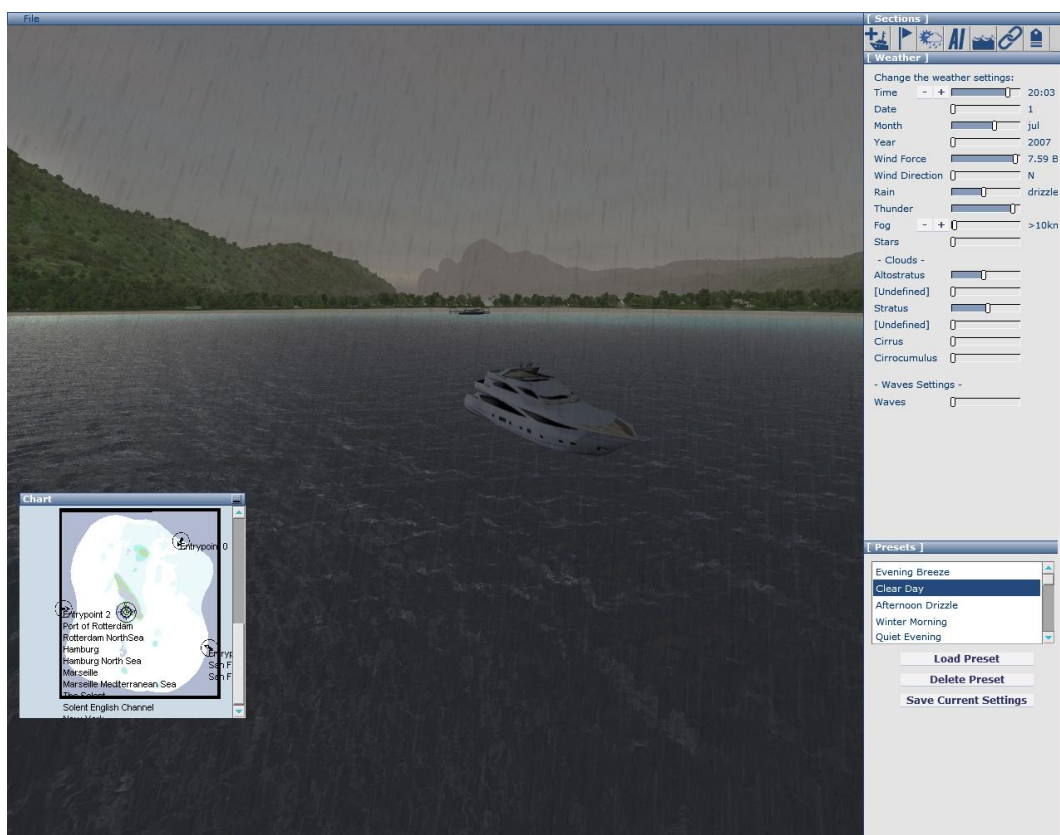

Figure 9 We can set the weather conditions for a more gloomy, sinister atmosphere.
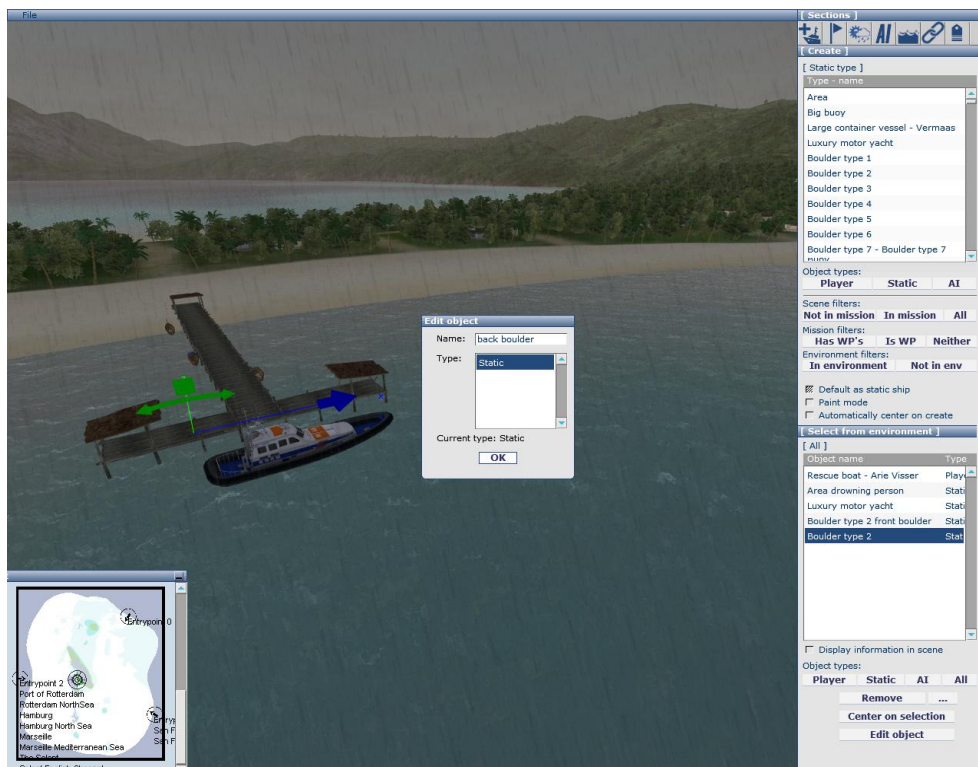
Figure 10 We can finish the mission by letting the player bring the rescue boat back to its mooring place, and connect the front and back mooring lines. To do this, we first need to add two boulders at the jetty. Go to the Create section of the editor, click on Static, Boulder type 2, and drag the boulder to the jetty. As soon as you added the boulder, click on "Edit object" and add a recognisable name like "Front boulder". Repeat the above for the back boulder (screenshot above). Watch the objects appear in the Object list at the bottom right.
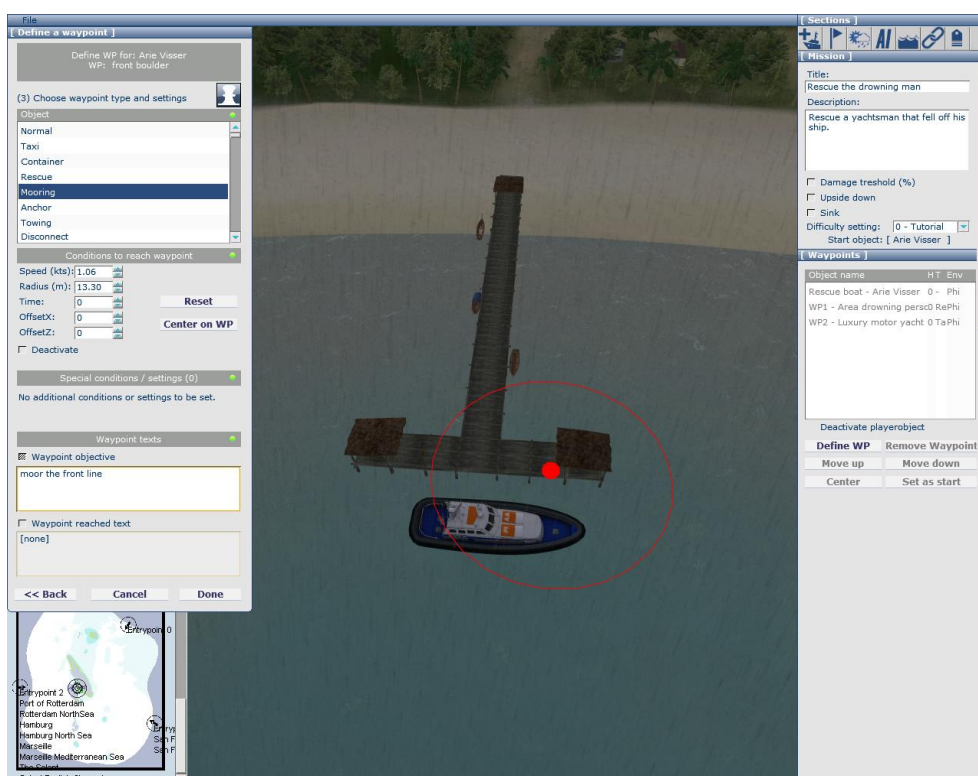

Figure 11 Click on "Define WP", select Rescue Boat as the player ship, then select "front boulder" as the waypoint object, and enter the details as shown in the dialog box above. Click "Done". Repeat the process for the second mooring line. Now the mission is finished when the player steered the rescue boat back to the jetty, and moored both mooring lines at close distance to the boulders.
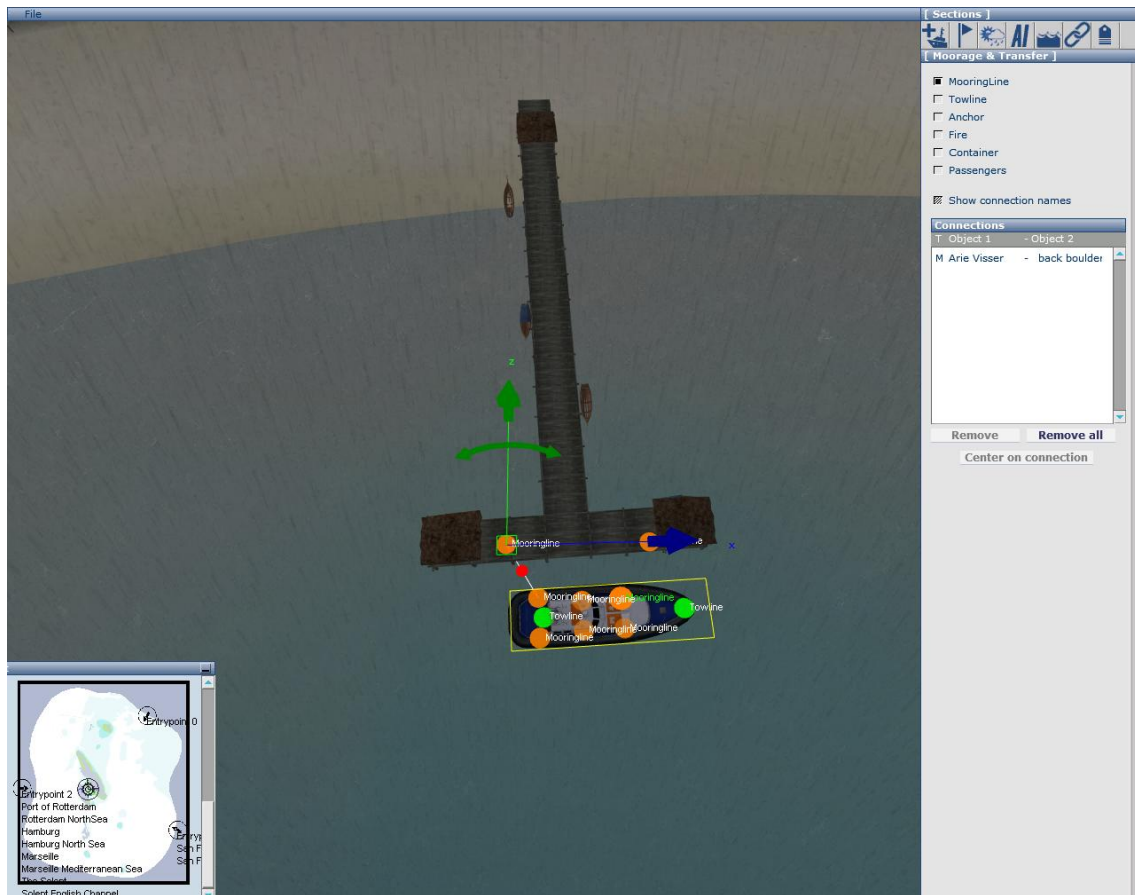
Figure 12 We can also start the mission in moored condition. Click on the "Moorage and Transfer" button, tick the "MooringLine" option. Green and orange dots appear at the vessel and the boulders. Click on the left-back orange dot of the vessel, and then on the back boulder. A mooring line appears as a straight line with a red dot. This line will appear as a more realistic looking mooring line in play mode. Clicking on the red dot will delete the mooring line again. Repeat the process for the front mooring line. In play mode, the player can only move away with the rescue boat after disconnecting the mooring lines. There is no need to add waypoints for this.
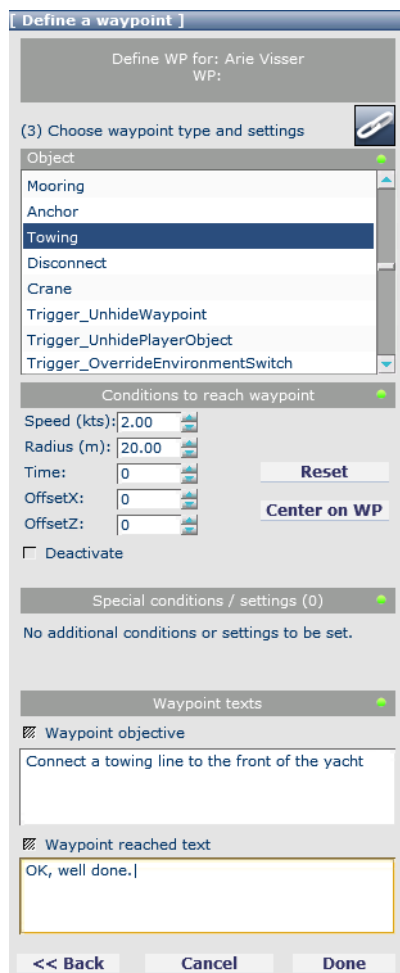
Figure 13 To give the mission more variety, we could let the player tow the motor yacht to a specific point, for example the jetty. To do this, we need to add a Towing waypoint for the object "Luxury motor yacht". If we had given it a specific name, it would have appeared on the top area of the waypoint dialog box. With the current settings, this waypoint will be completed when a towing line is connected by the player between the rescue boat and the yacht.

Figure 14 Now we need to specify at which point the player needs to disconnect the towing line again. By specifying a location close to the jetty, we force the player to tow the yacht to the new, presumably safe location. We could add a new area in the scene, but we can also double-use one of the boulders, like shown here.

[Waypoints]

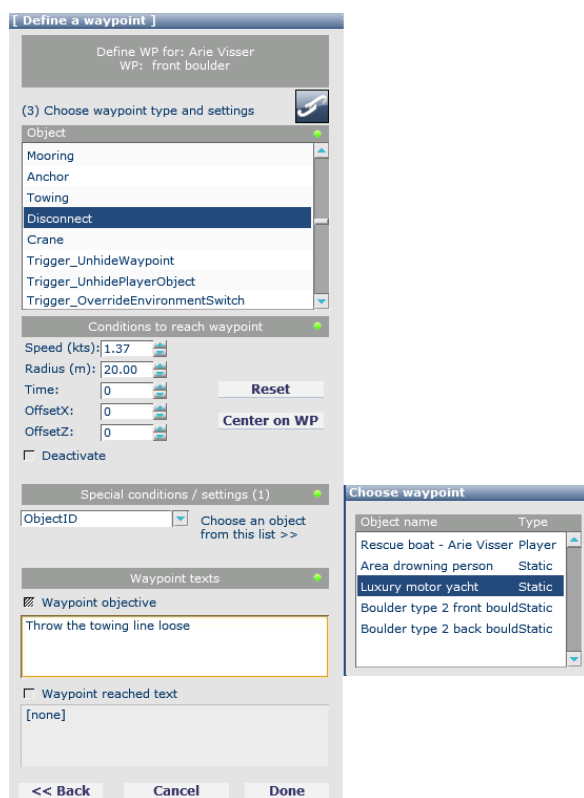| Object name	HT	Env
Rescue boat - Arie Visser	0 -	Phi
WP1 - Area drowning persc	0	RePhi
WP2 - Luxury motor yacht	0	TaPhi
WP3 - Luxury motor yacht	0	ToPhi
WP4 - Boulder type 2 front	0	Di Phi
WP5 - Boulder type 2 front	0	MoPhi
WP6 - Boulder type 2 back	0	MoPhi

Deactivate playerobject

Define WP	Remove Waypoint
Move up	Move down
Center	Set as start

Conditions to reach waypoint

Speed (kts): 2.00
Radius (m): 20.00   **Undo**
Time: 5.00
OffsetX: 0
OffsetZ: 0

Special conditions / settings (2)

PickupPeople (0)   ▼ 0

☐ Deactivate WP?

Waypoint texts

✏ Waypoint objective

Drop off the captain at his yacht.

✏ Waypoint reached text

Well done. The captain thanks you
very much for rescuing him.

Figure 15 We need to change the order of the waypoints, as the last added waypoints are at the bottom of the list by default, while the mission should end with the mooring waypoints we created earlier. You can use the buttons "Move up" and "Move down" for that. Selecting a waypoint from the list will show all its parameters.

If the panel is longer than can be shown on your screen, you can shift down using the vertical bar on the right-hand side. The blue area of this bar shows the visible vertical position of the panel.

You can change all parameters and text of the waypoints. It is good practice to click through all waypoints after you created a mission, to test if the sequence is still correct. An incorrect waypoint sequence may lead to a mission that cannot be completed.
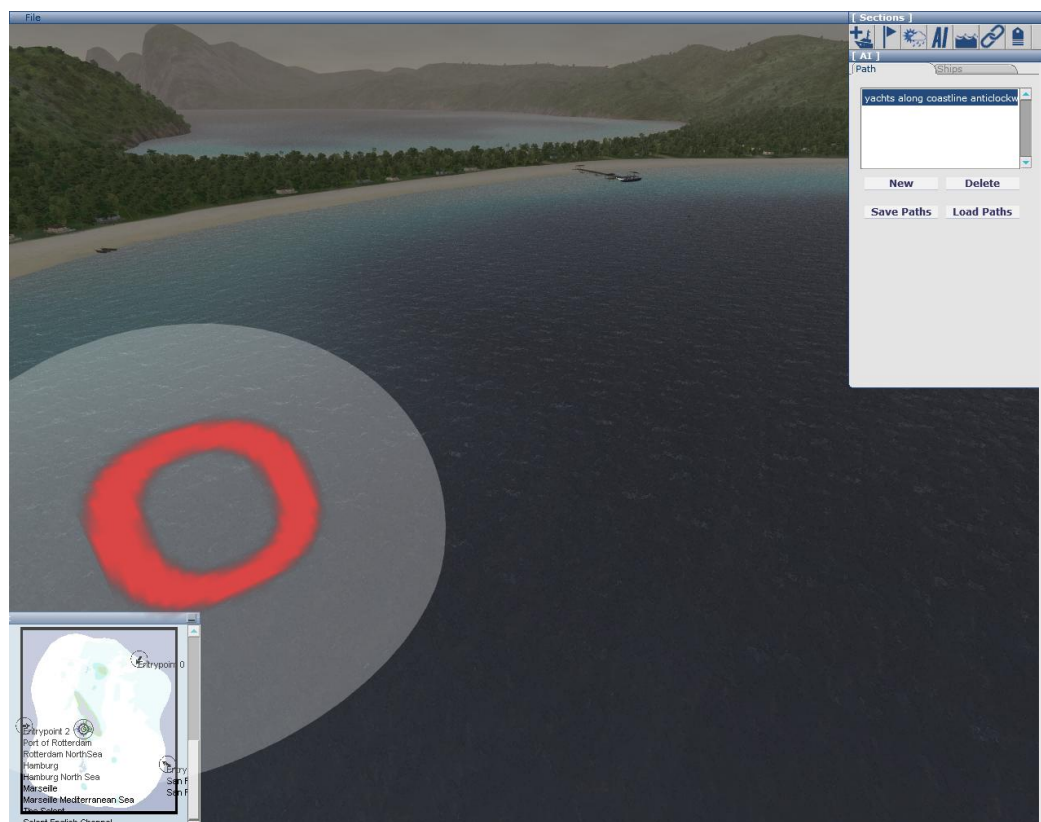

Figure 16 To increase the livelihood of your mission, and possibly to make it more difficult to play it, you can add self-sailing ships to the environment. These are also referred to as autonomous vessels, or abbreviated as AI (Artificial Intelligence) traffic. Go to the AI section. Click on "New" to create a new path, which will be followed by

the AI vessels. Create a meaningful name, so you can later on identify the path from possibly a whole series of paths, like in our case "Yachts along coastline anti-clockwise". Then add path nodes using the Insert key of your keyboard.

By default, a node will appear quite big, as it can also be used for open sea and large vessels, where space is more widely available than small yachts near a shallow coastline. You can shrink the node by keeping the Shift key pressed and shifting the mouse up and down with the left mouse button also pressed.

Move through the scene to the spot where the next nodes needs to be placed, using the cursor keys. Turn around by shifting the mouse left/right while keeping the left mouse button pressed. Zoom in and out using the scroll wheel. Place the next node again with the Insert key. Once placed, you can select a node by clicking on it, and shifting it with the mouse.
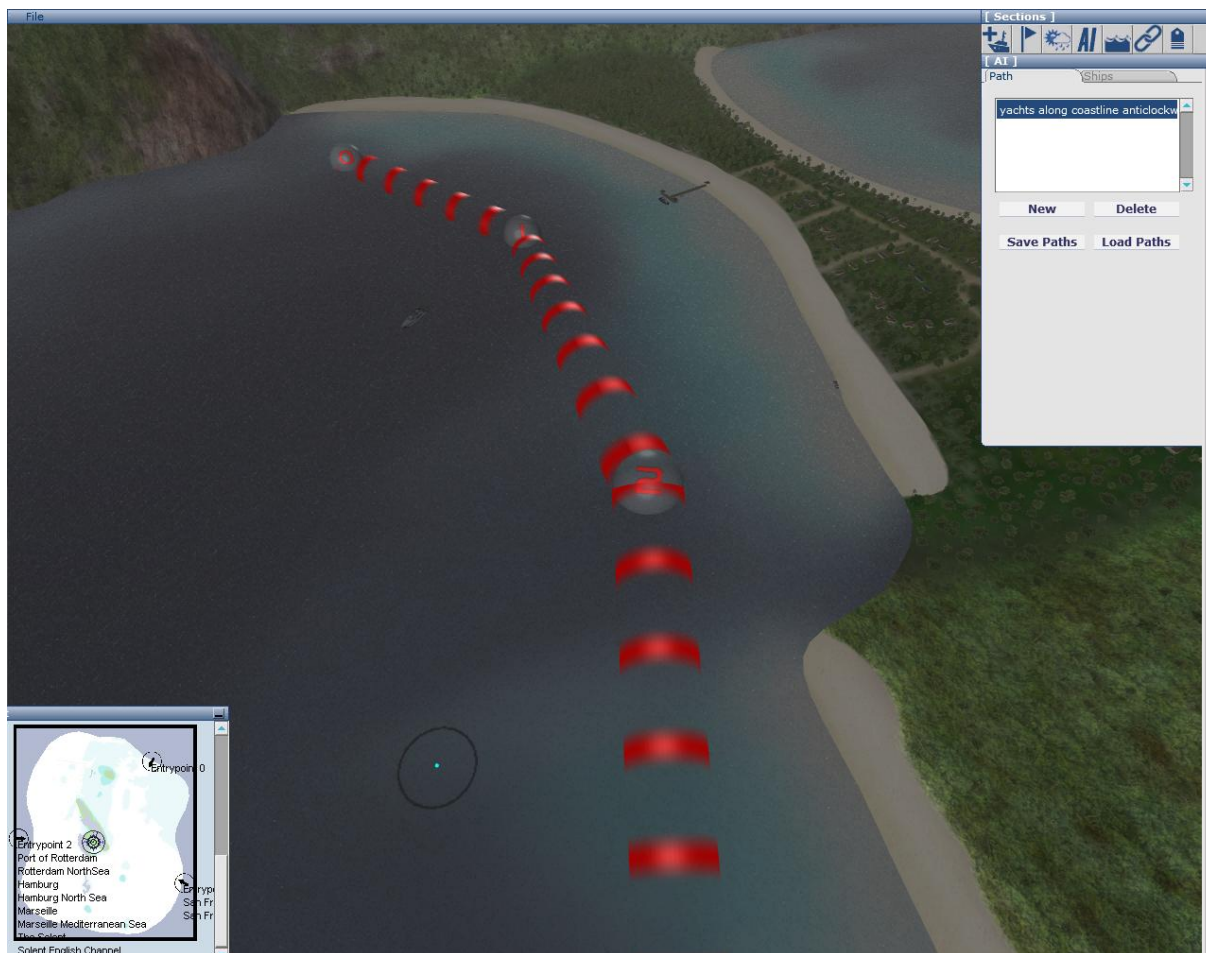

Figure 17 After you placed and sized a few nodes, your pad should look roughly like this. You can still insert new nodes in-between two existing nodes, by positioning the cursor where the new node should appear, and pressing the Insert button.
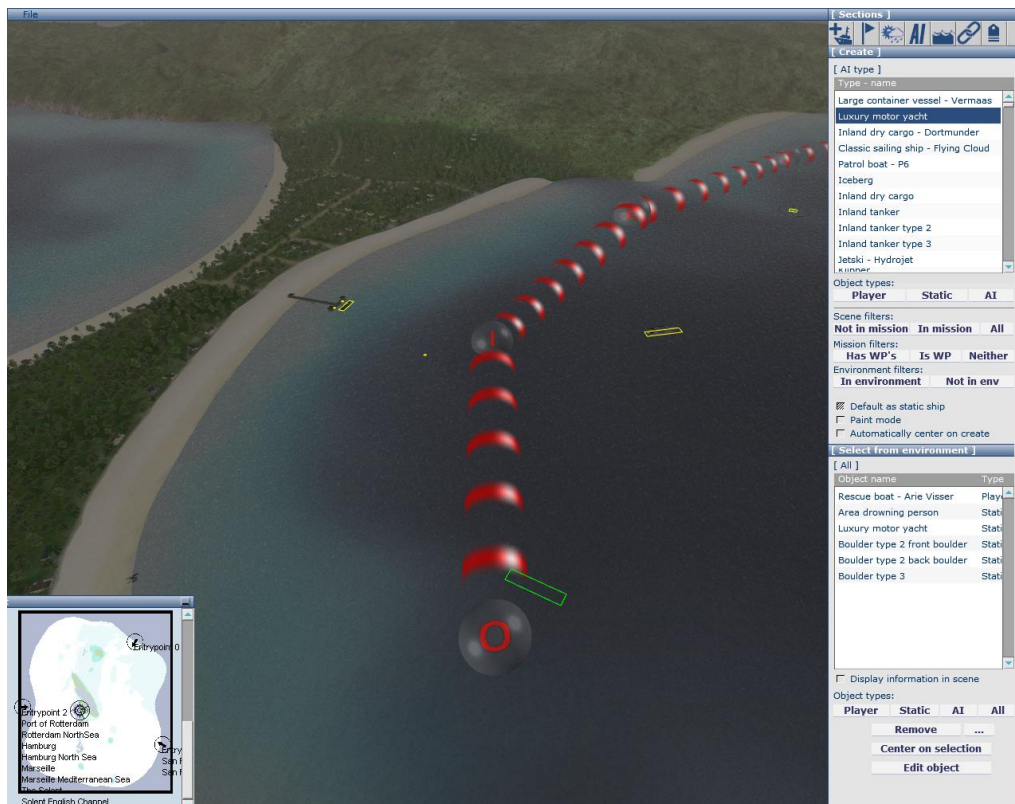
Figure 18 You can now add AI ships by going to the Create panel, click on the AI button, which will show all available autonomous vessels that can be used. Click on "Luxury Motor Yacht" and drag it to the path.
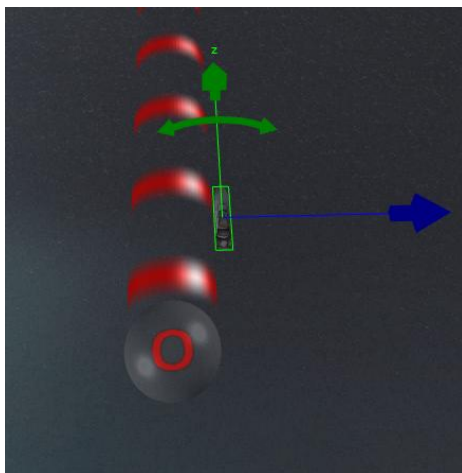

Figure 19 As soon as you dropped an AI vessel close to a path, it will start to move, following the nodes. It will try to make a smooth turn, in accordance with the dynamics of the real vessel. Bigger nodes give it more room to make naturally looking turns. You can shift a ship next to a path, and it will roughly follow the boundary of the path.

You can add multiple vessels of the same or different types to the same path. Watch out to give each of them a different distance to the centre of the path, to avoid traffic jams, as different ship types have a different sailing speed.

When an AI ship reaches the end of its path, it will be spawned back to the start of the path. So it will follow the same path over and over again.
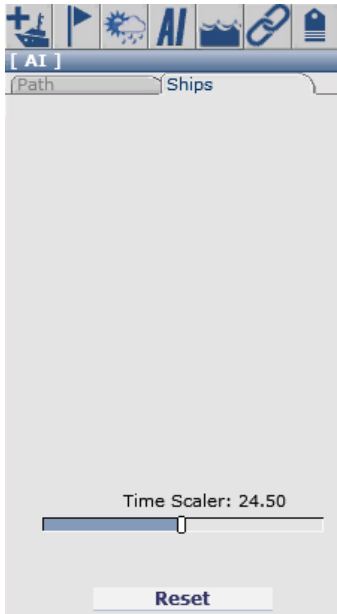
Figure 20 To check for possible collisions and traffic jams, you can speed up the movement speed of the AI vessels, using the Ships tab of the AI panel. The Reset button will set all AI vessels to their starting position. You can do a visual check, specially at corners of the AI path, if they all run smooth and don't cross each other.

In general you should avoid making different AI paths that cross each other. Undoubtedly at some stage, two AI vessels on each path will get on collision course. If the player ship is far away from them, so the player doesn't see them, they will sail through each other. But when the player ship is close to them, they will collide with each other, or stop and wait for each other. In spite of their title of AI, they are not so intelligent as to follow the collision avoidance rules of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

Waypoint types

Any object you add into environment can be turned into one or more waypoints. Most missions use the Area object, but you could use also static ships, buoys, AI vessels and player vessels (in case you added more than one player vessel) as waypoint.

There are 16 types of waypoints which you can use to create a mission. These are explained in this section. Have a look again at figure 14.

Normal – This is the most simple waypoint: just a circle in the water (or on land in case you make a mission for the hovercraft). The player needs to steer his vessel through the circle to complete the waypoint.

Taxi – With the taxi waypoint you can pick up or drop of people. In case you want to pick up people from a ship or an area, it is a good idea to place some waiting people at the pick-up area. You can do this in the Moorage & Transfer section on the right-hand side. When you tick the Passengers option there, you can see grey spheres at the spots where you can place people (see figure XX). Clicking on these spots will add a person. Each person appears in the scene, and also in the Connections area of the Moorage & Transfer panel.

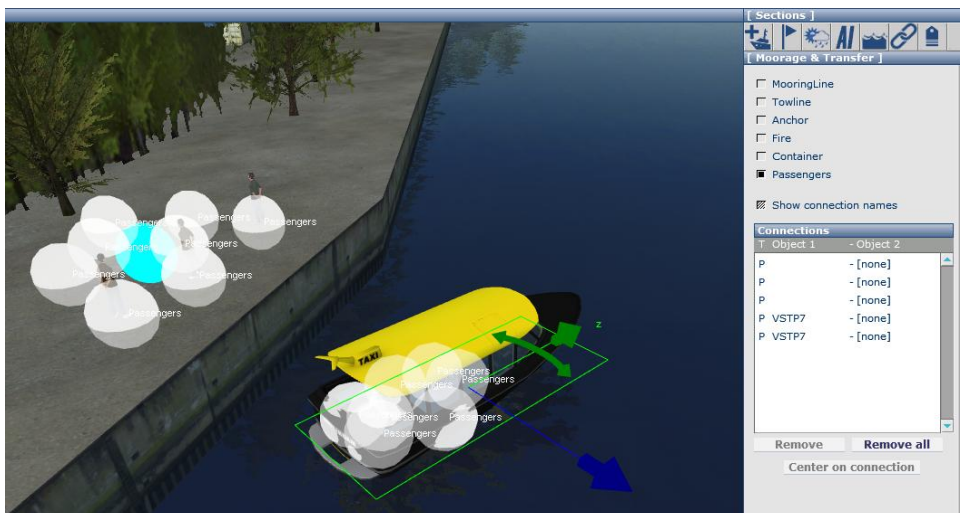Figure 21 You can place people at certain spots or inside ships using the Moorage and Transfer panel. The people you place appear in the Connections list, from where you can remove them as well.

When you create a taxi waypoint, you need to specify the maximum speed the player ship can have in order to complete the waypoint, the radius of the area, and the time the player ship needs to stay there.

You then need to specify how many people need to be picked up or dropped off under Special conditions. Set a number and click OK. Specify some text that appears before the player reaches the waypoint (Waypoint objective) and text that appears when the waypoint is completed successfully (Waypoint reached text). Click Done and the waypoint is set.

If you want players to pick up 3 people at this waypoint, make sure you set at least 3 passengers there with Moorage & Transfer. Under Special conditions, you always need to set all parameters to another value than -1, the default.
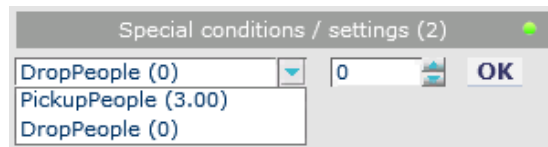

Figure 22 Settings under Special conditions to let the player pick up 3 people and drop off none.

Container – This works similar to the taxi waypoint. Place containers on areas or vessels under the Moorage & Transfer panel. Let the player pick these up by specifying the number under the Special conditions of the waypoint panel. Like with taxi waypoints, always specify valid numbers to pick up or drop off under Special conditions.

Rescue – This also works similar to the taxi waypoint. No need to place passengers there, they will be placed automatically by the number you specify under the Special conditions of the waypoint panel. This waypoint can only be specified for Area objects on water surface. You always need to specify the desired number of people to be rescued under Special conditions. Don't forget to click on OK to fix the setting!

Mooring – The waypoint will be completed when the player connects a mooring line between the player ship and a shore based mooring object, like a boulder you placed on the quay, within the radius of the circle. So the ship's centre point needs to be inside the waypoint radius, then the player needs to go to the Connections setting, and establish a mooring line.

Anchor - The waypoint will be completed when the player drop the anchor inside the radius of the waypoint circle, with speed below the specified maximum.

Towing – The player needs to connect a towing rope between the player vessel and another vessel (static or AI). So this waypoint is usually to be created with a static ship as the basis and not an area object.

Disconnect – The player needs to disconnect a towing rope with the player vessel inside the waypoint circle. Usually you need to create such a disconnect waypoint after a towing waypoint, at a different location, or else the player could immediately disconnect the towing line after connecting it. The Disconnect waypoint forces the player to actually tow the second vessel from A to B.

Crane – The use of this waypoint is very restricted. It was developed for container loading missions, whereby containers are loaded from the quay to the Vermaas container vessel. The mission cannot contain any other Vermaas object that just one player object Vermaas and one player object Crane. So you can create missions whereby the Vermaas starts in harbour A, sails to harbour B, moors in front of the crane, loads a few containers, and sails to harbour C.

Trigger_UnhideWaypoint – You can let a mission start with some (or all) waypoints invisible initially, by ticking the "Deactivate WP" option for each waypoint that needs to be hidden. To activate it, you need to insert a Trigger_UnhideWaypoint before the hidden (inactive) waypoint. All trigger waypoints are themselves excluded from the visible waypoint list, and indicated with EX in the Mission Editor. You need to make sure that the player crosses each Trigger_UnhideWaypoint WP in time, or else the mission cannot be completed. You usually place a trigger WP like this on the same object as the previous visible waypoint, so the player simply cannot miss it. Don't forget to set the Delay time (in seconds) and the WaypointID of the waypoint that needs to be activated, under Special conditions.

Trigger_UnhidePlayerObject – Similarly, you can let a mission start with a player object and all of its waypoints inactive. The vessel itself will be visible in the 3D scene, but it will not be usable as a player ship yet. You can deactivate a player object with the option "Deactivate playerobject", under the object list of the Mission panel. Using the Trigger_UnhidePlayerObject, you can activate the player ship during the mission. Starting with some inactive waypoints and player vessels and activating them during the mission can lead to more exciting gameplay, as the player cannot see all the

tasks of the mission upfront. Don't forget to set the Delay time (in seconds) and the ObjectID of the waypoint that needs to be activated, under Special conditions.

Trigger_OverrideEnvironmentSwitch – This waypoint can teleport the player vessel to another environment, or to another place in the same environment. Lengthy missions can be shortened this way, and missions can become more varied by encompassing multiple harbours. You can also teleport the player to open sea, with different weather conditions and waves. By default, the player vessel ree-appears in the new environment at one of the spawn points. You can add a Trigger_Teleport waypoint in the new environment to let the teleported player vessel appear at that spot.

Trigger_ChangeWeather – You can let the weather change during a mission. As there are many sliders for all kinds of weather settings, we simplified this process by defining a few weather presets. You need to set just one of these presets to 1, and all the others to 0. You cannot mix them. You can also set the EffectTime to the number of seconds that the changeover from old to new weather setting needs to take. Figure 21 shows a correct setting for a weather change to the Rain preset.
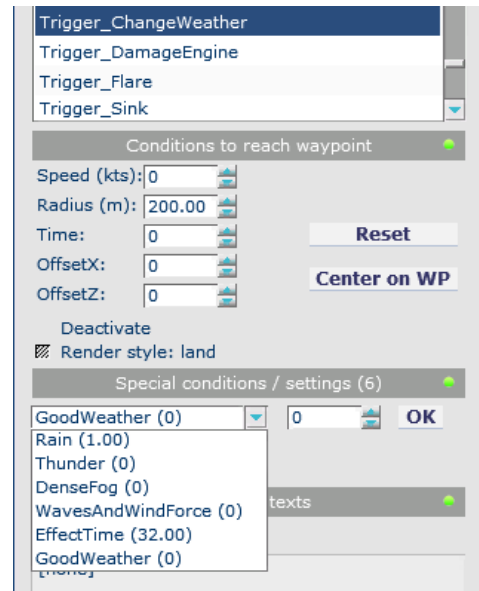

Figure 23 Example settings for the weather change trigger waypoint.

Trigger_DamageEngine – Using this waypoint, you can either create damage to the rudder and engines of another player ship, in case DamageSelf is set to 0, or to create damage to the active player ship, in case DamageSelf is set to 1. The damage will, as the name suggests, lead to less steering effect or less engine power. Use this waypoint in case for example you want to let the player get engine damage in a big storm, after which he needs to call in for assistance, to be towed into a harbour. Or get a rescue boat alongside with a mechanic to fix the engines (taxi waypoint of rescue boat with damaged player ship as the basis).
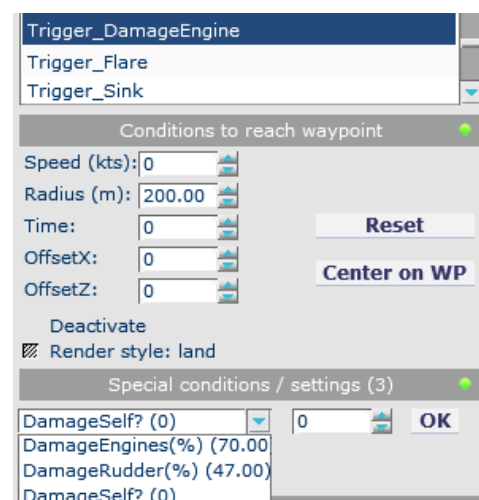
Figuur 24 Example of settings for damaging another player ship's engines and rudder.

Trigger_Flare – This waypoint lets the object (normally a static or AI vessel that needs assistance) on which it is based, shoot off a flare.

Trigger_Sink – With this waypoint you can make a vessel sink. You can use it on the current active player vessel, or on any other player, static or AI vessel. The sinking occurs not immediately, but slowly, dependent on the size of the vessel.

Trigger_Teleport – This is the spawn point in the new location, where a player ship appears after it was teleported with a Trigger_OverrideEnvironmentSwitch waypoint.

Waypoint Options

Conditions to reach waypoint:

- **Speed** – maximum speed that the player vessel can move to complete the waypoint.

- **Radius** around the centre of the object which was used as the basis of the waypoint, indicating the area where the player ship needs to be to complete this waypoint.

- **Time** in seconds, how long the player ship needs to be within the radius with a speed lower than the max speed to complete the waypoint

- **OffsetX** and **OffsetZ** – You can shift the centre of the waypoint circle away from the object centre in two horizontal directions. Useful if you for example want to drop people off at the side of a large vessel, for example a pilot.

Deactivate – Waypoints and player vessels can start in an inactive state. They can be activated during the mission when the player completes a Trigger_UnhidePlayerObject waypoint or a Trigger_UnhideWaypoint waypoint.

Render style: land – normally, waypoints are indicated with green circles on the water surface. With the addition of a hovercraft to the game, land-based waypoints are becoming an option in missions. These green circles are not visible on land. The Render style: land option creates a half-transparent vertical cylinder at the waypoint, which is also visible on land.

Waypoint objective – Text which will be visible next to the waypoint icon, and also pops up in the message box, with a description of the next waypoint. It can be a directive, like "sail to the Erasmus Bridge and moor the vessel on the North side", or just a simple description of the waypoint location, like "Erasmus Bridge South side".

Waypoint reached text – Text which pops up when the player finished the current waypoint. This can also have a directive, like "Now steer in Northerly direction", or just a message like "Well done! You saved two people!".

Additional comments

In the Create section, there are a few options with that can be ticked:

Automatically center on create – With this option, the center of the rotation point is centered on the object you placed last into the scene. You can center it on another object by double-clicking on that object.

Never sleep dynamics – Normally, when you place objects on the water, like ships, buoys, icebergs, they become active for collisions only when you get close to them. When you move away to a larger distance, the switch to non-dynamic mode. This is to save performance. It works fine for most objects and circumstances. You never notice the switchover from passive to active. For some objects however, like large static or AI ships or icebergs, you want them to stay in dynamics mode all the time. For example, if you used the Titanic as an AI vessel, and it approaches an iceberg. If you with a player ship (like a rescue boat) watch the Titanic from a distance approach the iceberg, you would see it sail straight through the iceberg if one of the two was in passive mode. So in this situation, both the AI Titanic and the static iceberg need to have the Never sleep dynamics option switched on.

Display information in scene – This option shows additional textual information in the scene, about the objects you placed into the environment. It may help you in case the mission cannot be completed, to find out what goes wrong.

Epilepsy warning Notes

WARNING READ BEFORE USING YOUR VIDEO GAME SYSTEM READ THIS NOTICE BEFORE YOU OR YOUR CHILD PLAYS ANY COMPUTER GAME

A very small percentage of individuals have a condition which may cause them to experience epileptic seizures or have momentary loss of consciousness when viewing certain kinds of flashing lights or patterns that are commonly present in our daily environment. These persons may experience seizures while watching some kinds of television pictures or playing certain computer games. Players who have not had any previous seizures may nonetheless have an undetected epileptic condition. If you or anyone in your family has experienced symptoms linked to an epileptic condition (e.g. a seizure or loss of awareness), immediately consult your physician before playing any computer games.

We recommend that parents observe their children while they play computer games. If you or your child experience any of the following symptoms: dizziness, altered vision, eye or muscle twitching, involuntary movements, loss of awareness, disorientation, or convulsions, discontinue immediately and consult your physician before resuming play.

FOLLOW THESE PRECAUTIONS WHENEVER USING COMPUTER GAMES

- When playing computer games, do not sit or stand too close to the monitor. Play as far back from the screen as possible.

- Play computer games on the smallest available monitor.

- Do not play if you are tired or need sleep.

- Always play in a well-lit room.

- Be sure to take a 10 to 15 minute break every hour while playing.

REPETITIVE STRAIN WARNING

Some people may experience fatigue or discomfort after playing for a long time. Regardless of how you feel, you should ALWAYS take a 10 to 15 minute break every hour while playing. If your hands or arms become tired or uncomfortable while playing, stop and rest. If you continue to experience soreness or discomfort during or after play, listen to the signals your body is giving you. Stop playing and consult a doctor. Failure to do so could result in long term injury. If your hands, wrist or arms have been injured or strained in other activities, use of your system could aggravate the condition. Before playing, consult a doctor.

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SHIP SIMULATOR 2008

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