

Solent Pilotage

Introduction

Welcome to Solent Pilotage. The Solent is one of the busiest waterways in Europe with a mix of commercial, recreational and military traffic. It is also a complex tapestry of maritime jurisdictions and responsibilities that are a result of history. The high density of mixed traffic in the Solent has implications for safety that have long been recognized by the harbour authorities in the area with the result that a number of safety management groups have been established. One recommendation from these groups has been this guide to the pilotage responsibilities and maritime jurisdictions of each Pilotage authority. It is designed to be a one-stop shop for busy mariners requiring pilotage in the Solent and to provide other mariners with an appreciation of the regulations and responsibilities of each authority.

The Solent includes five main ports, four of which (ABP Southampton, Portsmouth International Port, Langstone Harbour and Cowes) are Competent Harbour Authorities (CHA) with their own pilotage directions. The fifth is the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth, controlled by the Queen's Harbour Master (QHM) in Portsmouth who has statutory responsibilities for both the waters inside Portsmouth Harbour and for 50 square miles of the Solent¹. QHM's statutory powers are extensive, including powers to close areas to non-military traffic and impose exclusion zones around vessels. Many of QHM's regulations have been issued as General Directions which should be checked on QHM's website. A diagram showing approximate boundaries for CHAs and the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth can be found below.

Summary of Pilotage Requirements

In broad terms, agreement between the harbour authorities means that vessels requiring pilotage to transit between the outer reaches of the Solent and a particular port are to follow the pilotage direction for that port. Some nuances apply and the relevant direction should be consulted before passage. The table below gives the basic requirement/details of each CHA.

VTS

Two of the harbour authorities in the area, ABP Southampton and the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth (QHM Portsmouth), operate vessel traffic management services. ABP Southampton provides the VTS service for the majority of the Central and Eastern Solent despite the majority of the water coming under the statutory responsibility of QHM Portsmouth. QHM provides a VTS service for Portsmouth Harbour North of a line joining Horse Sand Fort, Outer Spit Buoy and Fort Gilkicker Light. The VTS services are linked with constant liaison maintained between the two authorities. QHM operates on VHF channel 11 and Southampton VTS operates on VHF channel 12.

Other References

All the necessary details for day-to-day operation of the Solent can be found on the relevant charts and in the appropriate Pilot and Admiralty List of Radio Signals. In addition, both Southampton and QHM issue Local Notices to Mariners for special

¹ The exact boundaries can be found in the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth Order2005 available on the QHM Portsmouth website at: www.qhm.mod.uk/portsmouth/

events in the Solent. The regulations for QHM's area can be found in the Dockyard Port Regulation Act of 1865 and the Dockyard Port or Portsmouth Order 2005, both of which can be found on the QHM website (See note 1).

Pilotage Exemption Certificates

In addition to the exemptions mentioned in the table below, each CHA may issue Pilotage Exemption Certificates (PEC). Regulations pertaining to PECs for each port can be found in the relevant directions.

Summary of Solent Pilotage Directions

CHA	Minimum length of vessel requiring compulsory pilotage	Exemptions	Contact details
ABP Southampton	<p>Vessels of 61m or more LOA. Vessels 20m or more LOA carrying more than 12 passengers</p> <p>The length of a tug and tow is interpreted as the distance from the forward end of the towing vessel to the stern of the last vessel towed.</p>	<p>HM Ships, MoD owned/operated ships, Naval Vessels of Commonwealth countries, Foreign Naval vessels.</p>	<p>VTs Centre: Phone - +44(0)23 8060 8208 Fax No - +44(0)23 8023 2991</p>
Portsmouth International Port	<p>Vessels of 48m or more LOA. Vessels 20m or more LOA carrying more than 12 passengers.</p>	<p>A vessel in transit through the Solent (see directions for more details). A vessel in Government service except when berthing or unberthing an any non-Ministry of Defence facility. A vessel with an Admiralty Pilot embarked while proceeding to or from any Ministry of Defence facility (see directions for more details). A vessel less than 150m LOA proceeding to or from the central Solent to an anchorage in St Helen's Roads (see directions for more details). A vessel of overall length not greater than 150m while to the South of a line joining Nettlesome Point to the Warner Buoy, then the Cambrian Wreck Buoy then North to the shoreline (see directions for more details).</p>	<p>Telex – 94078464 Phone - +44(0)23 9229 7395 Fax - +44(0)23 9275 3029 Email – pilotseta@portsmouth-port.co.uk</p>

Summary of Solent Pilotage Directions

<p>Cowes</p>	<p>Vessels of 48m or more LOA. Passenger ferries and passenger vessels 20m or more LOA carrying more than 12 passengers. Vessels or combination of vessels with a beam of more than 15m.</p> <p>The length of a tug and tow is interpreted as the distance from the forward end of the towing vessel to the stern of the last vessel towed.</p>	<p>HM Ships, MOD owned vessels belonging to a foreign government, Passenger ferries and passenger vessels less than 20m in length, other vessels less than 48m in length.</p>	<p>Agent PD Port Services Phone – +44(0)19 83 292501 Email – pdiow@pdports.co.uk</p> <p>Harbour Commission Phone - +44(0)1983 293952 Email – chc@cowes.co.uk Web : www.cowesharbourcommission.co.uk</p>
<p>Langstone Harbour</p>	<p>Vessels of 48m or more LOA. Vessels 20m or more LOA carrying more than 12 passengers.</p>	<p>Vessels transiting the Southern area of Langstone Harbour South of the Langstone Fairway Buoy (See directions for details). Vessels going to anchorage in St Helen's Roads except vessels departing Langstone Harbour. Vessels carrying out dredging activity in a dredging area licensed by the Crown Estate South of the Langstone Fairway Pile. Vessels in Government service except when berthing or unberthing at any non-Ministry of Defence facility.</p>	<p>Harbour Office Phone - +44(0)23 9246 3419 Fax - +44(0)23 9246 7144 Email – harbourmaster@langstoneharbour.org.uk</p>

Maritime Boundaries in the Solent

