

Local Notice to Mariners

Number 03 of 2025

01/01/2025

Safe speed in Southampton Water

1. Mariners are hereby reminded of the requirement to proceed at a safe speed at all times, as defined in the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (IRPCS) 1972 (as amended). Rule 6 of which states that:

Every vessel shall at all times proceed at a safe speed so that she can take proper and effective action to avoid a collision and be stopped within a distance appropriate to the prevailing circumstances and conditions.

In determining a safe speed the following factors shall be among those taken in to account:

- a. *By all vessels:*
 - i. *the state of visibility;*
 - ii. *the traffic density including concentrations of fishing vessels or any other vessels;*
 - iii. *the manoeuvrability of the vessel with special reference to stopping distance and turning ability in the prevailing conditions;*
 - iv. *at night the presence of background light such as from shore lights or from back scatter of her own lights;*
 - v. *the state of wind, sea and current, and the proximity of navigational hazards;*
 - vi. *the draught in relation to the available depth of water.*

- b. *(b) Additionally, by vessels with operational radar:-*
 - i. *the characteristics, efficiency and limitations of the radar equipment;*
 - ii. *any constraints imposed by the radar range scale in use;*
 - iii. *the effect on radar detection of the sea state, weather and other sources of interference;*
 - iv. *the possibility that small vessels, ice and other floating objects, may not be detected by radar at an adequate range;*
 - v. *the number, location and movement of vessels detected by radar;*
 - vi. *the more exact assessment of the visibility that may be possible when radar is used to determine the range of vessels or objects in the vicinity.*

2. In addition, the Southampton Harbour Byelaws 2003 provide that:

*7.(1) No person shall navigate a vessel or operate a personal watercraft –
(a) without due care and caution or at a speed or in a manner which, having regard to all the circumstances at the time, including weather conditions and the type condition and use of other vessels underway, berthed or moored, or which might reasonably be expected to be underway, berthed or moored, endangers the safety of, or causes injury to any person, any other vessel, buoy, moorings, banks of the port or any other property.*

3. ABP Southampton considers that, in the area of Southampton Water that lies to the north west of an imaginary line between Calshot Castle and Solent Breezes Holiday Park and to the south of an imaginary line between Hythe Pier through the Western Shelf buoy to the Weston shore, navigating a vessel or personal watercraft (as defined in the Southampton Harbour Byelaws 2003) at a speed in

excess of 40 knots through the water is, ordinarily, incompatible with the requirements and intent of both IRPCS Rule 6 and Byelaw 7.(1).

The only exception being where the person in charge of the vessel has conducted an appropriate risk assessment and given a minimum 24 hours prior notice of the intended operation by email to Southampton VTS SouthamptonVTS@abports.co.uk and to the Southampton Harbour Master's Office HMSouthampton@abports.co.uk who may request to review the risk assessment and/or require additional control measures to be in place before the operation commences.

4. Where any vessel is navigated at an unsafe speed contrary to IRPCS Rule 6, her owner, her master and any person responsible for the conduct of the vessel at the material time are liable to be prosecuted under the relevant provisions of UK merchant shipping legislation.

5. Where a person navigates or operates a vessel contrary to Byelaw 7(1), they will be liable to be prosecuted under the relevant provisions of ABP Southampton's special legislation.

6. Mariners are further reminded that ABP Southampton Byelaw 52.(1) provides that:-

No person shall engage or take part in water skiing, aquaplaning, paragliding, power boat racing, para-kiting or parachute towing or any similar activity, except with the written permission of the Harbour Master given either specifically or generally and only in such areas as may be designated by the Harbour Master and in accordance with such reasonable conditions as the Harbour Master may impose.

The content of this notice will be reviewed on an annual basis.

**Steven Masters,
Harbour Master**