

PORT OF BOSTON

ANNUAL STANDING LOCAL NOTICE TO MARINERS

IN FORCE 1/1/2025

NOTE: Boston Barrier & flood protection works will continue throughout 2025 with the Wet Dock Closure due in Q4. Marine construction, surveying and dredging vessels will be present. See Notices No.22 and 23 for further details. Local Notice to Mariners will be issued as and when required.

No1: Collision Regulations and SOLAS

All Mariners are reminded that they should at all times comply with the rules contained within SOLAS Regulations including the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea (1972) (COLREGs).

Special Directions* issued by the Harbour Master, his Assistant or Deputy will be issued if required and these Directions may overrule the COLREGs. Owners and operators of any vessel that is covered by the COLREGs are reminded that contravention of these Regulations is a serious matter. Recent occurrences suggest that in some cases the person in charge of navigation is unaware of these Regulations particularly those relating to vessels constrained in narrow channels. It is pointed out that ignorance of the law is no defence and prosecution under both the Boston Harbour Act and the COLREGs will follow any serious contravention.

*Under Section 52 of the Harbours Docks and Piers Clauses Act 1847, The Harbour Master, Assistants, or his Deputy may give Special Directions to any vessel. These may be made verbally or in writing depending upon the circumstances of the case.

No 2: Contact Details

Mariners navigating the river Witham (The Haven) seawards of Grand Sluice and extending to the outer limits of the Port of Boston Jurisdiction Area are to monitor VHF Channel 12. The Port Control Office at Boston, callsign 'Boston Port Control' can provide commercial traffic forecasts. Port Control Office contact numbers are 01205 362328 or 07966 244341, email portcontrol@portofboston.co.uk The office is not manned 24 hours a day but **only** at tide times when commercial shipping movements are planned to occur. Details outside these hours may be obtained from the 24-hour Port of Boston telephone number, 01205 365571.

No 3: Pre-Arrival Documentation and Defects Advice

Vessels should, wherever possible, provide 24 hours' notice of arrival to their ships agents with a copy sent to portcontrol@portofboston.co.uk. Vessels are required to comply with the Consolidated European Reporting System (CERS3). Any ship defects should be advised to Port Control prior to arrival either directly or via the ship's agents.

No 4: Insurance

All owners of vessels operating in the tidal waters should have adequate insurance and be fully aware of the consequences of not holding such insurance particularly in the event of damage to third party assets, Harbour Authority costs or environmental clean-up costs.

Persons in charge of inland waterway vessels, or other vessels not normally used in tidal rivers, should be aware of the dangers of entering tidal waters. Any person in charge of a vessel should confirm they have adequate insurance whilst in tidal waters.

Mariners should ensure that their insurance policy covers them for navigation at Sea or in Categorised Waters otherwise their policies could be null and void.

No 5: Anchoring and Sub Sea Cables

The Port of Boston designated anchorage area is situated in the seaward approaches to the Freeman Channel. It is clearly marked on Navigation Charts 108 and 1200. The eastern extremity of the anchorage area is marked by B1 and B2 Navigation Aids both of which are approximately 500m from the closest subsea cable. Mariners are advised that certain sections of these offshore cables are not at the expected depth of burial and may be exposed. Care should be taken not to anchor, trawl or carry out and seabed work close to these cables.

Information on the location of all UK offshore energy cables can be found on the KIS-ORCA website. This includes locations and safety related information as well as emergency procedures. Any suspected contact with a cable should be reported to the Harbour Master.

Submarine power cables cross the Haven upriver of the Port that Mariners should be aware of. Two in the location of the swing bridge and one between Tower Street and the tower of St Botolph's Church. The cable at St Botolph's Church is bedded down with concrete filled sandbags. Anchoring should be avoided in both areas.

No 6: Pilotage

Pilotage is compulsory for vessels over 30m LOA and for tug and tows with a combined length of over 30m. Pilots should be ordered through ships agents, giving 24 hours' notice wherever possible. Pilot boarding areas are at the Eastern End of the Freeman Channel (non-compulsory) or close to Number 9 Buoy (compulsory).

The Harbour Master reserves the right to require any vessel even if less than 30m LOA, within the compulsory pilotage area, to carry a Pilot or Pilots if he considers the circumstances require on the grounds of safety of navigation, life, property or the environment.

Masters are reminded of their legal obligations under the **UK Pilotage Act 1987**, which governs the use of pilotage services in designated waters. Non-compliance with the provisions of this Act can have serious consequences, including legal, financial, and operational repercussions.

The safety of navigation in Harbour waters is a shared responsibility. The adherence to the UK Pilotage Act not only ensures compliance but also safeguards lives, property, and the environment. Masters are duty bound under Section 15(3) to notify the Competent Harbour Authority if they intend to take the conduct of a vessel from a Pilot whilst within a compulsory pilotage area. Advice can be obtained from the Harbour Master should further clarification be required.

No 7: NAABSA Berths

The riverside commercial berths are deemed to be Not Always Afloat But Safely Aground (NAABSA) Berths. This means that vessels will take the ground and sit on a suitable bed which provides a level berth and one that will provide even support along the vessels hull. During 2025 and prior to the wet dock closing, 3 riverside NAABSA berths will be prepared and available for use when the wet dock temporarily closes. The Port of Boston will ensure regular surveys of the commercially used riverside berths are carried out, which will include visual and bathymetric surveys. Dredging or remedial works will be carried out on NAABSA berths as and when considered necessary by the Harbour Authority. Vessel owners and charterers should ensure that any vessel fixed for these berths are suitable for drying out and taking the bottom. Masters of vessels should

be aware of the need of extra moorings and the requirement to tend their moorings throughout the tidal cycle especially as the vessel takes the bottom. Although the Harbour Authority will not instruct Masters how to moor their vessel, it strongly recommends using additional mooring ropes up to 4 and 2 each end. On soft mud berths there may be occasions when vessels may stick in the mud and will “pop” up as the tide rises, it is important that watertight doors and openings are kept closed and secured at all times vessels are moored at NAABSA Berths. Limited space is available for landing gangways and with the large rise and fall of the tide, Masters must ensure an adequate gangway watch is maintained.

No 8: Non Port of Boston Berths

Any berths upriver of the Swing Bridge and all non-commercial riverside berths downriver of the swing bridge are not checked by the Harbour Authority for suitability for small craft. Owners / skippers of such craft, including pleasure boats and fishing boats should ensure that any berth they intend to occupy is suitable for purpose. It should be noted that the Port of Boston do not own, operate or have any responsibility for any berths mentioned above or the safe berthing and mooring of vessels which choose to use those berths.

No 9: Tidal Range and Speed of Water

On Spring Tides, tidal range in the river exceeds 7 metres. Mariners should exercise prudent seamanship when planning a passage and mooring or navigating in the confines of the tidal waters. At times of significant rainfall, fresh water is released without notice, from the Grand Sluice, South Forty Foot, Maud Foster and Hob Hole drains and other pumping stations along the length of the river. Such releases especially from Grand Sluice have the ability produce water speeds in excess of 6 knots and Mariners should take extreme care.

No 10: Changes in Depths

Mariners are warned that rapid changes in depths can occur in the approach channels with buoys being moved accordingly at short notice. Latest information on buoy positions and status of lights can be obtained from the Harbour Master office or via the Ports website.

No.11: Alcohol, Drugs & Fatigue

It is a criminal offence for professional persons in charge of navigation of a ship or having safety responsibilities onboard to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs or to be in contravention of the working hours directives leading to fatigue. The alcohol limit of 25 micrograms per 100 millilitres of breath or 50 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millimetres of blood is set at a lower level than the UK drink drive limit The Harbour Authority will inform the Police if they believe an infringement of this law has taken place. The Police will carry out breath and / or urine tests and if proved positive the vessel may be detained and appropriate action will be taken by the authorities. The Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 applies and as amended by The Merchant Shipping (Alcohol) (Prescribed Limits Amendment) Regulations 2015

No.12: Disposal of Garbage

Mariners are reminded of the requirements of the Prevention of Pollution by Sewage and Garbage from Ships) Regulations 2020.

[MGN 631 \(M+F\) The merchant shipping \(prevention of pollution by sewage from ships\) regulations 2020. - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/mgn-631-m-f-the-merchant-shipping-prevention-of-pollution-by-sewage-from-ships-regulations-2020)

[MGN 632 \(M+F\) Amendment 1 The merchant shipping \(prevention of pollution by garbage from ships\) regulations 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/mgn-632-m-f-amendment-1-the-merchant-shipping-prevention-of-pollution-by-garbage-from-ships-regulations-2020)

NO WASTE to be disposed of in the river or in the Port of Boston Jurisdiction Area.

Reception facilities for commercial vessels garbage are provided by the Port of Boston on receipt of relevant fee. Port of Boston Waste Management Plan may be viewed at the Harbour Masters Office with prior arrangement of the Harbour Master. No waste should be left on the quay at any time otherwise a charge may be made to cover removal costs. Master or Owners of commercial vessels have the right to complain to the Harbour Authority regarding any perceived inadequacies in the waste reception facilities. Galley waste from all ships that have stored outside of the UK is considered (ICW) International Catering Waste and should be disposed of in the designated ICW skips. This waste should be bagged, and cable tied prior to placing in the skip.

No.13: Buoys, Beacons and Lights

The Port of Boston uses Rotationally Moulded Plastic Navigation Buoys These buoys are lighter than Trinity House steel buoys and require smaller ground tackle and is therefore more important that vessels **do not use these for mooring.**

The attention of mariners is drawn to the Merchant Shipping Act, 1995, Section 219. [Merchant Shipping Act 1995 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/219)

It is an offence, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse to:

intentionally or recklessly damage –

- a) any lighthouse or the lights exhibited in it, or
- b) any lightship, buoy or beacon
- c) to remove, cast adrift or sink any lightship, buoy or beacon; or
- d) to conceal or obscure any lighthouse, buoy or beacon;
- e) to make fast to, or
- f) to run afoul of,
any lightship, buoy or beacon.

A person who is guilty of an offence under this section shall, in addition to being liable for the expense of making good any damage so occasioned, be liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard table.

No.14: Speed Limit

Attention of Mariners is drawn to the speed limit within the Haven. This speed limit is not set by the Harbour Authority but advised by the Environment Agency. The Harbour Authority considers safe speed to be more important and relevant to shipping and may monitor the speed of vessels having regard to such **safe speed**. If the Harbour Authority considers that excessive speed is causing a hazard to navigation or a danger to, or embarrassing other vessels, or causing excessive wash or risk damaging the flood defences, it will take necessary action. See also Rule 6 of the COLREGs.

No15: Safe Navigational Watch / Stability

Attention is drawn to Marine Guidance Note MGN 313(F) concerning Keeping a Safe Navigational Watch on Fishing Vessels. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mgn-313-keeping-a-safe-navigational-watch-on-fishing-vessels>

The skipper of all vessels should ensure adequate freeboard and stability of the vessel at all times. It is recommended that all skippers of fishing boats undertake the non-statutory MCA stability course.

Attention is also drawn to Marine Guidance Note MGN 324(M+F) concerning the use of VHF radio and AIS. This notice concerns incidents that have occurred around the UK where the misuse of VHF radio has been a contributory factor. [MGN 324 \(M+F\) Amendment 2 navigation: watchkeeping safety – use of Very High Frequency \(VHF\) radio and Automatic Identification System \(AIS\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mgn-324-m-f-amendment-2-navigation-watchkeeping-safety-use-of-very-high-frequency-vhf-radio-and-automatic-identification-system-ais)

No.16: Interaction

Several cases of interaction have been experienced in the river. (Interaction occurs mostly between vessels of different sizes). Interaction has occurred on occasions when fishing, recreational and passenger vessels have attempted to pass commercial vessels usually at a time when the larger commercial vessel commences slowing down on their approach to the dock and riverside berths. There is a serious risk of interaction, sucking the smaller vessel into the larger vessel, turning the smaller vessel broadsides to the river and therefore causing risk of collision and capsizing. In all cases it is highly recommended that overtaking in the river is only acceptable after clear consultation and agreement between vessels.

No.17: Small Craft in Tidal Waters

Water seawards of New Cut are designated by the MCA as “at Sea”. Waters between Grand Sluice and inside the New Cut are category C waters, and waters contained within the dock basin are category B waters. All vessels navigating in Categorized Waters and “at Sea” are legally obliged to follow the COLREGs and SOLAS Regulations with particular attention to Chapter V.

Owners, Operators, Yacht Clubs, Marina Operators and persons in charge of pleasure and other small craft are warned that tidal waters seaward of Grand Sluice Lock can be hazardous.

Persons in charge of inland waterway vessels, or other vessels not normally used in tidal rivers, should be aware of the dangers of entering tidal waters. Occurrences and near misses have occurred in Port of Boston Jurisdiction Waters due to the inability of one vessel to communicate with another. It is a local requirement of the Port of Boston, that all vessels navigating within the Ports waters have adequate means of communications which will normally mean carrying a Marine Band VHF Radio capable of receiving and transmitting on VHF channel 12.

The Merchant Shipping (Watercraft) Order 2023 was introduced on 31st March 2023. The changes are designed to ensure that the owners, operators, and users of watercraft within all UK waters (including inland waters) can be held accountable for their actions and omissions. Powered watercraft are enjoyed by many people on a regular basis. They are, generally, used safely and with respect for the rights of other water users and wildlife. However, in a minority of cases, the way in which such craft are used can endanger both their users and others.

The Order creates obligations on users, operators, and owners of powered watercraft, as appropriate, to ensure they protect both themselves and other water users from harm. Any person may have responsibilities under one or more of these terms depending on circumstances. For example, the user or operator of a powered watercraft may also be the owner.

Under the new legislation, “watercraft” means any type of craft which:-

- (a) Is capable of moving under its own mechanical power
- (b) Is used, navigated, or situated wholly or partly in or on water, and
- (c) Is capable of being used to carry one or more persons.

More information and a detailed explanation of the new legislation can be found online - [MGN 684 \(M\) Safety of powered watercraft - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

No.18: Hazards, Trawling

Attention is drawn to Marine Guidance Note MGN 415(F) – Fishing Vessels: The Hazards Associated with Trawling, Including Beam Trawling and Scallop Dredging. [MGN 415 Fishing vessels: hazards trawling, including beam trawling and scallop dredging - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Skippers of fishing vessels engaged in trawling should make themselves aware of any known submerged hazards, including the likelihood of the presence of Crab / Lobster Pots, wrecks, submarine cables and sand waves.

Notice is drawn to the notation on charts BA 108 and 1200 regarding the presence of unmarked pots and cables.

No 19: Sub Sea Electricity Cables in the Wash

Two Power cables run from each of Race Bank and Lines Windfarms through the centre of The Wash and make landfall close to the entrance of the River Nene. In certain areas, the burial depths of these cables have not reached the expected burial depths or recent hydrographic surveys indicate that seabed mobility has reduced the coverage and in certain cases the cables have become surface laid. Mariners should be cautious and prudent when navigating, anchoring, trawling or working in the vicinity of the cables route. In one location within the jurisdiction, survey has identified a possible cable free span. The location is marked by Isolated Danger Buoy Z13.

No 20: Hazards in the river

Any item that is considered by the Harbour Authority to be a hazard to navigation may be removed and disposed of or made safe to the best of the Harbour Authority's ability. Costs incurred will be chargeable to the owner of the hazard. When possible, the Harbour Authority will give notice to the owner of removal.

No.21: Works in Jurisdiction Area

DIVING, SURVEYING, RIVER / HARBOUR WORKS OR ANY OTHER OPERATIONS THAT MAY AFFECT NAVIGATION:

Prior to commencement within the Port of Boston Jurisdiction Area of any operation mentioned above, permission must be sought, and clearance granted from the Harbour Master. The form "Application for Marine Works", available from the Harbour Office should be completed. Adequate Risk Assessments and Method Statements will be required. The Harbour Authority will make charges to cover Officers time in the administration of these activities in line with the current Port Tariff.

No 22: Barrier & Flood Protection Works

Works will be continuing throughout 2025 on the above project. Key dates are given below.

During the wet dock closure all commercial vessels will be berthed on one of three the riverside quays. Turning of vessels has been simulated at HR Wallingford and a turning dolphin, situated some 25m downriver of the existing knuckle has been constructed to allow this to manoeuvre to be carried out safely. The dolphin will be removed at the end of the project. Every commercial vessel will need to turn on this dolphin, during which time the manoeuvring vessel will be across the river. The Harbour Authority will advise mariners of the number and expected time of vessels swinging. With the limited number of berths and limited river width available on the riverside, manoeuvring and passing of ships off these berths will be necessary on most tides. Such movements including swinging on the dolphin will occur close to high water. As part of their passage planning, all mariners should take into account that they will encounter ships that are manoeuvring between the Tidal Barrier and Church Point, proceed with caution and always act in a seamanlike manner.

Late 2025 for a period of approximately 14 months the wet dock will be closed to traffic.

Late 2026 Wet dock re-opens, turning dolphin is removed.

No 23: Operational Bow Thrusters

During the period of time that the dock is temporarily closed, and all commercial vessels have to swing in the river, Owners, Charterers & Masters will need to confirm to the Harbour Authority via their ships agents that their vessels are fitted with operational Bow Thrusters before they are accepted as being suitable. The Harbour Master, his assistants or deputies' decision on the suitability of vessels is final.

No.24: Bunkering

The Port of Boston has a bunkering policy and pre bunkering checklist which must be completed before any bunkering or transferring of waste oil ashore can commence. A minimum of 24 hours' notice should be provided to the Harbour Authority via ships agents prior to bunkering.

No.25 Declared Draughts

There have been instances where the inward bound draughts for vessels have been mis-declared when booking the Pilot. These mis-declarations have only become known when the Pilot has boarded the vessel and different draughts have been provided by the Master during the Master/Pilot Exchange or have been observed by the Pilot from the Pilot boat.

The provision of a vessel's draught is a key piece of information required for planning a vessels arrival and by a Pilot in preparing a passage plan. In certain circumstances, a mis-declared draught could result in the vessel's arrival being delayed or cancelled at short notice or worse case, being neaped for a number of days.

Masters, owners and their agents are hereby advised that it constitutes an offence to provide false draughts, which may render the Master liable, on conviction, to a fine. Additional charges could also be levied on the ship and MCA notified.

No.26: Dangerously Weighted Ships' Heaving Lines

The attention of Mariners is drawn to MCA Safety Bulletin No.2 of 2015 - "Dangerously Weighted Ships Heaving Lines" (copy overleaf) and also Section 26.3.5 of the Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers 2015 edition, which is reproduced below:

"To prevent personal injury to those receiving heaving lines, the "monkey's fist" should be made with rope only and must not contain added weighting material. Safe alternatives include a small high-visibility soft pouch, filled with fast-draining pea shingle or similar, with a weight of not more than 0.5kg. Under no circumstances is a line to be weighted by items such as shackles, bolts or nuts, or twist locks."

No.27: General

The Port of Boston complies with the Port Marine Safety Code. As part of the plan, there is a requirement for a documented 3-year plan that is relevant to the Ports Operations. The 3-year plan is contained within the Port Marine Safety Code and along with local notices to mariners, links to tidal and met data and recent hydrographic surveys can be viewed on the Ports website www.portofboston.co.uk

If any user of the river, dock and waters covered by the jurisdiction of the Harbour Authority wishes to raise any matter relating to safety of navigation, they should write or otherwise contact The Harbour Master or his deputy at the address below.

Vessel owners (including owners of fishing vessels), Agents, Charterers, Yacht Clubs, Marina Operators and Lock Keepers should ensure that the contents of these Notices are made known to the Masters and Skippers or persons in charge of vessels using the waters within the Port of Boston jurisdiction area.

The Canals and River Trust and the Environment Agency should ensure the notices are made available to the masters, skippers or persons in charge of craft transiting from the fresh water to the salt water at Grand Sluice and / or Black Sluice.

The Harbour Authority will issue Local Notice to Mariners and Special Directions as and when required, these will be uploaded to the Ports website.

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