



COWES HARBOUR COMMISSION

LOCAL NOTICE TO MARINERS No. 07 of 2025

Essential Safety Information

(This notice replaces Local Notice to Mariners 06 of 2022, which is hereby cancelled)

The following safety advice is brought to the attention of all harbour users.

1. Passage Planning

Prior to undertaking any voyage, a full and proper passage plan must be completed. It is a crucial task that must be completed to ensure your voyage is as safe as possible.

At a minimum, the following points should be taken into consideration:

- Weather
- Tides
- Limitations of the vessel
- Crew – including manning and experience
- Navigational dangers
- Contingency Plan
- Information ashore – make sure someone ashore is aware of your plans

See [Local Notice to Mariners No. 22 of 2024 – Importance of Passage Planning](#) for full information

2. Wear a Lifejacket

Lifejackets are one of the most necessary pieces of equipment to have when enjoying boating or watersports. The Royal National Lifeboat Institute are an excellent source of information on this subject and give the following key advice:

- You must have enough lifejackets on board. This means having lifejackets to suit all shapes and sizes including children and pets.
- It is the skipper's responsibility to show the crew where lifejackets are stored, how to wear and secure them and when and how to operate them.
- The RNLI recommends that when you use your tender and your boat everyone wears a buoyancy aid or a lifejacket.

More information can be found at: rnli.org/safety/lifejackets

3. Wear a kill cord on-board powered craft

The kill cord serves one purpose, to stop the engine when the driver moves away from the controls. It is essential that all owners and operators of vessels fitted with kill cords:

- Test kill cords regularly to ensure that the engine stops when the kill cord mechanism is operated.
- Make sure that the cord is in good condition.
- Always attach the cord securely to the driver, ideally before the engine is started, but certainly before the boat is put in gear.
- Stop the engine before transferring the kill cord to another driver.

See [Local Notice to Mariners No. 21 of 2024 - Use of Kill Cords On-Board Powered Craft](#) for full information.

4. Don't drink and go boating

The Royal Yachting Association (RYA) and the British Ports Association (BPA) fully support the Government in raising alcohol awareness and highlighting the dangers of drinking and boating. Although many recreational users enjoy boating responsibly, unfortunately, the issue of drinking in the marine environment has contributed to incidents around the UK coast, including at Cowes. **The message is clear - don't mix alcohol and boating.**

The RYA encourages all boaters to behave responsibly and to understand how alcohol can affect their safety and the safety of others. Put simply, alcohol distorts your perception of risk and your own abilities; it affects your balance, impairs your judgement, and slows your reactions.

Cowes Harbour General Direction [3.6. Navigating whilst under influence of Drink or Drugs](#) contains the local rule on alcohol and boating, which is:

- No person shall navigate or attempt to navigate a vessel when unfit by reason of drink or drugs.

5. CCTV coverage in Cowes Harbour

CHC uses harbour-wide CCTV to improve the safety management and security of our harbour to provide:

- Enhanced safety and security for harbour users
- 24/7 CCTV coverage to supplement CHC's Harbour Patrol Capability
- Evidence to enforce and/or prosecute under the Cowes Harbour General Directions.

See also [Local Notice to Mariners No. 09 of 2025 - Use of CCTV and Video Images for Safety and Security](#).

This Local Notice to Mariners shall remain in force until further notice.

Jon Kidd

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2 January 2025

Owners, Agents, Charterers, Marinas, Yacht Clubs and Recreational Sailing Organisations should ensure that the contents of this Notice are made known to the masters or persons in charge of their vessels or craft.