

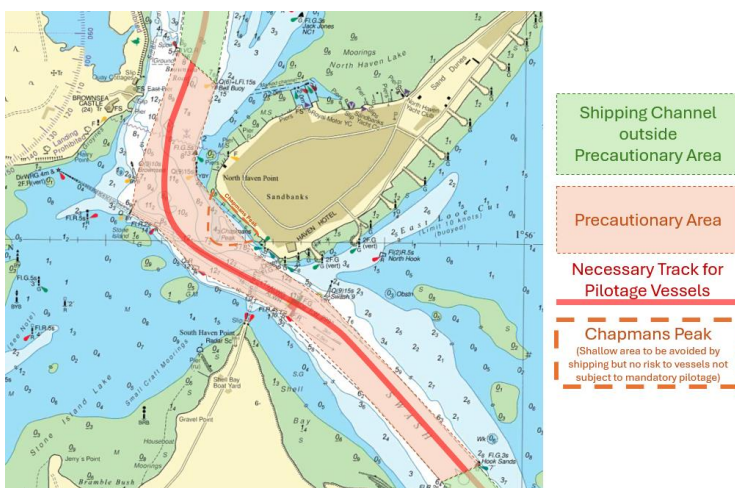
Guidance for Small Craft in or near Shipping Channels

Mariners are advised of the following local considerations that are critical to their safety when operating small craft in the vicinity of underway large commercial ships.

Harbour Entrance Precautionary Area

The part of the main shipping channel marked in orange on the below chartlet between Channel Buoy #8 and Bell Buoy #15 (opposite Brownsea Castle) should be considered a Precautionary Area. This is due to elevated risk introduced by frequent large shipping, the chain ferry's operations on this blind bend and the lack of available space for a designated Small Boat Channel on this narrow bend which experiences swift tidal flows. This notice formalises existing standard practice by experienced users of the harbour and applies to the same area where the 10-knot speed limit remains throughout the winter.

All ships over 50 metres in length are required to follow the charted leading line (299 °/119°) to ensure control during peak tidal flows and avoid the shallows known as Chapmans Peak on the Sandbanks side. **Therefore, shipping's necessary track puts them on the "wrong" (port/west/studland) side of the channel when inbound through this area.** This can take new harbour users by surprise whilst outbound because they are accustomed to vessels staying on their starboard side of channels in line with international regulations. All shipping has extremely limited ability to manoeuvre around small craft without grounding outside the channel or putting persons, property and the environment at unacceptable risk.

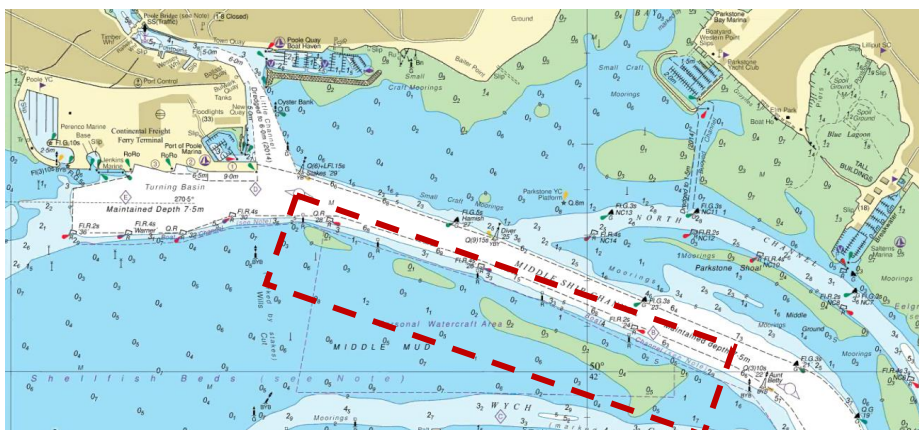


All vessels shall ensure that a ship subject to compulsory pilotage is given a clear channel and not impeded in following its illustrated necessary track within the Precautionary Area. Check expected shipping schedules [here](#), keep a good look out, monitor VHF Ch14 and adjust passage plans and speed to avoid transiting the Precautionary Area at the same time as a ship under pilotage

If small craft does not keep a good look out / plan ahead and fails to give ships a clear channel in this area, then they must take appropriate action to keep clear by preferably using the eastern (Sandbanks/Green) side when within the Precautionary Area (whether inbound or outbound) and navigate with utmost caution. That said, small vessels should only cross the channel if safe to do so without impeding other traffic. In extremis, where small craft have put themselves at risk of impeding shipping and there is insufficient time to safely cross the channel, they must navigate "buoy to buoy" on the outer extremity of the channel or, if safer to do so, leave the channel entirely. [\[Continues Overleaf\]](#)

Displacement Effect

It is evident that significant displacement effects can be created when large vessels transit the Middle Ship Channel at low water. When a vessel is stopped it displaces a volume of water equivalent to its volume below the waterline. As this vessel moves, a hole is left behind which quickly fills by sucking water from the much shallower areas either side of the main channel (particularly the "Soldier Bank" along the northern edge of the Personal Watercraft Zone). This area is also prone to bow and stern waves. These effects are unpredictable and can take small craft transiting the Small Boat Channel or nearby dinghy racing by surprise. **Small craft mariners are hereby reminded of this potential risk and the need to keep a special lookout and stand by to experience such effects when navigating in this vicinity.**



During "Controlled Vessel Movements"

Refer to [Standing LNTM 03 of 2024](#) to understand small craft's new obligations and exclusion zones when Harbour Control announces a Controlled Vessel Movement on Channel 14.

During "Restricted Visibility Routine"

Refer to [Standing LNTM 04 of 2024](#) to understand small craft's new obligations when Harbour Control puts Restricted Visibility Routine into force on Channel 14 (generally when visibility at 500m or less).

Mariners are reminded that Radar, AIS, CCTV, telephone and VHF channels are recorded 24-7.

Owners, Agents, Charterers, Marinas, Yacht Clubs and Recreational Water Sport Organisations should ensure that the contents of this Notice are made known to the masters or persons in charge of their vessels or craft. LNTM 36 of 2013 is hereby cancelled.

Harry Gregory
HARBOUR MASTER

All Local Notices are available online: www.phc.co.uk/leisure/harbour-control/local-notice-to-mariners