



LOCAL NOTICE TO MARINERS No. 62(T) of 2025

Update to Cowes Harbour General Directions

Notice is hereby given that the Cowes Harbour General Directions have been updated. In accordance with the Cowes Harbour Acts 1847 – 2012, the following General Directions have been approved by the statutory consultees, the Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee and the Board of Cowes Harbour Commission.

Non-routine towing

In order to reduce the risks associated with non-routine towing operations, to better comply with the Port Marine Safety Code in terms of regulating marine craft and to have awareness of these acts within the harbour, the following General Direction has been brought in for 'non-routine towing':

3.20 - Towing of vessels – *Other than in an emergency, any vessel engaged in towing or pushing another, where the aggregate length exceeds 20m or the beam exceeds 12.5m, is required to gain authorisation from the Harbour Master (or deputies) in writing, before the commencement of the act of towage. This may require the production of a towage plan, risk assessment and method statement.*

*For acts of emergency towing, where the aggregate length exceeds 20m or the beam exceeds 12.5m, any vessel engaged in such activity shall make an 'All Ship's' call on VHF Channel 69 stating that; **they are engaged in emergency towing operations, their location and their destination.** The vessel engaged in emergency towing activity shall maintain a good listening watch on VHF Channel 69 for any concerned traffic.*

The length of tow is measured from the bow of the towing vessel to the stern of the last towed vessel.

We have contacted all the yacht clubs that may be involved in more regular towing directly on this topic.

Water Taxi Licencing

With events such as IOW Festival, we have an awareness that unlicensed boats, operated by unqualified skippers, may be plying trade as water taxis within our jurisdiction. It is difficult to police as many RIBs / motorboats bring guests to / from the Island, but by bringing in a CHC licencing process we would have full awareness of who is allowed to be on the water as a 'taxi'.

The following addition to General Direction 5.17, would serve to protect the operation and reputation of authorised taxi operators and also better meet with the requirements of the Port Marine Safety Code in terms of the regulation of marine craft. This new licencing system will provide our Patrol team with a clear idea of who is and is not licenced, they can address the issue on the water and educate those in breach of the General Directions.

5.17.4 *In addition to the provisions within General Direction 5.17 regarding appropriate licensing, no person (other than the Commissioners) shall operate, or offer a Vessel for use as a Harbour Water Taxi Service within the Harbour, unless they are expressly licensed to do so by the Commissioners. The grant of such licences is at the discretion of the Commissioners and on such terms as the Commissioners shall consider reasonably appropriate in accordance with the provisions of the HRO. A licence granted by the Commissioners must be operated only within the limits of the terms and conditions of such licence.*

This local notice to mariners will remain in force until 13 Feb 2026.

Capt. Jon Kidd

Harbour Master, Harbour Office, Town Quay, Cowes, Isle of Wight, PO31 7AS

Email: chc@cowes.co.uk Website: www.cowes.co.uk

13 November 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.