



# COWES HARBOUR COMMISSION

## Essential Safety Information for Boat Users at Cowes

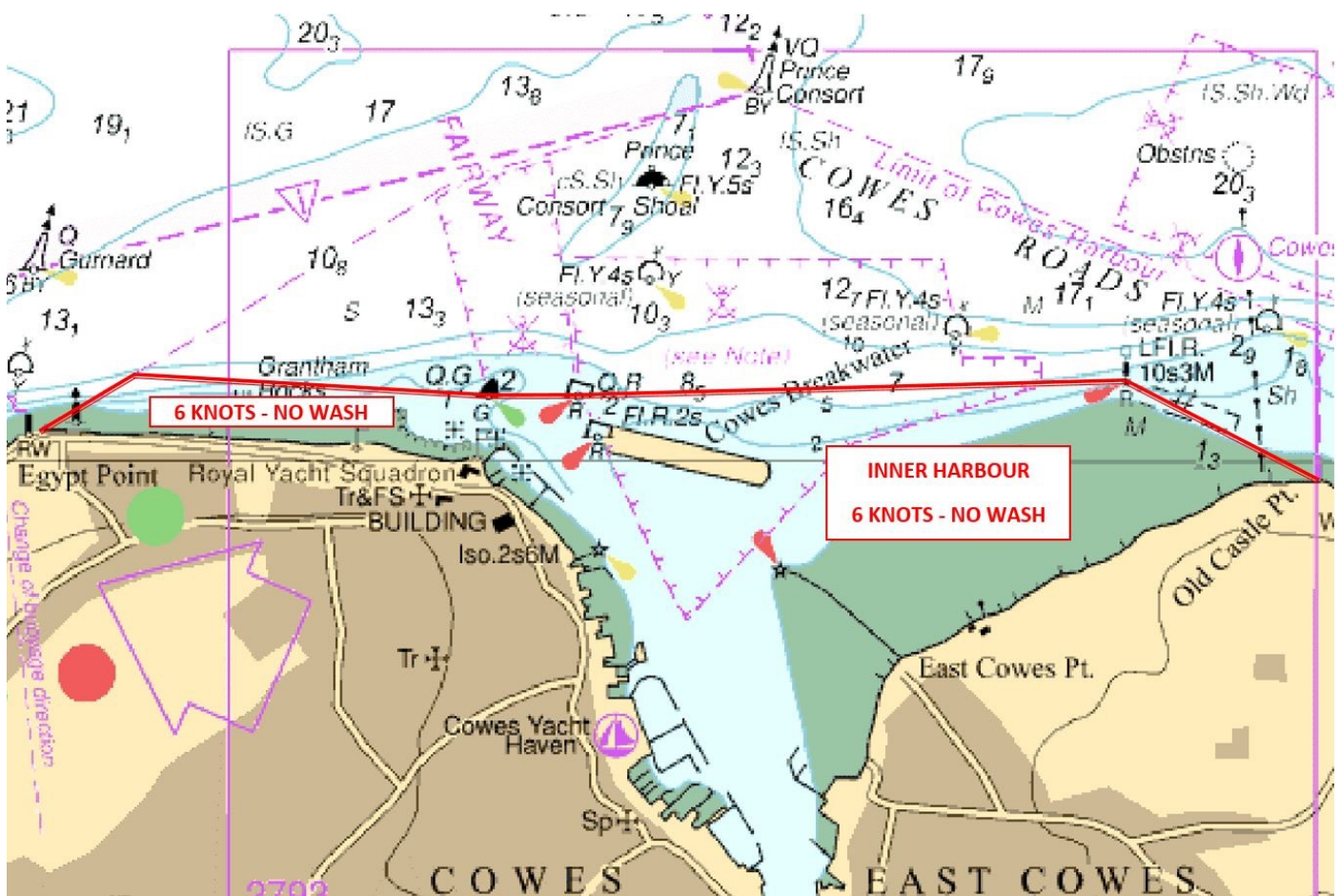
Cowes Harbour Commission's number one priority and responsibility is to maintain a safe harbour for all. Equally, it is the responsibility of all boat owners, agents, charterers, marinas, yacht clubs and sailing organisations to ensure that the Cowes Harbour General Directions and Local Notices to Mariners are made known to the masters or persons in charge of their vessels or craft.

Here in Cowes it is set to be an exciting week with three major events about to take place, The King's Cup (8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> Aug.), SailGP Cowes (8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> Aug.) and Cowes Week (10<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Aug.). At this time, it is important to highlight to harbour users the **4 top safety tips** to ensure you stay safe on the water and don't cause a danger to other vessels, property, or persons, including families with children on the beaches, particularly along Prince's Green in Cowes where swimming is popular:

1. **Inner Harbour speed limit 6 knots – no wash.**
2. **Wear a lifejacket.**
3. **Wear a kill cord on-board powered craft.**
4. **Don't drink and go boating.**

### Inner Harbour speed limit 6 knots – no wash

Cowes is one of the busiest leisure ports in the UK and in this busy marine environment it is essential that harbour users respect the regulations on speed and wash in Cowes Harbour and know where these rules apply. The **red line** on *Figure 1* below indicates the northern boundary of the Inner Harbour and the speed limit of 6 knots with no wash.



**Figure 1:** Red line indicates northern boundary of the Inner Harbour and speed limit of 6 knots - no wash

Cowes Inner Harbour rules on speed and wash - key points:

- The speed limit in the Inner Harbour is **6 knots through the water**.
- The 6 knot speed limit applies **in the Inner Harbour** at Cowes and **within 100 metres of the Mean High Water Mark** west and east of the harbour entrance **as far as Egypt Point and Old Castle Point**.
- **Navigate with care and caution** and **keep a good lookout** all around for other vessels and for swimmers in the water off the beach at Prince's Green in Cowes.
- **Do not create wash** in any part of the Inner Harbour and within 100 metres of the shore from Egypt Point to Old Castle Point.
- Cowes Harbour Commission's emphasis is on **education** in the first instance, but CHC will, if required, take **enforcement action**.

See also [Local Notice to Mariners No. 14 of 2018 - Speed Limit and Wash in Cowes](#) for more information.

### **Wear a lifejacket**

Lifejackets are one of the most necessary pieces of equipment to have when enjoying boating or watersports. The [RNLI](#) 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.

Further information can be found at: [rnli.org/safety/lifejackets](http://rnli.org/safety/lifejackets) and [completeguide.rnli.org/lifejackets](http://completeguide.rnli.org/lifejackets).

### **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 also [Local Notice to Mariners No. 12 of 2016 - Use of Kill Cords On-Board Powered Craft](#) for more information.

### **Don't drink and go boating**

Last month, the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) and the British Ports Association (BPA) joined forces to welcome the Government's announcement of an alcohol awareness campaign to highlight 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 Department for Transport's campaign warns about the risks of drinking afloat and **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.

### **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 and 24/7 CCTV coverage to supplement CHC's Harbour Patrols.
- Evidence to enforce and/or prosecute under the Cowes Harbour General Directions.

See also [Local Notice to Mariners No. 19 of 2017 - Use of CCTV and Video Images for Safety and Security](#).