

About Harwich Haven Authority

As a trust port with statutory responsibilities for conservancy and safety of navigation we ensure that commercial and leisure users co-exist safely in the Haven. We do this by providing free services for recreational users, including navigational and traffic information via our Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) and website.

Marker buoys, yacht channels and harbour patrols ensure the main channel is kept clear for commercial shipping. During the weekends of the summer months we patrol between 0800 and 1600. We collaborate on a regular basis with local yacht clubs such as the Harwich Area Sailing Association (HASA) to make their members aware of the hazards of boating in our busy harbour.

Each year we welcome more than 10,000 leisure vessels of all shapes and sizes who visit the Haven from both the UK and Europe.

Whether you are visiting the area or are a local sailor, we urge you to review the information contained within this guide, which will assist with safety and enhance your enjoyment of the Haven.



Best practice advice for sailors

On 1 July 2002, Chapter V of the SOLAS (Safety Of Life At Sea) Regulations came into force internationally affecting all leisure vessels.

The weather
Get a forecast before leaving and consider how it applies to the area. Prepare the boat and crew accordingly. Update the information regularly.

The tides
When are the tidal streams favourable? Will it be wind against tide making sea conditions worse? Is there a tidal gate? Is there sufficient height of tide to cross any shallow area?

Limitations of your vessel
Is the boat suitable for the conditions expected? Do you have the safety equipment and spares that you need?

Crew
Does the crew have enough experience and physical ability for the trip? Are there sufficient crew? Cold, tired or seasick crew will add to the skipper's tasks. Are you, as skipper, liable to seasickness too? Is there warm waterproof clothing, food and accommodation for the crew?

Navigational hazards
Check on the charts and read pilot books for information of the hazards in the area.

Contingency plan
If it gets too late, too dark, or too cold to follow the original plan, where will you go? If the weather deteriorates or there is an accident, where will you go for a safe haven? Have sufficient charts to cope with a different destination.

Information ashore
Tell someone ashore about your plans and tell them how to inform the Coastguard if you are overdue. Log details of your vessel and its life-saving equipment with the Coastguard. Use the C066 in the UK. This can be filled in online here: www.gov.uk/register-boat-coastguard-safety-scheme

Manoeuvring and warning signals

- One prolonged blast
- Leaving a dock, quay, or anchorage
- One short blast
- Altering to starboard
- Two short blasts
- Altering to port
- Three short blasts
- My engines are going astern
- Five or more blasts
- Your intentions are unclear
- Four short blasts followed by one short blast
- Turning short round to starboard
- Four short blasts followed by two short blasts
- Turning short round to port



Safety brief

Skipper should educate their crew about the safety equipment onboard the boat, where it is and when and how to use it. Crew should know:

- How to start the engine
- Location of first aid kit and book
- How to send a VHF/DSC distress alert and mayday
- Use of lifejackets, harnesses and jack-stays
- Location and use of flares and EPIRB
- MOB equipment and procedure
- Gas safety and use of cooker
- Location and use of AIS kit
- How to gain access to the engine space if there is no automatic system
- How to launch the life raft
- The danger zones where there is risk of injury from the boom or mainsheet in an accidental gybe

Further guidance is available within MGN 379 - use of Electronic Navigational Aids - www.gov.uk

Think smart, be safe; you should never rely on the output of a single navigational aid.



Mayday

A mayday should only be sent if there is grave and imminent danger to vessel or person which requires immediate assistance.

A DSC distress alert will sound an alarm on all DSC sets within range, including on ships and at Coastguard stations. It will send the position of the boat if the set is interfaced with a GPS.

If it is urgent, but not life-threatening, make a Pan Pan broadcast preceded by a DSC urgency alert. For advice contact the Coastguard by routine DSC or on VHF Channel 16.

DSC DISTRESS ALERT
Open the red cover, then press and hold the distress button through the countdown.

Use VHF Channel 16 on high power
MAYDAY, MAYDAY, MAYDAY
THIS IS [vessel type and name, vessel name, vessel name] MMSI & call sign

MAYDAY THIS IS [vessel type & name] MMSI & call sign
IN POSITION [lat/long]

NATURE OF DISTRESS [fire, sinking, mob]
I REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE
OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION [number of persons abandoning to life raft or no life raft]
OVER

During the Maydays, all the communication is likely to continue on VHF Channel 16. It will be possible to talk to the lifeboat or helicopter once they are on scene and all vessels in the vicinity will be aware of your situation.

Do not rely on a mobile phone in an emergency at sea, it cannot perform the same function.

Collision awareness checklist

- A vessel of less than 20m in length or sailing vessel shall not impede the passage of vessels which can safely navigate only within a narrow channel or fairway.
- It is required under Rule 9 that a sailing vessel may not impede the passage of any vessel which can safely navigate only within a narrow channel or fairway. Shipping entering and leaving Harwich Haven and the Stour/Orwell rivers can safely navigate only within the channel, and therefore it is essential their safe passage is not impeded. If in any doubt, contact Harwich VTS on VHF channel 71 before entering or crossing a shipping lane.
- A sailing vessel underway shall keep out of the way of:
 - A vessel not under command;
 - A vessel restricted in her ability to manoeuvre;
 - A vessel engaged in fishing;
- Any vessel other than a vessel not under command or a vessel restricted in her ability to manoeuvre shall, if the circumstances of the case admit, avoid impeding the safe passage of a vessel constrained by her draught, exhibiting the signals in Rule 28.

See MSN 1781 (M+F) The Merchant Shipping (Distress Signals and Prevention of Collisions) Regulations 1996.
Find the Collision Regulations - <https://rb.gy/c9doef>

Navigation channels and speed restrictions

Channels

The main deep-water navigational channels within Harwich Harbour are well marked by buoys and lights. Yachts are advised to keep clear of the channels and use the recommended yacht and small vessel tracks.

When main channels have to be crossed, this should be done as nearly as practicable at right angles. Avoid crossing the bows of on-coming commercial traffic. Large container ships, in particular, have very restricted visibility for quite a distance ahead when carrying a deck cargo of containers.

We request that sailors conduct themselves in a responsible way while using the Haven and adhere to Collision Regulations and best practice advice from RYA.

Speed limits
The speed limit for power boats, cruisers, or yachts is 8 knots within Harwich Harbour, the River Stour and the Walton Backwaters. The limit is 6 knots within the River Orwell.

Harwich Haven Authority Byelaws - www.hha.co.uk/operations/downloads
Ipswich Port Authority Byelaws - <https://www.ports.gov.uk/immersion-information-and-compliance/byelaws/>

Personal watercraft guidance and legislation

Jet-skiing is permitted in the areas marked on the map with the permission of the Harbour Master. Before entering the area, please contact Harwich VTS via VHF Channel 71 or telephone 01255 243000. Exclusion zones and permitted areas are clearly marked on the map.

For further information visit our byelaws - www.hha.co.uk/operations

- Wear buoyancy aid/lifejacket
- Service equipment
- Get trained
- Make a plan
- Know your limits
- Carry a communication device
- Check the weather

New Personal Watercraft Legislation
New legislation, which came into force, 31 March 2023, puts the responsibility on users, operators and owners of powered watercraft to make sure they protect not just themselves but other water users from harm.

Useful resources
www.bspa.org.uk
www.britishcanoeing.org.uk
www.rnli.org/safety
www.rya.uk/knowledge
www.tendering.gov.uk
@emilyscode



Pollution and dangerous goods

Prevention of Pollution by Barge Regulations

The North Sea, including its Estuaries and Rivers, is designated a Special Area under Annex 5 of MARPOL. Within this area the disposal of all garbage is STRICTLY PROHIBITED. Food waste may only be put overboard outside the 12 mile limit in compliance with the Regulations, otherwise all garbage must be retained on board until it can be deposited on shore in approved receptacles.

Dangerous Goods in Harbour Areas Regulations 2016 (DOHAR)
A vessel alongside displaying an all-round red light by night or a red flag by day indicates that she is carrying dangerous substances. Under these Regulations an exclusion zone of up to 200m is to be enforced around any vessel loading or discharging explosives. Tankers alongside the jet lobbies at Harwich, Felixstowe and Ipswich should also be given a wide berth.

Invasive animal and plant species are one of the top five highest risks to global and UK biodiversity. They can also restrict navigation, clog up propellers and be costly to manage. Follow these steps to stop the spread:

- Check your vessel equipment and clothing for live organisms.
- Clean and wash all equipment, footwear and clothing thoroughly. If you do come across any organisms, leave them at the water body where you found them.
- Dry all equipment and clothing. Make sure you don't transfer water elsewhere.

Fog

Harwich VTS cannot undertake control of small craft in reduced visibility but our VTS team will provide assistance if possible. Listen in on VHF channel 71 and always carry a radar reflector, flares and suitable emergency equipment. If you do not have radar and intend to cross any shipping lane, and you are in serious doubt as to the commercial movements, call Harwich VTS on VHF channel 71, or Ipswich Port Radio Ch 68 whilst in the River Orwell. Carriage and use of an operational AIS is also encouraged. Remember your obligations under the prevention of collision regulations (see above), particularly the ability to make an efficient sound signal.

Find the Collision Regulations: <https://rb.gy/c9doef>



Respect our special environment

So visitors can fully enjoy the Haven's surroundings, we work to preserve its environment by collaborating with groups including the Suffolk & Essex Wildlife Trusts, Natural England and the RSPB to protect natural habitats. In addition to being home to one of the UK's largest and busiest port districts, Harwich Haven is also an area of high environmental protection, mainly due to the bird population that it supports.

The Stour & Orwell estuaries, including their rivers, are part of the European network of protected areas known as Natura 2000, are recognised as important wetlands under international conventions (Ramsar) and are also Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within UK legislation. The shores and surrounding areas include designated National Landscapes (Formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and local nature reserves.

Considerate visitors are welcome, but please take care to avoid any kind of pollution. It is a criminal offence to damage the habitat or disturb wildlife. Always land in a recognised landing area and ensure that the anti-fouling paints used on vessels comply with current regulations.

Report suspicious activity
If you see or hear anything unusual, REPORT IT. Even the smallest thing can be significant...

Call the Police on 101 or CrimStoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 [Quote KRAKEN]

Key to facilities

Boat hoist & crane	Holding tank pump-out	Scrubbing berth
Chandlery	Launching slip	Showers
Defibrillator	Laundrette	Toilets
Diesel	LPG	VHF80
Drinking water	Petrol	Visitor berths
Electricity	Provisions	WiFi
Gas (bottles)	Refuse	Workshop
Hazardous waste / oil	Restaurant / bar	

51 Fox's Marina & Boatyard

Entrance 100m upriver of No12 channel buoy, which is dredged to 2m below CD. Visitors' berths available. Vessel wash waste capture system in place.

Yacht travel lift: 70 tons. Club facilities available to visiting crews. VHF Ch 80 | info@fmyc.org.uk | www.foxsmarina.com

@FoxsMarina @Foxs_Marina @foxsmarina

11 Orwell Yacht Club

01473 211771
01473 213256
01473 210666

52 Ipswich Beacon Marina

01473 236644
www.beaconmarinas.co.uk
ipswichbeacon@abports.co.uk

@abports21

Within the entrance to NEW CUT is a Tidal Barrier which is raised when required from the river bed. When raised the top of the structure may be just below the water level. 3 vertical red lights, when lit, warn vessels that they MUST NOT PROCEED. During high tides the floodgates at Ipswich may be closed.

All inward bound leisure craft should contact Lock Control on VHF Ch 68 for up to date information on lock times.

ARRIVAL: It is accessible 24 hours through a lock entrance, at all states of the tide for vessels up to 2m draft. Vessels wishing to use the lock should contact Lock Control, VHF Channel 68 as they clear the Orwell Bridge. Once through the lock, contact Ipswich Beacon Marina on VHF Channel 80 or 37 for allocation of a pontoon berth. Craft arriving early may use the layby pontoons. Visitors' berths are always available for even the largest yachts and non-commercial craft.

DEPARTURE: All vessels to call Lock Control prior to leaving the Marina berth. The duty officer will inform you when there is free flow or when you can lock out.

LOCK SIGNALS: Lights fixed at the river side of the lock entrance (for vessels arriving Wet Dock) and on the Orwell Navigation Service building (for vessels departing Wet Dock) indicate whether the lock is open or closed as follows:

- One red light - lock closed to vessels entry
- One green light - lock open for vessels entry

The lock master will advise if there is a pontoon available for mooring or if a vessel is to secure to the lock side. Due to the strong turbulence which can be encountered, it is strongly advised to wear lifejackets in the lock.

The lock master will advise all vessels prior to the commencement of locking operations. All yachts to monitor VHF Channel 68 whilst on the River Orwell.

53 Shotley Marina

Recommended yacht and small vessel track from south of Shotley Spit buoy is parallel to deep water channel, passing close north of Ganges buoy to the marked approach channel leading to locked basin. Traffic lights at lock entrance (2-4hr) plus INOGON directional leading light, see drawing. Diesel is available 24hrs per day. VHF Ch 80 visitors' berths available. Yacht travel lift approx 40 tons max. Channel dredged to 2m below CD.

01473 788982 | www.shotleymarina.co.uk

54 Suffolk Yacht Harbour

Entrance marked by channel. Dredged to 2.5 metres LWS. Visitors' berths available.

VHF Ch 80 | 01473 659465 | www.syharbour.co.uk

@Suffolk Yacht Harbour @syharbour

55 Tidemill Yacht Harbour

Entrance over a sill. Visitors' berths available. VHF Ch 80.

Note: To calculate entrance access - Height over sill - predicted HT off HHA
Guide minus (less) 1.5metres = HT over sill

01394 385745 | www.tidemillyachtharbour.co.uk



VHF Channels

VHF Channel 71 Harwich Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) working channel. All vessels are recommended to monitor this channel in Harwich Haven Authority waters. Harwich VTS may be contacted for essential UK Border Force navigational safety information and to make reports relating to marine incidents as required by the HHA Byelaws 1994 & 2003 (available at www.hha.co.uk/operations/downloads).

Vessels over 50 G.T. must report to Harwich VTS at designated reporting points (as per Admiralty Charts). Report also to Ipswich Port on VHF channel 68 on entry to River Orwell.

Useful contact information

Harwich Harbour Master	01255 243000
Harwich VTS	01255 243000
Ipswich Harbour Master	01473 211771
Ipswich Lock Control	01473 213256
Orwell Navigation Service	01473 210666
UK Border Force	0300 123 2012
National Yachtline	07900 056435
Regional Intelligence Team	07900 056435
Project Kraken	101 & quote
Operations/downloads	'KRAKEN'
HM Coastguard	01304 210008
Dover Coastguard	01304 210008
MMSI VHF/DSC	002320009
Coastguard in case of emergency	999

Keeping up to date with Harwich Haven Authority

Using our own data we produce and distribute 20,000 tide table leaflets to marinas, businesses and retail outlets across Essex and Suffolk, which you can pick up FREE of charge.

Download from our website - www.hha.co.uk/downloads/

Sign up to receive Notice to Mariners and Port Information Notices - www.hha.co.uk/news/subscribe

@harwichhaven

56 Titchmarsh Marina

Entrance 1.0m MLWS. Visitors' berths available. Yacht travel lift 35 tons.

VHF Ch 80 | 01255 672185
01255 851899
www.titchmarshmarina.com

57 Walton Yacht Basin

VHF 80 | 01255 675873
07514 492815
www.waltonyachtbasin.co.uk
admin@waltonyachtbasin.co.uk

58 Mistley Marine

Please be aware that the berths can dry out.

VHF 80 | 07850 208918

59 Woolverstone Marina

Continuous access. Visitors' berths. VHF Ch 80 | 01473 780206
www.woolverstonemarina.co.uk

13 Royal Harwich Yacht Club

Visiting yachts can lay on outer pontoons. 07742 145994
www.royalharwichyachtclub.co.uk

38 Ha'penny Pier yacht moorings

First come, first served. Charges made when staying between 1600 - 0900. Pier master on duty between April and October. Out of season (November - March) please direct any enquiries to pier.masters@hha.co.uk

01255 243030 | 07748 154039 | pier.masters@hha.co.uk | hha.co.uk/leisure/mooring/

Scan QR code for Ha'penny Pier mooring charges

Mooring in Ha'penny Pier - Be aware that if the wind direction is NW, NNW or West to North there can be a strong swell. Pontoon bridges will be raised to the up position if conditions are not suitable for mooring. Please contact the Harwich Haven Authority pier master for further information - pier.masters@hha.co.uk

5 Knots maximum speed limit

Please be aware of swell 1 hour before and 1 hour after high and low water.

59 Woolverstone Marina

Continuous access. Visitors' berths. VHF Ch 80 | 01473 780206
www.woolverstonemarina.co.uk

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2026 Leisure Guide

For all water-based activities in Harwich Harbour and its rivers

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