



Harwich Haven Authority

Yachting Guide to Harwich Harbour and its Rivers 2008

Welcome

The Harwich Harbour and its adjacent rivers is one of the United Kingdom's busiest port areas; over 357 million gross tons of shipping entered the Haven ports in 1999. Despite this commercial activity the Harbour and the delightful estuaries of the River Stour and River Orwell provide excellent sailing and recreational activities for large numbers of visiting or home-based pleasure craft. The purpose of the brochure is to welcome leisure sailors to the Haven and provide a nucleus of useful information which we hope will add to your safety and enjoyment while boating in this area.

VHF Radio

The Harbour Operations frequency, Channel 71, is extremely busy with commercial shipping. The radio call sign is "HARWICH VTS".

Yachts are requested not to use this Port Operations Channel, except in an emergency, although it is beneficial to monitor this frequency in order to obtain information on commercial vessel movements.

Reporting

All vessels of more than 50 GT entering or leaving the seaward approaches to Harwich Harbour by the Approach Channel must report by VHF Channel 71 to Harwich VTS when passing the appropriate reporting points indicated on Admiralty charts and report to Ipswich Port Radio Channel 68 on entering the River Orwell.

Navigational Safety

The principal deep-water navigational channels within Harwich Harbour are well marked by buoys and lights. These channels are in constant use by large deep-drafted vessels. Yachtsmen are advised to keep well clear whenever possible and use the recommended yacht tracks. When main channels have to be crossed this should be done as nearly as practicable at right angles. **Avoid crossing the bows of on-coming commercial traffic.** Larger container ships, in particular, have very restricted visibility for quite a distance ahead when carrying a deck cargo of containers. (You may be able to see her clearly, but can she see you?). Most yachtsmen take a justifiable pride in the responsible way they conduct themselves. Part of this is a realisation that hindering the passage of large commercial vessels is not only bad manners, but downright dangerous to themselves and their crews. Yachtsmen are particularly requested to remind themselves and observe the content and spirit of Rules 9(b) and (d), 18(b)(ii) and 18(d)(I) of the Collision Regulations and also the Harwich Haven Authority Byelaws.

Anchoring

Leisure vessels should avoid anchoring within, or near to, navigational channels and commercial anchorages. Where necessary to do so, they should comply with the requirements of Collision Regulation rule 30 and exercise heightened navigational awareness.

International Collision Regulations

Rule 9(b) A vessel of less than 20m in length or sailing vessel shall not impede the passage of a vessel which can safely navigate only within a narrow channel or fairway.

Rule 9(d) A vessel shall not cross a narrow channel or fairway if such crossing impedes the passage of a vessel which can safely navigate only within such channel or fairway. The latter vessel may use the sound signal prescribed in Rule 34(d) if in doubt as to the intention of the crossing vessel.

Rule 18(b) A sailing vessel underway shall keep out of the way of:

- (i) a vessel not under command;
- (ii) a vessel restricted in her ability to manoeuvre;
- (iii) a vessel engaged in fishing.

Rule 18(d)(i) Any vessel other than a vessel not under command or a vessel restricted in her ability to manoeuvre shall, if the circumstances of the case admit, avoid impeding the safe passage of a vessel constrained by her draft, exhibiting the signals in Rule 28.

Rule 30(a) A vessel at anchor shall exhibit where it can best be seen:

- (i) in the fore part, an all round white light or one ball;
- (ii) at or near the stern and at a lower level than the light prescribed in sub-paragraph (i), an all round white light.

Rule 30(b) A vessel of less than 50 metres in length may exhibit an all round white light where it can best be seen instead of the lights prescribed in paragraph (a) of this rule.

General Directions for Navigation

No. 10 Harwich Traffic System

10(b)(i) The Master of every small vessel shall not impede the passage of a vessel, which can safely navigate only within the Harwich Traffic System.

10(b)(xi) The Master of every small vessel shall not navigate or make use of the anchorages, Harwich Traffic System or approaches to wharves, piers and jetties in such a way as to cause obstruction or impede regulated vessels

10(b)(xiii) The Master of every small vessel shall maintain a minimum distance of 100 metres from any vessel berthed alongside or at anchor and engaged in loading or discharging dangerous substances as indicated by that vessel displaying an all round red light by night or a red flag by day in accordance with the Dangerous Substances in the Harbour Area Regulations 1987.

10(e)(i) The Master of every small vessel shall make use of the Recommended Track for Yachts and channel crossing positions whenever practicable when transiting the Authority's area.

Harbour Patrol

The Harwich Haven Authority maintains a regular patrol of the Haven throughout the year. In addition, during the summer months weekends, between the hours of 0800 to 1800, these patrols are maintained to provide assistance and advice to yachtsmen, and to ensure that the main channel is kept clear for the transit of commercial shipping. The weekend Harbour Patrol launch maintains a listening watch on VHF Channel 71. The crew will be pleased to offer advice and information on the Harbour and its approaches.

FOG Recommended procedure for small craft in visibility of five cables or less.

- (i) All craft with VHF radio maintain a listening watch on Channel 71.
- (ii) Provided you are aware of your position and you intend staying on the yacht track, just monitor the commercial activity in Harwich Harbour as reported on Channel 71, or Channel 68 in the River Orwell.
- (iii) If you are uncertain of your position, it may be prudent to anchor well clear of the shipping channel until visibility improves. Do not anchor close to the channel buoy.
- (iv) If you do not have radar and intend crossing any shipping lane, and you are in serious doubts as to the commercial movements, call Harwich VTS on Channel 71, or Ipswich Port Radio Channel 68 whilst in the River Orwell. In summer time, or at times of peak commercial activity, you will probably be directed to a working channel.
- (v) If you pass a craft without radio which asks you for guidance, you should advise Harwich Harbour Radio of the details. If the craft is going in your direction it is hoped that you will give every support in the spirit of co-operation that should prevail at these times.

Harwich VTS cannot undertake control of small craft in reduced visibility but the operators will give whatever assistance is possible at the time.

If you are not visible on radar you will be beyond shore assistance. Always carry a radar reflector, flares and suitable emergency equipment.

Remember your obligation under the prevention of collision regulations, particularly the ability to make an efficient sound signal.

Water-skiing, Jet-skiing & Sail-boarding, etc

These activities are not permitted in or near any navigational channel used by commercial vessels. Power craft are only permitted within the designated areas shown on this chartlet. Sail-boarding is not permitted in or near mooring areas or any beaches where danger could be caused to swimmers. Local Authority constraints also apply to launching and recovery at certain shore locations.

Speed Limits

Other than within the specified areas referred to above, the speed limit for power boats, cruisers, or yachts is 8 knots within Harwich Harbour, the River Stour and the Walton Backwaters. The limit is 6 knots within the River Orwell. The need to avoid wash damage to the banks of the River Orwell is stressed. Further information is contained within the relevant Harwich Haven Authority or Ipswich Port Authority Byelaws.

Prevention of Pollution by Garbage Regulations (1993)

The North Sea, including its estuaries and rivers, is designated a Special Area under Annex 5 of **MARPOL**. Within this area the disposal of all garbage is **STRICTLY PROHIBITED**. Food waste may only be put overboard outside the 12 mile limit in compliance with the Regulations, otherwise all garbage must be retained on board until it can be deposited on shore in approved receptacles.

Dangerous substances in Harbour Areas Regulations (1987)

A vessel alongside displaying an all-round red light by night or a red flag by day indicates that she is carrying dangerous substances. Under these Regulations an exclusion zone of up to 200m is to be enforced around any vessel loading or discharging explosives. Tankers alongside the oil jetties at Harwich, Felixstowe and Ipswich should also be given a wide berth.

Sound Signals Used by Vessels in the Area

One prolonged blast	—————	I am leaving a dock, quay or anchorage
One short blast	•	I am altering my course to starboard
Two short blasts	••	I am altering my course to port
Three short blasts	•••	I am operating astern propulsion
At least five short blasts	•••••	I am uncertain of your intentions or actions
Four short blasts followed by one short blast	•••••	I am turning short round to starboard
Four short blasts followed by two short blasts	••••••••	I am turning short round to port

