



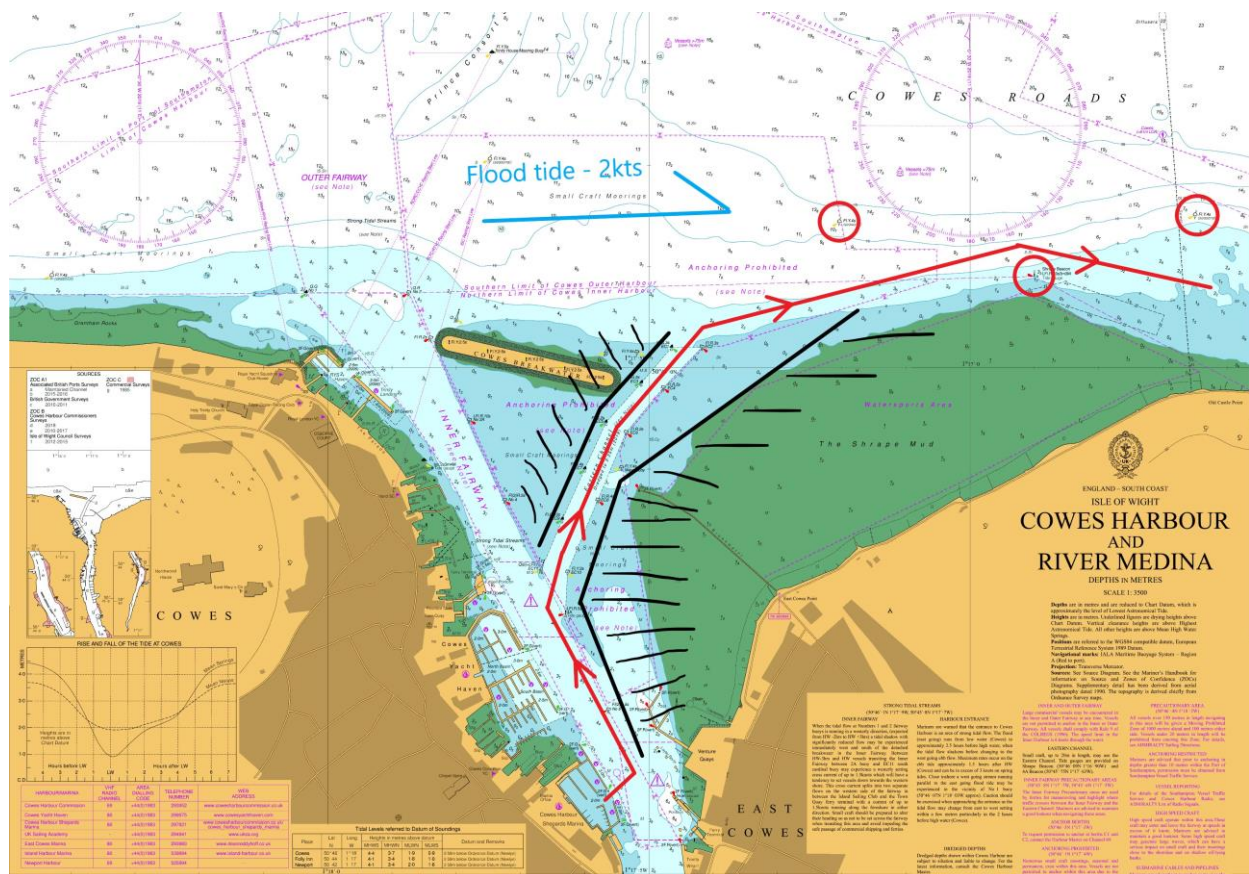
# COWES HARBOUR COMMISSION

## LOCAL NOTICE TO MARINERS No. 22 of 2024

### Importance of Passage Planning

As the season gets underway and after a recent avoidable incident in Cowes Harbour, I would like to share this timely and important safety advice.

**All mariners** are reminded that the prior planning of your trip, more commonly known as passage planning, could be the difference between arriving safely at your planned destination and an incident that could irreversibly change your life and the lives of your loved ones.



**SOLAS Regulation V/34** ('Safe Navigation and avoidance of dangerous situations') concerns passage planning. Skippers should take into account the following points when planning a boating trip: -

- **Weather:** before you go boating, check the weather forecast and get regular updates if you are planning to be out for any length of time.

- **Tides:** check the tidal predictions for your trip and ensure that they fit with what you are planning to do.
- **Limitations of the Vessel:** consider whether your vessel is up to the proposed trip and that you have sufficient safety equipment and stores with you.
- **Crew:** take into account the experience and physical ability of your crew. Crews suffering from cold, tiredness and seasickness won't be able to do their job properly and could result in an overburdened skipper.
- **Navigational Dangers:** make sure you are familiar with any navigational hazards and dangers you may encounter during your boating trip. This generally means checking an up-to-date chart and a current pilot book or almanac covering the area of intended voyage.
- **Contingency Plan:** always have a contingency plan in case something goes wrong. Before you go, consider places where you can take refuge should conditions deteriorate or if you suffer an incident or injury. Bear in mind that your GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System) receiver, e.g. GPS set, is vulnerable to various interferences and could fail at the most inconvenient time. This might be due to problems with electrical systems, jamming or interference with the signals or meteorological activity. It is sensible and good practice to make sure you are not over-reliant on your GPS for timing and position-fixing and that you have sufficient skills and information (charts, almanac and/or pilot books) to navigate yourself to safety without your GPS should it fail.
- **Information Ashore:** make sure that someone ashore knows your plans and knows what to do should they become concerned for your wellbeing. The MCA recommends joining the Coastguard Voluntary Safety Identification Scheme by registering on RYA SafeTrx.

Skippers should note that this regulation changes the status of passage planning on small boats from simply good practice to **a requirement under UK law** for vessels proceeding to sea (proceeding outside of the Solent and its categorised waters).

However, the Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA) says, "Although regulation 34 only applies when proceeding to sea, small craft users should adhere to the voyage planning principles when also sailing in categorised waters".

I strongly recommend that you always have a plan. This needn't be complicated, but an element of planning is required for even the simplest, and shortest of journeys to help prevent an avoidable incident.

*This local notice to mariners will remain in force until further notice.*

**Jon Kidd**

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**23/04/2024**

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