

Essential Safety

in Chichester Harbour

**An essential guide for the new
or less experienced mariner**



01243 512301

www.conservancy.co.uk

**Chichester
Harbour
Conservancy**

Enjoying Chichester Harbour in safety

Chichester Harbour is renowned as an excellent venue for enjoying boating. In common with all tidal waters, it can be a very hazardous environment for the unwary in the wrong conditions, or those in un-seaworthy vessels.



This information is produced for the new or less experienced mariner and aims to guide them away from difficulties as they build their knowledge and experience.





Wind

Forces 1-3 are light and suitable for beginners.

Force 4 larger waves begin to form; consider sheltered areas or returning.

Force 5 and above only suitable for experienced mariners.



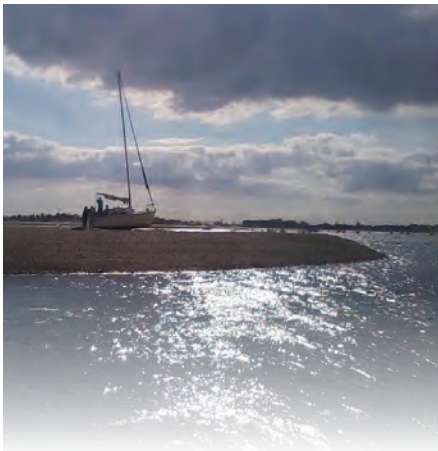
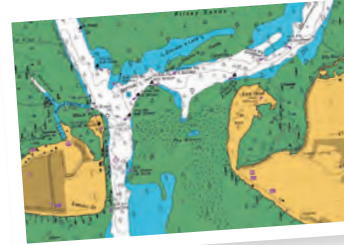
Tidal Streams

The tides follow a fortnightly cycle of neap tides followed by spring tides. The spring tides have lower low tides and higher high tides. This fact creates stronger currents. Be aware that on spring tides, particularly the ebb tide (when the tide is falling), currents can reach speeds of up to 6 knots at the Harbour entrance and many vessels are unable to make progress against it.



Depth and Navigation

Whilst the Harbour appears as a huge expanse of water at high-tide, depths vary greatly and it is reduced to a series of channels at low water. If you get caught out on the drying area on a falling tide, you will be there for some time.



The deep-water channels are marked by navigation buoys and generally have a depth of at least two metres at low water. Chichester Bar $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile south of the Harbour entrance however, is periodically dredged to only 1.5 metres below Chart Datum(CD); this depth reduces between dredges and can be as little as 0.7 metres below CD. Check Local Notices to Mariners for the very latest depths.

The Essentials: Chichester Harbour



Combination Effects

On their own the effects of wind, tide and depth are relatively predictable, but in combination they can make life very difficult for the mariner. Strong tides pushing a column of water over a shallow feature causes the water to become very turbulent. The turn of the tide can change a pleasant cruise into an unpleasant one as the friction of wind and tide in opposition create short choppy seas and a wet and bumpy ride for crews. Put these together, add a swell, and it can make for very dangerous seas, particularly in the exposed area of the Chichester Bar and across to the Harbour entrance.



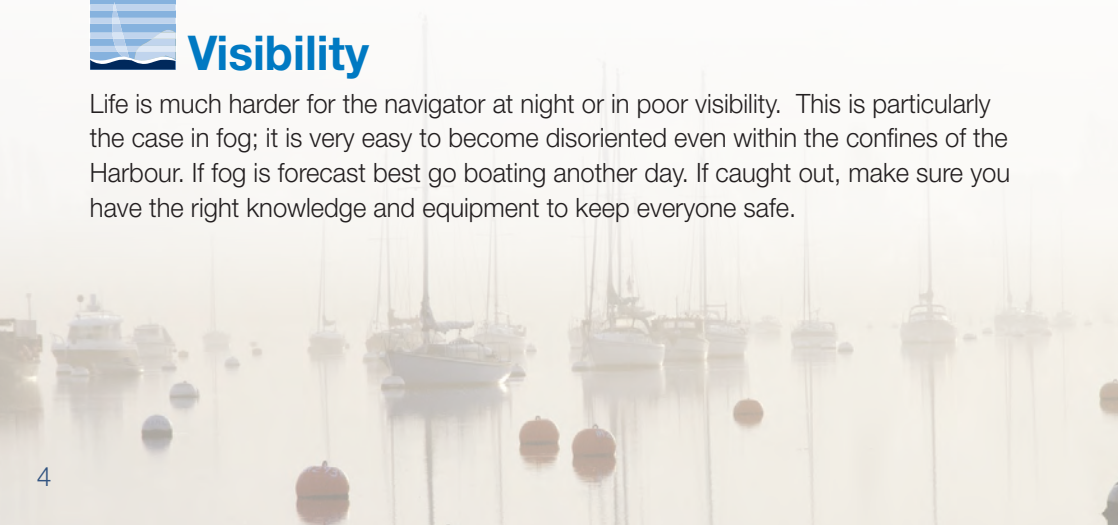
Chichester Bar

For the inexperienced this is no place to be even in relatively light winds. With a falling tide and strong winds from a southerly sector, a dangerous sea may be encountered. Experienced sailors in seaworthy vessels crossing the bar in these conditions are advised to do so three hours before and one hour after high water springs. In very strong winds, serious consideration should be given to postponing your trip.



Visibility

Life is much harder for the navigator at night or in poor visibility. This is particularly the case in fog; it is very easy to become disoriented even within the confines of the Harbour. If fog is forecast best go boating another day. If caught out, make sure you have the right knowledge and equipment to keep everyone safe.

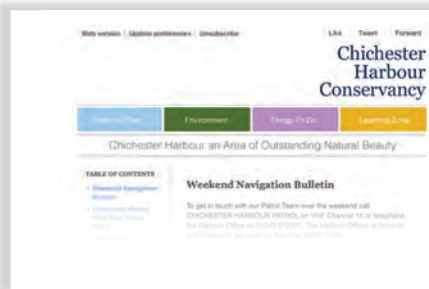




Passage Planning

Passage planning is crucial to avoid being caught in the wrong place at the wrong time and is in fact a requirement under the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS). Be familiar with your GPS and have a chart and tide tables on board too. Take a look and understand the navigational advice in the *Chichester Harbour News & Guide*.

Sign up on www.conservancy.co.uk for our *Weekend Navigation Bulletin*. It is a single source of important information that includes details of the racing activities that may affect your trip. It also has simple links to weather forecasts and real time wind and tide conditions.



Keep updated with Local Notice to Mariners on the website too. These will give you the latest advice on any navigational issues in the Harbour.

For further safety advice see Safety for Life at Sea (SOLAS) chapter V regulations for Pleasure Craft available from www.gov.uk/government/publications/solas-regulations-for-pleasure-boat-users and Chichester Harbour Local Notice to Mariners published and in the *Chichester Harbour News & Guide*.



Small Boat Safety

Beware of overloading small vessels as they can quickly become unstable especially if the load is unbalanced. Tragically there have been a number of deaths in harbours caused by tenders sinking in this way, and still more near misses.

- ✓ Wear a lifejacket; this simple measure has saved many lives.
- ✓ Always use your kill cord on your engine.
- ✓ Sea, weather and tide conditions must be suitable for your trip. If you're unsure do not risk it.
- ✓ Carry a means to summons assistance, preferably a VHF radio.
- ✓ Make sure you can be seen at night – carry a torch or white lantern.





Rules of the Road

With hundreds of vessels using the Harbour on busy days, it is essential that mariners have a working knowledge of the collision regulations. Key rules are detailed in the leaflet *Rules of the Road* produced by Chichester Harbour Conservancy which is available online or at the Harbour Office.



The collision regulations also apply when you meet racing vessels in the harbour; the leaflet *Sailing and Powerboating in Harmony* offers further guidance. Both documents are available on www.conservancy.co.uk or can be obtained from the Harbour Office and the Harbour Patrol.



Training



Appropriate training will greatly enhance your competence, safety and enjoyment of your sport. See www.rya.org.uk for advice on training courses. A good training course will help increase your enjoyment of your sport.



Warnings in Chichester Harbour

Watch your speed and wash

Harbour users risk a £2,500 fine if they create 'undue wash', even if keeping to the speed limit. The speed limit for power craft is 8 knots. So keep out of trouble and avoid annoyance by slowing down enough to reduce wash and noise to a minimum when passing other boats especially when passing through moorings.



Sewage and Oil

Do not pump sewage or oily bilge water into harbour waters. You could be liable of a fine of up to £50,000 for discharging oil in the Harbour. There is a list of oil disposal and sewage pump-out sites on the Conservancy website www.conservancy.co.uk



No Waterskiing or Kitesurfing

Waterskiing, kitesurfing, wakeboarding and similar activities are not permitted in Chichester Harbour.

Guidance Notes:

Etiquette in the Fairways

- Keep to the right hand side of the fairway and remember that large vessels moving at slow speed may need extra room.
- Avoid weaving between lines of moorings.
- Only overtake in a mooring fairway when there is no oncoming traffic – be aware of you wash.

Harbour Dues

All vessels using Chichester Harbour must pay harbour dues. You will receive a self-adhesive plaque which must be displayed on the port quarter. The plaque has a unique reference number so the Harbour Patrol can quickly track the boat back to you in case of emergency.



Reporting Incidents

If you see a breach of the byelaws, a collision, someone needing assistance, dangerous navigation, to report a theft or see a suspicious incident, let the Harbour Patrol know on **VHF Channel 14 – call sign ‘Chichester Harbour Patrol’**.

You can also complete an incident report online at www.conservancy.co.uk or call the Harbour Office on **01243 512301**.

Mooring and Anchoring

- Keep the fairways clear by anchoring outside the main navigable channels, particularly near the Harbour entrance.
- Don't anchor in mooring areas; you'll risk losing your anchor as well as colliding with moored or moving boats.
- Anchor well away from navigation or racing marks, or withies; on no account tie up to them! That would make navigation difficult for others and you'd risk being a centre of attraction for a dinghy race.
- When anchored, always leave someone on board if anchored in the Harbour, the tide may turn and a dragging anchor could result in damage or total loss of your boat.
- Anchor in sufficient water to allow for tidal change.
- Consider the rise of the tide when calculating how much anchor chain to use.
- Never leave your boat unattended on someone else's mooring.

Rubbish

Take your rubbish ashore. There are disposal and recycling facilities sites at all marinas and most landing sites in the Harbour. A copy of the *Chichester Harbour Port Waste Management Plan* is available on www.conservancy.co.uk



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Photographs courtesy of: David Steer, Matt Simmons, Peter Ayling, Paul Adams, Duncan Paterson, Peter Arnold, Andrew Filipinski, Christine Fitton and Chichester Harbour Conservancy

For more Information visit www.conservancy.co.uk or call 01243 512301. See the latest issue of *Chichester Harbour News & Guide* for information on Chichester Harbour, available from the Harbour Office, sailing clubs and marinas.

For everything you need to know about boating see www.rya.org.uk



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